

Approved April 20, 2021

Revised 2/18 w/ comments from DD and MM.

BLAKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING

6:30 PM, February 16, 2021

On Zoom

Trustees present: Shirley Montage, Rob Rinaldi, Carl Demrow, Dina Dubois, Julia Anderson, Nick Kramer, Kathryn Price. Not attending: Sara Kingsbury.

Staff: Miranda Miller, Interim Director; Kimberly Hotelling, Assistant Librarian

Shirley brought the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 1 meeting was made by Julia and seconded by Rob. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The Treasurer's report came next. The finance committee has met and proposes paying down the line of credit by using funds in the capital project savings account (\$25K) and some of the investment funds (about \$16K). Those accounts would be replenished with the savings bonds coming due in the 2023. Shirley presented this proposal and we had a brief discussion. The advantage is eliminating interest payments and their effect on the operating budget. Dina said it seems like a good way to go about paying off the line of credit. Dina asked how our operating fund is replenished and Shirley said that \$5K comes out of the investment fund each quarter and goes directly to our operating expenses.

Carl moved we approve the finance committee's proposal on paying down the line of credit and Rob seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Shirley said we got a good response for the annual appeal and that we are very fortunate to have some strong donors who are helping us through.

Dina noted that it seemed like the electrical bill was high. Miranda explained that the heat pumps work best if they are running, but Shirley noted we have had a cold month. We discussed the operating temp of the library and how we might save some of the costs by turning thermostats down or programming them to be down when the building is not open. Shirley suggested that the Building and Grounds committee look at this issue and Rob agreed. Shirley noted that we used to spend \$2,500 a year on heating oil alone and still had electrical bills.

Nick moved to approve the Treasurer's report, Julia seconded. The Treasurer's report was adopted.

Buildings and grounds was next. Carl talked a little bit about the two leaks on the roof and what he saw in the attic and on the roof with Peter Keene.

Rob moved to approve up to \$7,500 to have the roof fixed around the old chimney, the leaking vent, and the unroofed new air lock. Kathryn seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Nick gave a summary of the personnel committee's activities. The committee approved a 5% increase for the assistant director retroactive to the beginning of the year. The director search committee has been hard at work for the past month or so and Nick thanked Greg Renner and Tania Aebi for serving on the committee. The advertising of the position brought about a deep and competitive applicant pool. The search committee has done first round eliminations, some interviews, and is moving toward coming to a recommendation to bring to the board in the near future. Rob noted that we advertised on 10 local list serves and also on the state library web site, and that over a dozen applicants responded.

Rob talked a bit about what the committee's charge was and Dina had some questions about the process. Nick said that it is a bit too soon for this conversation since they haven't finished their work yet. Shirley talked a bit about how this process has been handled in the past, but she noted that the committee is on track and there will be a special board meeting when the committee is ready with their recommendation. Dina reiterated that she would like to have finalists present to the board, and preferably two finalists. Rob said he expects that the committee will bring one candidate to the board and Shirley said that in the past candidates have not presented to the board or the public. Shirley also noted that we have entrusted this committee with doing a thorough job and others noted that they do indeed trust the committee and their work.

Kathryn moved to approve the personnel committee report and Rob seconded. The report was approved.

Next up was the directors report. Miranda spoke about about our numbers and the covid protocols. Collection wise, Miranda spoke a bit about the need for balance . She also said she'd been attending the certification classes and a lot of what is talked about is balance in both collections and programming. She said she is aware that some people may feel that the library is pushing an agenda due to recent programming and additions to the collection, but she said that is a constant issue for many libraries and she wanted to be sure we are aware that she is taking into account all opinions.

The book discussion series has been very popular and successful. April is fair housing month and there will be a book discussion around the issue of fair housing in April. Miranda has been in touch with the Vermont Humanities Council around grants and she is confident that BML will be able to obtain more grants from VHC. Their grants are program based but they have a variety of short and long term project grants to fit a variety of humanities related programs.

The poetry hour is coming back in honor of Jack Gundy. Timing has not yet been nailed down, but Miranda is working with Sally and Josie on that. Story hour is also back, but on zoom. This past week had two kids. Those numbers may come up but it might also be possible to make the

story hour presentation available at any time as a recording so a family can access it when possible. They are hoping to get Vershire writer Makenna Goodman to talk about her book in March. Miranda noted Makenna has gotten rave reviews at libraries around the state.

Kimberly is accepting applications for “Reflections on 2020”, the next exhibit at the library.

The craft kits helped to generate 46 valentines for meals on wheels participants in Corinth and Topsham.

BML was one of 200 recipients of the “Rural Libraries Transforming Communities” grants. The grant was for outreach and soliciting thoughts from the community about where the library should be headed, and this will dovetail well with our next strategic plan. Miranda also mentioned that she has applied for a Rural VT Connectivity Grant to create a laptop lending library.

Julia moved to approve the director’s report and Carl seconded.

Board training was up next, Carl said he would get in touch with Laura Keenan to get a sense of her schedule.

Next was the annual meeting and Julia suggested we postpone until the summer so we can have it in person. Dina asked what the purpose of the annual meeting was and Miranda talked a bit about that, including drumming up volunteers and generating enthusiasm for upcoming programs. Trustees are elected at the annual meeting generally. We then had some discussion of the the association vs. friends groups and Miranda suggested that there may be some opportunity to work that confusion out as part of the strategic planning process.

Next up was the budget. Dina asked what last year’s COVID recovery grant was used for and Shirley said it went to salaries.

Shirley went through a few of the budget lines and explained the discrepancies. Dina asked about the phone lines and why they are required. Topsham Telephone is donating the three addition lines we need with the elevator.

Carl moved to approve the budget and Rob seconded. The budget passed unanimously.

The next trustees meeting will be April 20 at 6:30 PM.

Shirley adjourned the meeting at 8:05.

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Demrow, Secretary

