

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 2/13/2024

Attending: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Kate Bettencourt, Jennifer Petersen, and David Zeiler. Also Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

Absent: Trustees Mark Gerath and Kristen von Campe

Call to Order:

Kate Bettencourt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Vote Summary

- Approval of December 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Moved by Helena Altsman, seconded by Jennifer Petersen. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention.
- Approval of \$300 from LEG/MEG for postage for survey. Moved by Helena Altsman, seconded by Jennifer Petersen. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention.
- Approval of \$100 from Gift Fund for postage for survey. Moved by Helena Altsman, seconded by Jennifer Petersen. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention.
- Approval of request for \$3,468 from the Endowment. Moved by Helena Altsman, seconded by Jennifer Petersen. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention.
- Adjourn. Moved by Helena Altsman, seconded by Jennifer Petersen. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention.

Action Items

- Vanessa will work with Mark to answer Select Board Member Alison Manugian's questions. They will also send the Comparison Town presentation to Town Manager to share with Select Board and Finance Committee.
- Vanessa will share the summary of results Teen Survey with the Select Board and the Finance Committee.
- Community Survey will launch tomorrow.
- Vanessa will change letterhead to add Jennifer as Secretary.

New Business

Report on Town Manager Budget Presentation

- Mark and Kristen attended the presentation of the Budget. The presentation went very well, but the Trustees should be prepared to present impacts of budget reductions on Library Service. Additionally, the report of the comparison towns correcting the library budget comparison should be shared with Tri-Comm in advance of January 27th.

Report on Annual Investment Performance Presentation to Trust Commissioners

- Dave and Vanessa attended the annual meeting with the Trust Commissioners to report on investments of all the funds under the Trust Commissioners. There are two portfolios managed by different firms. \$22M for growth which is more aggressively invested and \$5M for cash needs, which is invested more conservatively. Both portfolios did very well

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 2/13/2024

this year because bonds are paying well and the stock market is rebounding, therefore investments are performing well. Groton, now on the prudent investor list and doing very well. It was agreed to diversify each investment type.

Unfinished Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes from Dec. 12, 2023 Meeting

- Completed, see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings

- All action items reviewed.

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

- All calendar items reviewed.

Review Monthly Bills & Budget Report

- All library bills reviewed.
- Monthly budget report reviewed.

Standing Committee & Liaison Reports:

Budget & Finance

Response to Town Comparisons Report

- Mark Gerath worked with Vanessa and Helena to review the data and put together a formal response to the Town Manager, Select Board, and Finance Committee regarding the recent town comparisons report. Trustees agreed it should be sent to the Tri Comm.

Other Budget & Finance Updates

- Vanessa requested an up to an additional \$300 from LEG/MEG for postage mail survey, which will be added to the \$1,600 voted for at the last meeting.
- Director's Discretionary Fund an additional \$100 from the Gift Fund to support staff anniversary presents and other expenditures.

Building & Equipment

Project Updates

- Trees were cut and trimmed on the property and Babin will do the landscaping to fill in the gaps.
- Alison Manugian sent questions about the library's capital plan related to HVAC systems and alternate flooring options in the meeting rooms and Children's Room.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 2/13/2024

Grades 5-12 Survey Results Summary Report

- Report summary as presented by Barbara Alevras, Strategic Planning Consultant. Barbara sees a lot of survey results and was very impressed with the volume of responses, how overwhelmingly positive the results were, and how thoughtful the fill-in answers. She has never seen a teen survey without negative or smart aleck remarks.
- Vanessa will share the summary of results with the Select Board and the Finance Committee along with our budget request.

Community Survey

- Community Survey launches online tomorrow. Print copies will be in mailboxes by the end of the week. Full Community Survey will be sent out via social media and shared widely throughout the town. Trustees will fill out and help promote. Deadline January 31, 2024.

Focus Groups & Informal Polls

- Four focus groups will take place on Jan. 30 and 31 with community influencers/leaders, parents/caregivers, and teens. Barbara will lead the adult groups, and Teen Librarian Deborah Dowson will lead the teen group.
- Informal polls in the library and online coming.

Other Policy, Personnel, and Planning Updates:

- Noted letter to patron that books spaces in classes and does not cancel if unable to use.
- Phil will cover the custodial needs during Debbie's absence.

Other Reports:

GPL Endowment:

- There is a need to rebalance the line items within the Endowment budget due to meet the increasing cost, number, and demand for children's and teen programs. The request would increase \$3,468 to support programs and other expenses, but otherwise would change the line items in which the funding is allocated.

Art & Artifacts:

- The Central MA Pastel Society show was very successful. At least one piece was sold and the requested 10% donation was made to the Endowment.
- The Tarbell Charitable Trust made a donation to the library for our ongoing support and display of Tarbell's works.

Social Media Report & Other News:

- Social continues to grow and in part 3x more engagement on teen social media.

Other Business

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 2/13/2024

- Jennifer volunteered to be Secretary and take minutes at future meetings.

Library Director:

- Trip to Littleton Library was helpful to generate new ideas for staff.
- Beth working on Groton Reads programming for March. The date for the author event is regretfully the same day as the Celebration of Life for Al Stone, the great man and generous benefactor of so many organizations in the area, including the library and the GPL Endowment. Beth did get the start time pushed back to later in the afternoon, but that was possible.

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above.

Review Upcoming Meetings & Events

Adjournment at 8:12 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Helena Altsman, Secretary pro tem