

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**August 10, 2021**  
*Approved 9/14/2021*

**Call to Order:**

**Attending:** Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, David Zeiler, Nancy Wilder, and Library Director Vanessa Abraham. **Absent:** Jane Allen and Kate Bettencourt.

David Zeiler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**Vote Summary**

- The Trustees voted to approve the July 13, 2021 minutes as amended. Nancy moved to approve and Kristen seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
- The Trustee goals for the upcoming year were approved unanimously following a motion by Nancy and a second by Kristen.
- The motion to eliminate library late fines including those accrued historically was made by Nancy and seconded by Kristen. The motion passed unanimously.
- Nancy made a motion to authorize up to \$5,000 from LIG/MEG to defray travel costs to the annual Public Library Association national conference. The motion was seconded by Kristen and passed unanimously.
- Nancy made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 PM and Kristen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**

- Vanessa to discuss library budget and reopening plans with the Town Manager.
- Kristen to ask Connie Keeran about potential Endowment Trustee candidates.
- Vanessa to note in the newsletter that there will be Endowment Trustee vacancy pending.
- Nancy and Mark to plan the Library Director's review.
- Nancy to review and update the list of people asked for reviews of the Library Director in the last several years.
- The Trustees are to meet to discuss the draft annual review on September 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.
- Vanessa to send the budgetary request and accreditation documents to the Select Board.
- Vanessa to ask if remote access is possible at the Select Board meeting regarding Library finances.
- David, Vanessa, and Mark to attend the Select Board meeting on August 23, 2021 at 7 PM.
- Vanessa to propose to the curators of A Sense of Place that the two Tarbell paintings be exhibited in their current places in the library rather than moved to the Boutwell House.
- Vanessa to meet with the new Senior Center Director, Ashley Shaheen, regarding potential collaboration.

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**Unfinished Business**

Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 13, 2021 Meetings Completed, see vote summary.

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

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

All were reviewed and addressed, as necessary.

Finalize Trustees' Goals for the Upcoming Year. The following goals were adopted, see vote summary:

- Advocate for the FY2022-23 budgets that meet the needs of the community and the library, including returning to full staffing, hours, and usage.
- Support the community in fostering diversity and inclusion.
- Research options to improve Sibley Hall including better audio-visual systems – begin planning and consider funding options.
- In cooperation with other community efforts, work to increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the library.
- Complete the long-range planning process consistent with the state's five-year requirements.

**Standing Committees and Liaison Reports**

**Budget & Finance**

Report of Meeting with Mark Haddad on Wed. July 21 at 8 am, Re: \$55,664 Wage Cuts

Mark, Vanessa, and David reviewed the financial issues and the outcome of the meeting. The Town Manager and Town Accountant proposed that Federal Covid-relief money could be used to address the budget shortfall for up to three years. At that point, the Town Manager believed it was likely that growth in the tax base would allow the return of the wage expenditure to the municipal appropriation. He noted that both the Select Board and Finance Committee would need to be briefed and offer an opinion prior to asking for approval of this strategy at the Fall Town Meeting.

The Town Manager and Town Accountant were briefed on the GPL Trustees' intention to end late return penalties at the August meeting.

Upcoming Meeting with Select Board on August 23, 2021

Vanessa, David, and Mark will attend and present a short briefing on the request to replace the wages shortfall. Vanessa will forward background materials to the Select Board prior to the meeting.

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Review Final FY 2021 Budget Reports

The final FY 2021 expenditures and the annual budget were reviewed. Due to the partial spending and hiring freezes, the library returned \$51,998 of operating and \$54,168 of its wages budget to the general fund.

**Building & Equipment**

Capital Project Updates

The parking lot upgrade is to occur in FY2022 and that will be scheduled. Vanessa noted that the budgetary estimate for the future upgrade of the alarm systems (\$25, ) should be updated and increased based on a recent quote received on the fire alarm portion of the system (\$40, ).

CPC Project Updates

Vanessa and David Zeiler will meet with John Brooks on August 16 to discuss the upcoming restoration and preservation of the historic skylight.

Other Building Updates

The HVAC unit has been repaired.

**Policy, Personnel, & Planning**

Review Library Policy on Overdue Fines

The Trustees agreed to eliminate the fines for overdue materials including outstanding late fees, see vote summary.

Public Library Association National Conference in March 2022

Vanessa requested approval of funds from LIG/MEG (state aid) of up to \$5,000 to defray travel costs for the Public Library Association National Conference held every other year. The funds would support travel for two staff members in rotation. The request was approved, see vote summary.

**Other Reports**

GPL Endowment

No report.

Art Committee:

A show will begin in September in the gallery: paintings by Priscilla Levesque.

The plans for A Sense of Place, a community exhibition organized by the Groton History Center, were discussed. The current plan is to loan two the Tarbell paintings housed at the library to

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the exhibition at the Boutwell House. Professional art movers will make the move. The potential to exhibit them in place was discussed and Vanessa will suggest that to the organizers.

Social Media Report A Sense of Place, an exhibit of local artists organized by the Groton History Center (<http://www.grotonhistory.org/art/>), is pending.

**Other Business**

None

**Library Director Reports**

Monthly Director's Report

The monthly report was reviewed.

Town News & Updates

Mask wearing will now be required in all town buildings starting August 16 (regardless of vaccination status) and all town employees must provide proof of vaccination by August 31, per the Select Board. The Center has a new director and Vanessa is scheduled to meet with her.

Program & Services Updates

The GPL fall newsletter is in development and will be sent out soon. Library Staff are hard at work on getting the new website and all the Assabet modules up and running smoothly for going live on September 1.

Monthly Reports & Statistics

The MBLC has expanded the number of categories for programs that must be addressed in its required reports. This is a significant expansion and change for staff. Monthly reports and statistics were reviewed with the new changes.

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting: See above.

Upcoming Meetings & Events were reviewed.

Adjourned at 8:10 PM - see Vote Summary

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Gerath, Secretary pro tem