

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 7 pm, Community Room

Approved, 8/13/2024

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Kirsten von Campe, and David Zeiler. Also Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

Absent: Kate Bettencourt

Call to Order

Chair Helena Altsman called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Vote Summary

- Approval of June 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes. Moved by Dave, seconded by Kristen. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn. Moved by Kristin, seconded by Mark. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items

- A Library Director Evaluation Working Group consisting of a two-member committee and chair needs to be appointed. Kristen will review who has participated previously and make a recommendation.
- Trustees' Annual Goals need to be revisited in September.
- Dave to visit Prescott School to assess the size of The Big Book in the basement closet.
- Vanessa to request that Town Counsel review the proposed GPL Social Media Policy.
- Vanessa to add a Next Step column to the Building & Equipment Library Project Tracker.
- Vanessa to put a 10-page document of other libraries' goals in the Google Drive folder.
- Each Trustee will come up with draft goals to share at 7/27/24 retreat.
- Mark to respond to the Trustees' listserv about the Littleton Library Trustees' question.

Director's Report (Vanessa)

- FanFest was the summer kick-off and was a success despite the fact that the middle school field trip impacted attendance.
- Joe Leary's concert with songs from the '60s and '70s was a big hit.
- The Summer Reading Program is going well, with over 600 sign-ups.
- The Solstice event run by Lauren Sanchez in conjunction with the Groton Conservation Trust went well.
- Based on the youth survey results, Deb Dowson discovered that teens wanted afternoon programs in the summer; she started offering them, and attendance has been strong.
- Circulation Head Nicole Irvin is going to the Council on Aging at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and is helping seniors get PINs, get online, check out books, etc.
- Across the board, statistics show increased library use, with an especially large increase in recorded library program views.
- The library was open and busy on July 5, when many other libraries were closed.
- The new Florence Roche School Library no longer has a librarian, so Lauren Sanchez has agreed to help set up the library in August.
- The Endowment received an unexpected personal donation of \$5,000.

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- Art Cheeks has been selected as the Town's new Fire Chief.
- The new visitor counter system was installed on 6/28/24.

Action Items

- Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 11, 2024 Meeting
 - o Completed, see vote summary.
- Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month
 - o All calendar items reviewed.
- Review Trustees' Action Items for Current Month
 - o All action items reviewed.
- Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings
 - o All action items reviewed.

Budget & Finance (Mark & Helena)

- Review Monthly Bills
 - o All library bills reviewed.
- Review Monthly Budget Report
 - o Monthly budget report reviewed.
- Other Budget & Finance
 - o Helena and Mark are now both signed up on DocuSign.
 - o The FY24 Budget Report indicated that all amounts reconciled nearly perfectly.

Building & Equipment (Dave & Jennifer)

- Review the New Building & Equipment Library Project Tracker document that prioritizes and outlines current and upcoming projects.
 - o Vanessa will add a "next step" column to the tracker, which will remain in the monthly folder.
 - o Capital planning for FY26-30 is due in October. We project significant facility expenses for the next five years, such as HVAC, painting, elevator, etc.
 - o The Historical Room HVAC has finally been fully repaired.
 - o Kristen donated a canopy to the library.
 - o The new people counter was installed on 6/28/24, is fully functional, has an online data package, and staff have been trained on its use.
- Other Building & Equipment
 - o None.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning (Kristen & Kate)

- Strategic Planning Updates
 - o Broad, five-year goals and underlying objectives still need to be completed.
- Strategic Planning Session on July 27
 - o Vanessa will share sample goals from other libraries with Trustees and will work with Staff to involve their ideas.
 - o Trustees will bring their own suggestions for goals to the meeting to discuss.

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- Other Policy, Personnel, and Planning:
 - o A Library of Things committee has been formed and is headed by Sarah with Nicole, Susanne, and Lauren. Nicole is working with the new Assabet module to launch the new Library of Things visual catalog.
 - o Storage space for items in the Library of Things needs to be considered, but staff is getting creative.
 - o The book budget for next year includes more money for digital offerings because of increasing demand for ebook and audiobooks. Physical audio CDs aren't as popular as they once were.
 - o The Library Director Evaluation Working Group consisting of a two-member committee and a Chair needs to be appointed.
 - o There has been a strong response from highly qualified candidates to the posting for the Sunday Circulation Assistant position.

Other Business

- Library Board of Trustees' Annual Goals for FY24 reviewed.
 - o Advocate for a FY 2024-25 budget that meets the needs of the community and the library, including returning to a municipal appropriation that allows for full staffing, hours, and usage, particularly Sunday hours and Summer Reading Assistants.
 - o Foster staff growth, including beginning the evaluation of classifications and ensuring integration of the Assistant Director.
 - o Complete the long-range planning process consistent with the state's five-year requirements.
- Littleton is changing its town government, and its Library Trustees are concerned that going from a Town Administrator to a Town Manager might include an attempt to change who is in charge of the Library and Library Director. When Groton originally drafted its Town Charter, the Charter Committee proposed that the Library Trustees should be appointed rather than elected, but Massachusetts General Laws state that Library Trustees be elected, and Town Counsel agreed. Library Trustees hire and evaluate the Library Director and are responsible for budget and finance, building and equipment, policies, planning, and personnel. Mark proposed responding to Littleton Trustees with this information and all agreed.

Next Steps

- Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above.
- Review Upcoming Meetings & Events.

Adjournment at 8:12 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary