APPROVED December 24, 2024
BLAKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
6:30pm, August 20, 2024
At the library

Trustees Present: Shirley Montagne, Kathryn Price, Zoe Tilley Poster, Tania Aebi, Rob Rinaldi, Dina Dubois

Staff present: Jen Spanier

Shirley called the meeting to order at 6:36

No changes or adjustments are made to agenda.

Shirley motions to approve minutes from June 11, 2024 meeting, Katherine seconds. Minutes are approved unanimously.

Treasurers Report:

Correct YTD typo from 6/9/24 to 8/9/24.
Jen notes collections budget has been restored. There is a short discussion about figuring out accurate number for collections so Jen knows how much she has left.

Rob mentions Garden House Tour didn't yield as much as last year, wonders if we will continue with this. Shirley says she will meet with Anne, Jen and Kimberly this fall to discuss. Historically, these things fluctuate over the years, she says, and reassessment is in order. Jen suggests merging this event with fundraising committee efforts instead of having just Anne doing it on her own and with a small team, distributing brochures everywhere. Rob doesn't know if it was advertised enough, if the weather was an impediment, or if doing it too often is the problem. Maybe better to do it every other year? Would more gardens be more enticing?

Rob wants to know more about section titled "Overall Discussion" on agenda. Shirley explains the function of SAM number and how she is re-upping it. It's a once a year hoop to jump through for any entity seeking grant funding. We are doing well this year because of generator grant award and Prophet sale.

Dina wants to know where the Prophet came from. Other trustees recount history, how it showed up in a book sale donation, how Ken, a former library director, recognized it might have some value, how it sat in safe for many years, how Tania took it out and pursued the sale.

Jen asks what is a True Up. Shirley explains we get a grant from a generation of gains and profits from the funds, but they should have sent us more. It's a correction for the Gendrot fund.

Dina wishes there were some way for people to sign up for BML patron card during the Art House Garden tour. Shirley says many tour participants come from out of area.

Rob moves to approve treasurers report, Katherine seconds. Report is approved unanimously.

Director's Report:

BML has had a very busy summer. The CLIF grant paid for pollinator garden and programming around it. Grand finale coming up this Saturday. Games, water balloons, face painting, tie dying (if somebody can help) bubbles. Four Winds Institute offered to run outdoor story hour, lots of hands-on fun. Erica did the boats and goats program, this week she has another outdoor idea. New thing: starting a French class taught by Jim Masland. Tuesdays at 6:30. About seven sign-ups so far. Trying to make it so it's not a bunch of fluent people sitting around and talking, but people who want to practice and get better.

Apparently, DOL is behind with going through grant applications and awarding federal money for capital project fund, but they're still on track to make announcement this summer. And, we are still waiting and hopeful to be recipients of grant to pay for pavilion with solar panels. Need to spend generator money by end of year, have a contractor, but would be better to know first if we get other grant before deciding where to place it.

Rob moves to approve Directors Report, Katherine seconds. Director's Report approved unanimously.

Fundraising Committee Report:

Zoe reminds us plant and bake sale is coming up this Saturday to coincide with grand finale of reading program. Have been talking about doing a collaboration with NES for a Halloween event and Beetlejuice film night. Not sure if it'll make a lot of money, but it'll be a community event and blueprint for future like events. Not necessarily on Halloween, but around then. Rob likes idea about working toward something related to Beetlejuice, could attract people from away and be a significant fundraiser, likes idea of raising money from people who aren't from here.

Online auction is also in pipeline, ideally before holidays, but not committed to making it happen. Will give it a shot and see what happens. Spoke to Thetford Hill Church for ideas and inspiration. Tapping community to donate for auction.

Governance Committee Report:

Jen says we need to think about a new policy regarding people doing First Amendment audits, something that has been happening in public spaces nationwide and in a few VT Public Libraries. People come in to photograph and videotape patrons, hoping to provoke a confrontational reaction, and get some angry people footage to broadcast on their social

medias of choice. How do we want volunteers and staff to handle such a situation, how to be boring and not prevent escalation? People in libraries entitled to privacy. Rob says this happens with “public” libraries. We are not a public library, he says. But we are a private library serving the public.

Should Tania and Jen work on this policy to bring to board? Yes, they will.

Buildings and Grounds report:

Rob has been in touch with Matt Nola, he will take down tree any day now. Will have a group to pick up and move tent, then move it back again. Will not save any of the tree for lumber. Might do something symbolic with it. Idea is nice, but actuality, a pain. Wood chips can be used, offered to community. Also talked with Carole Freeman about maybe asking Lori Buik to allow BML to put solar panels on her property. Trustees discuss solar panel placement, consensus that it’s better on our own pavilion, hope that all works out.

Scheduling and planning Association Meeting:

We will host it on September 24, 6:30—the 121st Association Meeting. We will present the slate of board members and report on state of BML affairs. Association responsible for voting in the board of trustees and talking about the library.

Security Camera. Jen saw a webinar about safety in rural libraries being a concern. She has found evidence of people hanging out in parking lot and leaving around gross garbage. She looked it up and there are some reasonable options. Rob says there are different systems available, easily under $200. Might be a good deterrent. Upload to cloud, or to a computer or phone. Decide on location. People might sleep in parking lot, air lock and pavilion? That’s okay, as long as they respect the property.

New Trustee Recruitment. Who? Thinking about it. Shirley is stepping down from board, staying on as Treasurer. Looking for people who would complement the library, library lovers.

Motion to adjourn. Rob motions, Katherine seconds. Adjourned at 7:55.

Respectfully submitted Tania Aebi