

## Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 7 pm, via Zoom

Approved, 3/13/2024

**Attending Virtually:** Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Kate Bettencourt, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Kristen von Campe, and David Zeiler. Also Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

**Absent:** N/A

### Call to Order:

Kate Bettencourt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

### Vote Summary

- Approval of January 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 2 abstentions (Mark, Kristen)
- Approval of \$11,000 from LEG/MEG for Babin Landscaping to revitalize garden area, shrubbery, and pedestrian walkway. Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions
- Approval for Vanessa to request \$30,000 from Endowment Trustees (to cover the cost of ~\$24,000 for meeting room and task chairs and tables and ~\$6,000 for historic skylight restoration). Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn at 8:47 p.m. Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention.

### Action Items

- Vanessa to reach out to Owen Shuman about celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the building's renovation and expansion.
- Deb Dowson to compile list of responsibilities/accomplishments of teen helper.
- Vanessa to request \$30,000 from Endowment for chairs and historic skylight restoration.
- Vanessa to approve \$11,000 quote for Babin Landscaping work.
- Vanessa to speak with Mark Haddad and Fire Chief Steele about Narcan liability and use issues.
- Vanessa to put out design boards on 2/14/24 for Trustee review.

### New Business

#### Trustees up for Re-Election

- Helena and Kristen are up for three-year seats
- Jennifer is up for a one-year seat to finish out Nancy Wilder's term
- Shorter window than usual; nomination papers due March 5.

#### Planning for Future Redesign and Improvement Projects

- Discussion of Future Redesign Projects and appropriate funding sources; the Children's Room will be a big expense; dedicated space for older children needs to be added; representative from KI brought in chairs and quotes were obtained; re-upholstery of

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existing chairs and adding carrels being considered; investigated costs of putting in study rooms (\$50,000 for custom-made double study room for back wall of second floor); etc.

- Discussion regarding hiring interior design firm to assist with coordinating colors and fabrics, etc., prior to repainting that is scheduled to take place in 2025.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes from Feb. 13, 2024 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.
- Mark Haddad said level services budget being brought to Town Meeting.

### **Standing Committee & Liaison Reports:**

#### **Budget & Finance**

##### **Report on Jan. 27 Budget Meeting**

- Mark, Vanessa, and Kristen presented the FY 2025 library budget to the Finance Committee, and Kate was also in attendance.
- Presentation went very well, and questions asked by the public and the Select Board were all answered.

##### **Other Budget & Finance Updates**

- Discussion regarding impact on library budget if override fails (cutting/reducing staff, hours, and materials budget.) This budget would require a waiver from the state to remain certified.

#### **Building & Equipment**

##### **Quote for Landscape Improvements**

- Quote received from Babin Landscaping for \$11,000 to revitalize garden, shrubbery, and pedestrian walkway. Vanessa requested funding which was approved. See Vote Summary above.

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### Other Building & Equipment Updates

- Sibley Hall meeting room chairs are 25 years old and in need of replacement. Sixty-two new chairs are estimated to cost ~\$24,000 which is not in the capital plan. Vanessa raised the possibility of having it funded by Endowment (allowed under charter, if unanimously approved by the Endowment Trustees); although Dave understood the request, he noted it should really be funded by municipal budget.
- Historic skylight restoration work is nearly complete, but the previously-approved funds are depleted and there is still ~\$6,000 of work needed to finish the job.
- Vanessa requested permission to ask Endowment for funds for the new chairs (which are a priority and cannot be worked into the capital plan for four or five years) as well as for the funds needed to complete the skylight restoration project.
- Approval was given for Vanessa to request \$30,000 from Endowment Trustees (\$24,000 for meeting room and task chairs and tables and \$6,000 for historic skylight restoration). Approved. See vote above.
- Lower stairs were very dark and lighting has been added so they are better illuminated, along with other small electrical improvement projects in the library.

### **Policy, Personnel, & Planning**

#### Strategic Planning Updates

- Surveys going well. Consultant Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting said she has never seen anyone break a 90% completion rate (# of people who start the survey and finish it), and the library is at a 92% completion rate. 912 survey responses have been received, 50% more than the 600 received in the last GPL survey in 2015.

#### YA Helper

- Current Teen helper is leaving for college and is currently working six hours per week/(\$4,000 per year) paid from Gift Account using the Chris Christie estate gift.
- Deb to provide summary of what is being/will be accomplished if new teen helper hired to replace her, as this was a pilot project to see what the benefits would be.
- Decisions about continuing the Teen Assistant position will be discussed at a future Trustees meeting.

#### Other Policy, Personnel, and Planning Updates:

- Discussion regarding whether to purchase Narcan kit for library. Vanessa to speak with Town Manager Mark Haddad about insurance/liability issues and Fire Chief McCurdy about issues involving use.

### **Other Reports:**

#### GPL Endowment:

- Met on Jan. 27.

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- Vanessa reached out to State regarding possible confusion regarding two different GPL entities: GPL Endowment Trust and the GPL Endowment Events Inc., which is a separate fundraising arm for the Endowment.
- Annual reporting fee to the state is \$15 annually.
- Budget requests has been approved.

### Art & Artifacts:

- Art Committee meeting took place February 2.

### Social Media Report & Other News:

- March 6 is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dedication of the Expanded and Renovated Library Building

### **Other Business**

- **Library Director:**  
Groton Reads - banner across street next week and newsletter going out next week.
- Spring Newsletter - 12 pages long.
- Discussion regarding reception for Trustees who facilitated expansion of library and about displaying before and after pictures.
- High School cafeteria announcement screen broken and Vanessa to reach out to high school to inquire about repair/replacement.

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above

Review Upcoming Meetings & Events

Adjournment at 8:47 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary