

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**July 14, 2020, Virtual Meeting**  
Approved, 8/11/2020

**Attending – Via Zoom:** Marilyn Dabritz, Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, Nancy Wilder, Jane Allen, David Zeiler and Library Director Vanessa Abraham.

Support and attendance by Bob Colman of Groton Cable.

M. Dabritz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

**Vote Summary – All Votes were by Roll-Call**

- Draft minutes from June 9, 2020 meeting approved as amended. Jane moved and Nancy seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Draft minutes from June 18, 2020 meeting approved as presented. Jane moved and Nancy seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Officers elected as follows: Chair: Mimi Dabritz; Vice Chair: Kristen von Campe; Secretary: Mark Gerath. Jane moved and Nancy seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Policy to delegate bill signing to a single Trustee retroactive to March 2020 was approved. Kristen moved and Nancy seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Vote to adjourn. Jane moved and Nancy seconded. Approved unanimously.

**Action Items**

- Related to New Officers and Committees
  - *Director to send board reorganization memo to Select Board and Town Clerk*
  - *Director to update state library directory*
- All Trustees sign to empower Vice-Chair or designee to sign biweekly payroll warrant.
- Trustees to review old and new Trustee goals for upcoming year for next meeting.
- Vanessa to communicate to the Town Accountant and Director's Assistant the change in bill signing policy.
- Vanessa to arrange for signature of payroll delegation as necessary.
- Vanessa to communicate to the requester the Trustee's decision to decline to allow a Main Street surveillance camera on the building.
- Vanessa to draft and send a thank you note to Bemis for its contribution.
- Vanessa to draft and send a thank you note to Middlesex Bank for its contribution acknowledging its use in the new reference desk.
- Vanessa and David to attend the Zoom meeting of the HDC on July 21 at 7:30 PM to discuss the proposed railings for the emergency stairways.
- Vanessa and Mark to draft a letter requesting exemption of the Adult Program Coordinator/Library assistant position from the hiring freeze.

**Unfinished Business**

Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 9 & 18, 2020 Meetings. Completed, see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings Reviewed and all completed.

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Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month (June remaining & July):

**New Business**

Elect Trustee Officers for Upcoming Year: Chair, Vice-Chair, & Secretary  
Completed – see vote summary.

Appointment of Standing Committees – The following appointments were made by the Chair:  
Budget and Finance: Nancy and Mark; Building and Equipment: Jane and David; Policy, Personnel, and Planning: Mimi and Kristen.

Bill Signatories: Remain at 4 signatures (quorum of the board) on every bill? Option to vote to empower one person (Chair) and back-up person (Vice-Chair) to sign for the board. Can vote to make retroactive to March for all bills. (See relevant KP Law Municipal Modernization Act eUpdate text at end of document) In response to COVID-19 and the required social distancing, the potential to delegate a single Trustee to review and sign invoices on the usual schedule was discussed. Under this new procedure, a list of the invoices, the payee, and the amounts would be emailed to each Trustee for review and comment to the Chair in a timely fashion. The Vice Chair (Kristen) was proposed for the authority with the back-up signatory designated as Nancy if necessary. The policy is retroactive to invoices that have not been processed since the March COVID-related shutdown. Proposed policy was approved – see vote summary.

Resident Request for a Main Street Security Camera on the Building The request and its motivation were discussed along with the nature of the existing library-focused surveillance cameras. While there was sympathy for the request, the trustees agreed that the potential for Main Street surveillance was a matter for the police. The request will be declined. No vote taken.

**Other Business**

**Budget & Finance**

Updates on FY 2021 Budgets and Bruce J. Anderson Grant

- The budget status was reviewed.
- It was noted that the Town received \$1.4 million from the state to defray COVID-related expenses. A substantial portion of that will be earmarked for the schools and approximately \$300,000 has already been spent. The Library's COVID-specific expenditures will be applied to this grant.
- The final installment of \$2,070 for digitizing the Groton Herald was received from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation.
- A donation of \$1,000 was received from Bemis Corporation in Shirley.

**Building & Equipment**

Completed Projects: Roof, South Side Drainage, Reference Area Redesign

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- All three completed projects were reviewed.
- The roof project is complete and remaining funds returned to the Town's General Fund.
- The final close out documents from GRLA on the roof are pending.
- The importance of the Middlesex Bank gift to the new reference desk was noted.
- The HDC will be asked to approve the railings for the new emergency exit stairways.

Sewer Abatement Two quotes of approximately \$5,000 have been received. The charges for irrigation water in recent years would have been reduced with new metering by \$650 to \$680/year. B&E recommended not hiring a plumber at this time due to short funds, outside watering ban, and the reduced garden maintenance necessary. Reconsider work at a later date.

Library Directional Signs Up on Main St and Rte. 40 The finished project was reviewed.

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

#### Hiring Freeze, Furloughed Shelves & Fill-in Staff, and Reduced Staffing Continues

The status of patron service and staffing levels was discussed. In particular, the ongoing limitations on hiring and providing staff hours was noted as affecting patron service. Substantial work cannot be done and staff are experiencing burn-out. The trustees supported Vanessa's request to hire a half-time Adult Program Coordinator and two part-time Library Assistants. This would involve the Town Manager and Select Board exempting that position from the hiring freeze. These positions have been vacant since January. A letter of request will be drafted for the Town Manager's review.

Automatic 14-Day Quarantine if Travel Outside New England, NY, or NJ This policy was announced by the Town Manager. The quarantined individual will receive pay only to the extent that their Department Head approves work at home or they can use sick, vacation, or personal time.

Contact Tracing Contacts made at the library are being recorded in the form of appointments and are available for COVID-related tracking if necessary. They will not be shared unless necessary.

Review of Town Charter on Trustee Vacancies No changes are necessary.

Review of Director Annual Review Process and Appointment of Subcommittee The process was reviewed and no changes made. Kristen and Mimi will serve as the subcommittee with Nancy as back up – no vote was taken.

### **Other Reports**

#### GPL Endowment

The Endowment is still being set up to work remotely.

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Art Committee The potential for virtual shows on-line and a sculpture in Katie's Garden will be discussed with the Curator.

Social Media Report The GPL's social media profile remains very high.

**Other Business**

Annual Goals for Trustees The setting of goals is on hold but will be considered at the next meeting.

**Library Director Reports**

Reopening Updates

- Public reaction has been very positive.
- Staff were apprehensive but excited and motivated.
- A significant number of people who have come in stay in the library for several hours working or studying.
- Staff are still logging comments which are very positive.
- Returned materials are quarantined for three days which has been demonstrated to be sufficient to eliminate the virus.

Program and Service Updates Summer reading is going very well. The kids weekly craft programs are going well and "Brag Tags" are very popular. Getting away from plastic toys seems to be popular with all parties.

Patron & Staff Updates YA Librarian Deb Dowson is attending local racial and diversity awareness training groups with an emphasis on how libraries can provide support.

Monthly Report & Statistics Statistics were reviewed. Teen and children program attendance is strong.

Other News & Updates

**Wrap-Up**

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting: Complete

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

- Trustees Meetings: August 11, Sept 8, Oct 13
- Early Fall Town Meeting: Sat. Oct. 3 at 10 am at GDRMS Field

Meeting Adjourned at 6:06 PM - See vote summary.

Respectfully submitted:

Mark Gerath, Secretary