

Approved October 19, 2021

BLAKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING

6:30pm, August 17, 2021

Trustees present: Shirley Montagne, Tania Aebi, Rob Rinaldi, Julia Anderson, Dina Dubois, Kathryn Price, Carl Demrow arrived at 6:45. Not attending: Nick Kramer. Staff: Jen Spanier, Kimberly Hotelling.

Meeting begins at 6:30pm sharp. Tania will do minutes until Carl gets in.

Rob makes a motion to approve the June 15 meeting minutes, everyone approves

Treasurer's report: Because of Quickbooks glitch, Shirley will have to present it later. No questions.

Director's report: Jen reviewed it, highlighting the statistics. Numbers down from 2019, but steadily increasing. More traffic. Lots of program attendance, much of the increase had to do with camps. Any questions?

Dina asked about the categories, astonished by the amount of books and downloadables circulated. She is also surprised by how many people come in. Shirley reminded her all director's reports show these numbers. Jen mentioned an annual report to the state with a lot of this same info is due in November. Dina suggested that off-site events that the library co-sponsors, like the recent ones at town hall, have a bit more tie in with a few words about the library, books on the topic for folks to check out, info about the library like a bookmark with contact info and hours or the opportunity to sign up for a library "card". Dina noted our strategic plan calls for us to reach beyond the usual suspects who already use the library.

Of the folks who make up these numbers, Dina asks, do some come 5 times in a month, or is it always new people? Jen explains the circulation desk volunteers keep tallies of everyone who comes in. Though we don't name them, there are certainly repeats.

Do we have a goal to have more people, Dina asks? Had no idea we already had so many patrons, how many more can we handle?

Jen agrees it has gotten busy, that the library has seen several Saturday mornings with lots and lots of new people. Kimberly adds that she feels it is a pretty well-frequented library.

Shirley recalls a gentleman at community forum saying BML is the best library in the whole world.

Jen mentions they've had to put a temporary hold on acquiring books from Junior Library Guild. We are running out of money and space for all the books. So, orders are paused until January. Will be getting some funds from ARPA grant to add to collection. Also, she says, the summer reading programs were very well attended.

Shirley points out how wonderful the big tent has been. She loves having that outdoor space.

Dina says she loves the Meadow Meeting House and how a reading will be held there, collaboratively with another local organization. How does bringing people there work, she asks, when we're trying to get more people in to library? Jen says BML's role was primarily to help advertise, that nothing was really happening together with other organizations. Kathryn added that posters for Meadow Meeting House event have gone out to local books stores—then her connection broke up.

Kimberly explained that we also have programs at Town Hall, where we can have more space. Like for Monarch program, that had a slide presentation. Or, with bird presentations. Particularly with Covid, it is good to have more space so people don't have to sit too close together. She says partnering with Conservation Commission on these events was a good way to bring in new people. Dina wonders how collaborating with other organizations helps the library by bringing in more people. She had no idea BML was such a popular library, found the existing numbers amazing. Jen says all this gets the word out. Rob moved to accept Director's Report, seconded by Kathryn. Vote was unanimous.

Committee Reports and Fundraising:

Shirley said she needs to get off the fundraising committee, that the committee needs a chair and a robust group of volunteers to rebuild and take the reins. Lisa Locke, Ann Peck, Anne McKinsey, Jude Tharinger, and Suzie Strainchamps were all noted as possibilities, or people who have served in the past that can offer guidance.

Shirley also noted that we need to get the 25-30 boxes of books in Carole Freemans' barn out of there. There was some discussion about what needs to be thrown away or kept. Recycled books can go to St. Johnsbury. But, where to store them? Carl and Rob volunteered to sort through books and whittle down the collection. Kathryn offered to help go through the boxes. Shirley thinks Susie and Lisa might provide some guidelines for what to keep, or not. There are also lots of new books stored in Jen's house. She wants to see if she can send them to Amazon and get some credit. Rob would be happy to have books redirected. He suggests library could buy an enclosed trailer that can be parked anywhere and brought to library when necessary. Something to consider as an idea. Everyone thinks a mobile storage unit is a good idea. Shirley wants everyone to make sure to always let Carol F know when anyone goes to barn. Rob will go look the situation over and see what can happen next.

Strategic Planning Committee:

Shirley asked trustees to get in touch with members of Strategic Planning to offer feedback on the plan draft that was circulated. Jen said she had about 25 responses to the online and paper survey. Dina said that she has been going to Kai's Cones to talk with people about what they want from the library, and she will continue to do that and pass the feedback from those conversations on strategic planning.

New business:

The masking requirement seems to be working well. Jen says no one has complained and everyone seems to be cooperating. Dina asked about the process for doing the vote about mask requirement over email. Julia reported the personnel committee had asked for the issue be brought to the board. Due to the fact this was not during a board meeting, only an up or down vote can be held without discussion. Dina then asked to address the board on the issue of vaccinations. Rob asked for an executive session, Carl moved, Kathryn seconded.

We came out of executive session at 7:17

Shirley said that she had been working with Miranda on the financials so the library will be covered for the overages on the camp programs. There has been some concern that the last two weeks of camp were a bit chaotic with the over-enrollment. Carl said that he wished the staff were here for this discussion and that in the future we should have a firm policy around enrollment ceilings. Dina said she thought that it was great that the camp brought more kids into the library.

Tania noted that she and Carl would not be at the October meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully co-written and submitted by Carl Demrow and Tania Aebi