

Approved 6/20/23

BLAKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING

6:30pm, April 18, 2023

At the library and on zoom

Trustees present on zoom: Dina Dubois, Nick Kramer. At the library: Shirley Montagne, Tania Aebi, Rob Rinaldi, Kathryn Price, and Carl Demrow. Also present: Jen Spanier, Library Director; Miranda Moody Miller, Afterschool and Camp Director.

Shirley brought the meeting to order at 6:32 pm

Rob moved to approve the minutes of the February meeting, Tania seconded.

Treasurer's Report:

Shirley presented the 2023 budget. It is tight. We did not match 2021 donation in 2022, but thankfully received a \$10,000 donation, a super nice one time event. Expenses have gone up, while there has not been a concurrent increase in revenue. The Gendrot trust is also bringing in less by about \$4K. Shirley is hoping for a strong garden tour and plant sale. Rob suggested sending out a second appeal letter to those who did not give last year. Shirley said she tends to drop people off the list when they don't donate for three years.

Dina acknowledged the generous \$10,000 gift and how special that is. The donor wants to be anonymous. Nick asked if the annual appeal is pretty standard, and suggested mentioning in a future appeal that we have been pinched by inflation as well. Shirley said she runs her appeal letters past Jen and her daughter who works in fundraising. It highlights special programs, thanks past donors. Shirley said she tries to make it easy to donate in the letter. We had some more repairs this past year. The cleaning folks asked to raise their rate to \$25 an hour.

Jen spoke a bit about collections spending and is looking to do something different with the junior library guild expense. Carl moved to adopt the budget. Rob seconded. The budget was adopted unanimously. Nick noted that we should be keeping a close eye on our expenditures and he wondered where the funds came from that fixed the hole in operating budget deficit. It meant drawing down some of our investment funds but we also have \$50K in savings bonds that need to be cashed in. The Treasurer's report was unanimously accepted. Rob made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report; Carl seconded. Passed unanimously.

Jen gave the director's report, starting with the kids reading program. She is also working on a culling strategy since we are beginning to run out of room once again. She has found some older books in the building that are not getting taken out. We ALMOST got there with the lending laptops, but there seems to be a software problem that has gotten in the way. Rob

suggested the internet switch. Jen said she thought it may be a problem with the wireless router upstairs. Jen may get Topsham Telephone to replace the router.

Edith Wharton book discussion series is underway with increased attendance, up to 20 people at times! There are a lot of clubs going on after school—crafting, chess, board games, dungeons and dragons, etc. The Harry Potter Club is back by popular demand with the second book. There will be a bird walk and a wild garden talk. There has been a youth advisory group meeting with some good feedback. Jen applied for a \$500 non-competitive grant to help implement some of their suggestions. Jen also attended the Vermont Library Director's meeting on April 3rd, and is looking into some robotics programs and how we might do that at BML. She also said Norm Colette gave her a big bag full of oral histories on CD. Jen is looking at grant opportunities to get solar panels and a back up battery in case of a power outage, and she is working with a couple of different providers to get estimates. Kathryn moved to approve the director's report and Nick seconded. Report adopted unanimously.

Rob asked about the status of Carole's barn and the aging books over there. If in three weeks the remaining books haven't been removed, Carl and Rob will get rid of them.

Rob gave a quick B&G update. The drainage project seems to have worked- no water in the basement this spring. Billy did not have the right sized riser for the septic, so they built one out of wood. At some point—this year, most likely—a permanent solution will be found.

Anne Peck has a plan for the garden tour and will begin working on all the promotional materials for that soon. Shirley and Kimberly are going to do the plant sale on Memorial Day weekend. The church will also do a bake sale.

Governance: Shirley made a motion to approve the new policy on use of the library by outside groups. Tania seconded. Policy accepted.

Miranda gave an update on the after school program and a summary of the various activities and program. Averaging about 16 kids per session but a bit less at times with flu and covid. Her report also contained a staffing report and assistant roles for kids. There have been some issues with the high school staff not showing up so she has built in some additional adult capacity. There is day coming up when bus service will not be available, so it is likely after school program that day will be cancelled. We had some questions about demographics of kids in the program and rates of pay for staff. Went through a few other operational issues including cleaning, etc. There will be some additional income for the library, both for time that Kimberly and Jen put in, but also operational support for the building.

We discussed a nominating committee and Carl, Nick, and Jen will be the committee.

Shirley will begin to plan the Association meeting for the summer, she will have a date for that soon.

There was a day when we had no staff and no volunteers and we were not able to open. Jen had covid, Kimberly had a commitment, the regular volunteer was ill. We do the best we can....Nick said we are not the New York Public Library. Jen made an effort to call the usual patrons and let them know we were closed.

Jen would like to consider being open until 8 one night a week. But, she'd like to iron out the details with Kimberly before proposing it to the board.

Carl made a motion to go into executive session and Shirley seconded. We went into executive session at 8:09 PM.

The board came out of executive session and 8:24 and took no action.

The next board meeting will be June 20th.

Carl moved to adjourn and Shirley seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carl Demrow, secretary