

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 8, 2022, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 12/13/2022

Attending in Person: Trustees Kate Bettencourt, Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, Nancy Wilder, David Zeiler and Library Director Vanessa Abraham.

Also in attendance, Trustee Candidate Helena Fruscio Altsman. Welcome!

Call to Order:

Mark Gerath, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Vote Summary

- Approval of October 4, 2022 Meeting Minutes, special meeting for Library Director Evaluation. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Kate. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention (Dave).
- Approval of October 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Kate. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention (Dave).
- Approval of October 19 Meeting Minutes, special meeting for replacement trustee interviews. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Kate. Unanimous approval, 5 ayes.
- Approval of October 20 Meeting Minutes, special meeting for replacement trustee interviews. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Kate. Unanimous approval, 5 Ayes.
- Kristen made a motion to approve the GPL using a Purchase Card issued through the Town to lessen/replace the use of personal credit cards by library staff. Kate seconded and vote passed unanimously, 5 ayes.
- Kristen made a motion to expend up to \$2,000 from LIG/MEG to purchase a new barcode duplicator, wireless internet traffic counter, and pedestrian traffic counter. Kate seconded, unanimous approval, 5 ayes.
- Kristen made a motion to expend up to \$500 from LIG/MEG for December Staff Training on intellectual freedom and associated expenses. Kate seconded and vote passed unanimously, 5 ayes.
- Kristen made a motion to expend up to \$4,000 from the Chris Christie bequest to fund a pilot program of a Young Adult Librarian Internship. This position would be for 6 hours a week, \$15.00 per hour. Kate seconded and vote passed unanimously, 5 ayes.
- Kristen made a motion to close the meeting at 9:02 pm. Kate seconded and vote passed unanimously, 5 ayes.

Action Items

- Budget and Finance to meet to set budget
- Vanessa to call Trish, Town Accountant, about Town Purchase Card
- Dave to look into the possibility of a whole building generator for the library
- PPP to give guidance to Deb Dowson for the Young Adult Librarian Internship program
- PPP to work on Library Director contract

New Business

Library Director Evaluation

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- The Trustees congratulated Vanessa on her accomplishments over the last year. Each Trustee highlighted her strengths and victories that they formally recognized in her written evaluation. The Trustees were unanimous in recognizing a stellar performance over the last year.

Recent Youth Behavior Issues in the Library and on the Grounds

- Recently, some of the middle school age patrons of the library, particularly during Llama Lounge and school half days, have been disrespectful and belligerent to both staff and other patrons. Several staff members had a productive meeting on November 4 with GDRSD resource officer, Pete Breslin, regarding this issue. The issue seems to be abating as GPL staff members learn the actual names of the offending patrons and periodic visits by the Groton Police have occurred. During half days, a staff member has been deployed to the lobby to greet patrons of this age group which has also helped curb offending behaviors.

Unfinished Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 4, 11, 19, and 20, 2022 Meetings

- Completed, see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings

- All action items reviewed.

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

- All calendar items reviewed.

Standing Committee & Liaison Reports:

Budget & Finance

Report on Trust Commissioners Meeting

- The meeting was collegial and productive. Our request for \$70,000 for materials for FY2024 was granted.

Town Manager Budget Guidelines, Timeline, and Library Budget Thus Far for FY 2024

- The Town Manager is looking for a balanced budget and requests the various departments help him in that endeavor. The draft budget Vanessa shared was very conservative. The Town Manager supports the creation of the position of an Assistant Library Director from the Technology Services Librarian position after Jeff Pike retires and our FY24 budget will include the salary for such a position.

Library Credit Card Options

- Currently some staff use personal credit card to make purchases for the GPL and are then

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reimbursed, which is not ideal. The Town Accountant has issued town purchase cards to other departments and is willing to issue one to the GPL. Vanessa thinks such a card would reduce if not replace the use of personal credit cards for library business, which would be great. See vote above.

Review Q1 Reports

- Vanessa reported that spending is on track.

Request for Specialty Library Equipment

- Vanessa outlined the utility of barcode duplicators to meet state delivery standards for handling interlibrary loans to and from other libraries, as well as the State mandate to count the usage of GPL internet and pedestrian traffic. The Trustees thought that LIG/MEG (state aid) funds would be the perfect source to fund the acquisition of these items.

Request for Dec. Staff Training Funding

- Vanessa would like to bring in a speaker on the role of libraries in protecting Intellectual freedom and how libraries can help maintain their long tradition of fostering such pursuits. Vanessa requested up to \$500 to cover the cost of training and snacks for the event. The Trustees approved the request, per the vote above.

Budget & Finance Updates

- Review of bills since last meeting

Building & Equipment

Report on Capital Planning Committee Meeting

- The Capital Plan the GPL submitted to the town was accepted as reasonable. The Capital Planning Committee had minimal questions about our requests and seemed amenable to our proposal.

Building & Equipment Updates

- At a recent Town department head meeting, it became apparent that the GPL is one of the few (only?) town buildings that does not have a backup generator on site. As we are designated a heating and cooling refuge for the town, the Trustees agreed that we should investigate having a generator installed. See action items above.
- RISE Engineering is ready to start installing energy efficient bulbs and appliances, with the aim of reducing electric consumption by half. They will begin to install the new material on November 21.
- There has not been a meeting on the fate of Broadmeadow Rd. engineering assessment report yet. The Town Manager will let the Trustees know when the public presentation on their findings and recommendation will be held.

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Policy, Personnel, & Planning

YA Librarian Special Request

- Vanessa outlined the reasons the YA librarian could use part-time, dedicated help. The Trustees thought a pilot program, funded by the Chris Christie bequest, with metrics to measure the value of a YA teen assistant, would be a good idea. See vote summary.

Proposed Assistant Director Job Description and Salary Survey

- Vanessa has been in discussion with the Town Manager and the Human Resources Director about creating an Assistant Library Director position from the Technology Services Librarian position after Jeff Pike retires. Both have agreed, in principal, to the position and it will be part of our budget for FY 2024. PPP is to meet with Vanessa to help her with finalizing the job description. The Human Resources Director will grade it for appropriate salary in Town. The proposed salary band width seems to be in line with what other towns our size are paying their Assistant Library Directors.

Director Contract

- PPP and Vanessa need to review her contract and make adjustments as needed in before her contract expires on June 30, 2023.

Hiring & PPP Updates:

- Vanessa's 10 year anniversary is December 3 and Deborah Fleishman's 5 year anniversary was just reached. The Trustees congratulated them on their tenure and successes here at the GPL.

Other Reports:

GPL Endowment: Annual Report from Chair; Report on Annual Meeting; Newsletter; Taxes

- The GPL Endowment Trust held its Annual Meeting on October 17 and has submitted its annual report to the GPL Trustees. The Endowment balance is down this year due to the performance of equities markets in general. The Endowment has sent out its annual newsletter, highlighting the departure of David Riggert, past Treasurer, and Connie Keeran, past Chair of the Endowment. Targeted appeals letters have also been sent.

Art & Artifacts: Town Property Insurance List

- Vanessa reviewed and shared the library property list for the Town's insurance purposes

Social Media Report & Other News:

- None, which is good!

Other Business

- None

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Library Director:

- Library Updates: Vanessa updated news of the inner workings of the GPL throughout the meeting.
- Town Updates: No public meetings regarding the engineers' assessment for addressing ongoing flooding issues on Broadmeadow Road have been set yet.

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above

Review Upcoming Meetings & Events.

Adjournment at 9:02 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Zeiler,
Secretary pro tem