

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**January 23, 2021, Virtual Meeting**  
Approved, 2/09/2021

**Meeting jointly with the Select Board and Finance Committee**

**Attending – Via Zoom:** Vanessa Abraham, Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, Nancy Wilder, Jane Allen, Kate Bettencourt, and David Zeiler.

Kristen von Campe, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

**Action Items**

- Library Trustees to invite Select Board member Josh Degen to attend the next Trustees' Meeting.
- Vanessa and Kristen to put potential funding sources for Summer Reading and Sunday Hours on the February agenda.

**Library Budget Presentation**

Mark Gerath of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee began his presentation by acknowledging the library's accomplishments as a leader in the Commonwealth for providing services during COVID-19.

He explained how fortunate the library has been in requesting and receiving from the Trust Commissioners a one time emergency appropriation of \$30,000 for books and materials from the Robbins Fund.

With \$55,664 cut from wages, Sunday hours and the Summer Reading Programming support will not be offered in FY 2022. This critical program and popular weekend hours are particularly difficult losses. Mark communicated the Trustees' understanding that budget cuts are needed right now, but also that Sunday hours and Summer Reading have to be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Gerath noted that no figures were in the budget for COLAs or wage and salary increases for union employees as the union contract is still under negotiation. Mark Haddad responded that as per the tentative union agreement, there will be no impact on the budget for the library. Mr. Gerath also noted that the Trustees have the option to reopen the library director's contract if other town employees' salaries and wages will be frozen for FY2022.

Ms. Abraham stated that the library is currently open from 10-5 Tuesday through Saturday which is all that is possible with current staffing. She thanked the Select Board for lifting the furlough on three Shelver positions in July and lifting the hiring freeze on three part-time library positions (out of five that were going unfilled.)

Select Board member Alison Manugian asked for a dollar figure to re-fund the Summer Reading Program and Sunday Hours. Together that number is \$27,000, \$9,000 of which would cover the Summer Reading Program. Select Board member Josh Degen presented

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the option of fundraising to offer Sunday Hours and/or Summer Reading for this year only. He and Mark Haddad successfully did that to keep Sargisson Beach open. Mr. Gerath responded that it is something the trustees can discuss at their next board meeting and Mr. Degen said he would be happy to attend and share the success he had. Mr. Haddad also suggested the trustees consider using State Aid to fund these. Mr. Gerath stated clearly that this would be a stopgap measure and not sustainable for anything more than one year. He made it clear that going forward, we are running a public library, not a private library.

The \$45,000 parking lot repaving capital project, after being put off during the previous budget cycle, is in this year's budget.

The Boards thanked us for our participation and Mr. Gerath thanked them for their time and Vice Chair Nancy Wilder adjourned the meeting at 9:00AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen von Campe, Secretary pro tem