

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 7 pm, Library Community Room

Approved, 5/10/2022

Attending: Trustees Jane Allen, Kate Bettencourt, Kristen von Campe, and Nancy Wilder and Library Director Vanessa Abraham (in person). David Zeiler attending via Zoom.

Kristen left early at 7:48 pm.

Absent: Mark Gerath

Call to Order:

David Zeiler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

Vote Summary

- The Trustees voted to approve the March 8, 2022 minutes as submitted. Kristen moved to approve and Jane seconded. The vote was approved unanimously with one abstention (Dave).
- Jane made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm and Nancy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

- Nancy to organize the upcoming annual staff appreciation.
- The Building & Equipment committee will meet (non-urgently) to discuss ideas for library signs.
- Vanessa to determine the deadline date for the Green Grant bids.
- The Policy, Personnel, and Planning committee to meet and review policy for book challenges.
- Vanessa will follow up on the Emily Post Etiquette Training contract and determine the details before further decisions are made.

New Business

Report on Spring Town Warrant Public Hearing

- Kristen and Vanessa attended, with Mark coming in after the CPC meeting. Mark Haddad gave an overview of the spring town warrant, including the library capital requests for FY2023 to the Select Board and Finance Committee.

Report on Library Legislative Breakfast

- Mark, Kristen, and Vanessa attended the Legislative Breakfast on March 18 at the new Littleton Public Library building. Attendees described how the new library has beautiful lighting, ceilings, and an outdoor patio. There is also a dedicated book sale room right when you walk in the library.

Unfinished Business

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Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 8 Meeting

- Completed, see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings

- All action items reviewed. Vanessa noted that Phil is too busy with contracting work to take on the skylight shaft project, but he continues to show his dedication, generosity, and flexibility in serving the library as our weekend and fill-in custodian and handyman.

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

- All calendar items reviewed.

Standing Committee & Liaison Reports:

Budget & Finance

FY2022 Budget Updates

- Reviewed current YTD general expense report, budget v actual. Spending at 60% for year, despite being 75% through the fiscal year. Budget projections look healthy, so unlikely to need State Aid funding to pay for 10 newly purchased laptops.

Other Budget Updates

- Second state aid financial award coming this month. Groton will receive a total of \$21,166 for this year.
- The full Robbins amount of \$85,000 has been expended for the year. This is the \$70,000 we receive now annually for books and materials, plus an additional \$15,000 to make up for frozen budgets and to help meet the full state aid materials expenditure requirement for the year of 16% of the total town-appropriated library budget.

Building & Equipment

Review Temporary Sign Regulations

- The Building Commissioner notified Vanessa that there was a complaint about temporary signs in front of the library. He sent over the regulations with the violations highlighted (apparently the street banner was too big, and the free standing special event sign was out too long). Vanessa will look into applying for a permit to display the summer reading banner in June and talk to the Land Use Director; the B&E committee will meet to discuss this further.

Other Building Updates

- At least two lighting companies conducted walk-throughs to bid for the Green Grant library lighting project.
- HVAC repair from early fall – the part finally arrived and a crane was needed, making the total repair about \$8,000 in total.

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- Trustees agreed to hold off on the skylight shaft construction until costs come down, labor is more available, and/or another solution presents itself.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

Review Resources on Materials Selection

- With the rise in book challenges nationwide, Vanessa noted that it is a good time to review current policy and procedures, and shared ideas from other libraries on additional considerations.
- Vanessa posted some additional resources from the American Library Association that may be helpful. ALA.org offers excellent support for library staff and trustees on how to hold public meetings, respond to letters, reconsideration request, etc.
- Vanessa has also been discussing with front line staff on how to handle any book challenges they receive.

PLA Conference Report

- Children's Librarian Lauren Sanchez wrote a report to share highlights of the experience attending her first professional conference and did an excellent job sharing all of the details.

Other PPP & Staffing Updates:

- Two new shelvers were hired.

Other Reports:

GPL Endowment Draft Grant for FY2023

- Vanessa outlined the first draft of the grant and will work with staff to continue to finesse it before the final draft is present in May.

Art Committee

- The new art exhibit has gotten great reviews from staff and patrons. There are wooden art pieces and wildlife photography.
- Groton History Center has reactivated its display case in front foyer with a new display on the Town Forest.

Social Media Report & Other News:

- Social media: On Facebook, many expressed positive comments about GPL - especially GPL Staff - during National Library Week.
- Vanessa shared an example of a reference library staff member did great work researching an inquiry from a patron who reached out with historical questions.

Other Business

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Etiquette Contract

- Discussed how the contract only allows the licensee to present the information, which changes the idea of the original investment. The Emily Post Institute agreed to allow the licensee to be the Groton Public Library, not the individual staff member, but there are details that still need to be ironed out.

Destination Groton

- Jane raised an issue about how an article about “Destination Groton” in the Groton Herald did not mention the library at all. Discussed how it might be good for a Trustee to include themselves in these discussions.

Library Director:

- Vanessa shared about a recent patron complaint, including how it was handled and addressed by all parties involved, and how it will serve as a useful training tool for all library staff.
- Vanessa shared about some concerning behavior by a few after-school patrons towards library staff members. She reached out to one of Groton’s school resource officers to discuss the repeated problems staff are experiencing. He noted that he has seen a similar pattern happening in the schools and offered support for library staff. He also said he would speak privately to one of the identified principal offenders.

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above

Review Upcoming Meetings & Events:

-Next Trustees meeting May 10, 2022

-Town Meeting April 30, 2022

-Town Elections - May 24, 2022

Adjournment at 8:30 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Bettencourt, Secretary