



22 Dalton Road

Trustees of The Mary E. Bartlett Memorial Library

Brentwood, New Hampshire 03833-6000 642-3355
(603)

Tracy Waldron, Chair James Clark, Treasurer Lynn Austin, Secretary Liz McConnell Greg
Coppola Brian Duffy, Alternate Tom Walker, Alternate

DRAFT Meeting Minutes Monday, April 20, 2020

Trustees attending: Tracy Waldron, Jim Clark, Lynn Austin, Jim Clark, Greg Coppola

From the Library: Janice Weirs, Library Director; Heather Lindsay, Asst. Library Director/Youth Librarian

Others: Alternate Trustees Brian Duffy, Tom Walker; Bob Mantegari (BOS liaison)

NOTE: Due to Covid-19 and social distancing precautions, the trustee meeting was held virtually via Jitsi.org, a free open-source video conferencing platform for web & mobile. The public was duly notified in advance and provided with the Jitsi meeting link.

Tracy called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm, welcoming Bob Mantegari to the meeting as a liaison from the Town of Brentwood Board of Selectmen

On a motion from Lynn, with a second by Jim, the minutes of the 3/16/2020 trustee meeting were unanimously passed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Janice submitted her director's report to the trustees in advance of the meeting per usual for review. There were no questions from the trustees.

ACTION: Janice mentioned that she omitted the patron count and would revise the report to include it.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Regarding the treasurer's report, it was noted that the February and March check registers need to be reviewed and approved.

Janice screen shared the February check register for the board to review. On a motion from Lynn, with a second by Jim, the February check register was approved.

Janice screen shared the January-March 2020 profit and loss sheet for the board to review.

Janice screen shared the March check register for the board to review. On a motion from Lynn, with a second by Jim, the March check register was approved.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & COMMENT:

There were no questions or comments.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Reviewing & Updating Trustee By Laws** - Lynn stated that the trustee by laws have not been updated since 2005. She encouraged all trustees to check out the trustee by laws of other NH libraries for topics we should be addressing in ours.

ACTION: Lynn asked that trustees to email her with suggested topics based on their own research efforts; she will compile a list for board discussion at future meetings.

- **COVID 19 Re-opening Procedure** – Janice stated that she joined a NH Library Association (NHLA) task force of library directors who will develop recommendations for libraries to consider when it's time to re-open to the public.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **The way things work** – Tracy stated that, as the board chair, email correspondence needs to be directed only to her. Group email discussions constitute a public meeting, which would require that the public be notified as per the related NH RSA. Tracy asked Bob Mantegari to explain how the BOS handle communications between meetings. Bob confirmed that communication is sent only to the board chair – not to the whole BOS - and that board members who receive emailed information are never to use “reply all” if they have a question or comment they want to make because it constitutes a public meeting as Tracy said. Lynn clarified that, as board secretary, she disseminates the meeting minutes and if board members spot a typo or omission, they may reply solely to her. Trustees should email meeting discussion topic suggestions to Tracy and she will include them in the meeting agenda.

Bob stated that each of the BOS members have a dedicated email address for board business due to right to know laws.

ACTION: Janice to continue to investigate getting MEB email addresses for each of the trustees. In the meantime, trustees are encouraged to set up a dedicated Gmail address for board business.

- **Pandemic Policy** – the need to develop a policy for MEB was discussed at our March meeting;
ACTION: Janice will send the Jaffrey, NH public library's policy for the board to review and discuss at next month's meeting.
- **Library labeled “essential”** – Tracy stated that she received an email question from Greg asking why the library is deemed “essential” to the town. Tracy asked Greg to explain the context for his question. Greg stated that he doesn't think of the library as a “business” and therefore MEB should be considered “non-essential” within the context of Governor Sununu's current directive to close non-essential businesses. Tracy replied that for the past several decades in our annual report to the town we show that we provide essential services to the town and the impact we have on supporting the community both in terms of services and as a resource. She stated that we can't suddenly backtrack on being essential just because of COVID-19.

Lynn stated that the library is a business – we expend and accept money, we have an operating budget, we employ and pay staff, and the primary role of the library trustee board is fiduciary. She said that if we had decided to deem our library services “nonessential” for some reason, that we would have had to furlough and lay off all library staff. Instead, we are keeping everyone working, we are showing evidence of that work weekly, and we are maintaining records and business operations even though the public isn't coming into the building. She stated that Googling “why libraries are essential COVID-19” resulted in a plethora of articles with myriad examples.

Jim commented that the library is an essential business to the town for all the reasons previously stated.

Greg asked why we were not following directives from the NHLA since it's the governing board for libraries throughout the state. Brian replied that the NHLA is not a governing body; they have no oversight over the libraries, they make recommendations for libraries to consider. Lynn explained that each library is different and must decide on their own what their policies are, and more importantly how to continue to serve their community in relevant ways, including during COVID-19. Tracy stated that while the MEB board voted to stop curbside book pick-up for patrons, at the East Kingston Library where she is the Library director, she has continued to take book requests and offer curbside pick-up. She explained that she leaves books in bags with the patron's name on it outside of the library; she doesn't come into physical contact with patrons. Tracy stated

that she works in her library daily in order to keep the business operations moving forward so that she's prepared when this crisis is over. Those were the decisions best for East Kingston.

- **Newsletter subscriptions-trustee participation** – Janice asked that trustees help to amplify the social media messaging efforts she and Heather are posting on Facebook, Instagram, and the website if they are comfortable and able to do so. Janice also asked for trustees to help spread the word about the new weekly e-newsletter she and Heather create that showcases what's happening at the library. She mentioned that everyone on staff contributes to the content in the newsletter in various ways.

ACTION: Trustees to help amplify MEB messaging efforts, if they choose to.

Janice mentioned that the NHLTA is hosting a Virtual Roundtable meeting for trustees and library directors on Friday.

ACTION: Janice to send the board the NHLTA registration link for the Virtual Roundtable being held Friday, April 24. Registration deadline is Thursday, April 23.

- **MEB Capital Improvement Plan** - Janice stated that the town planning board is requesting our capital improvement plan. The completed form is due on June 3rd. Discussion followed regarding three areas of improvement:

- o the outdoor amphitheater
- o electronic entrance doors for improved handicap accessibility
- o indoor accessibility to the Gilbert Gathering room (aka basement function room)

Discussion centered on continuing to explore grant opportunities and using the library's share of town impact fees to help fund these capital improvements. Bob stated that with the new housing development on North Road, impact dollars will be significant but that we have to use them within a certain timeframe, or the money will no longer be available.

ACTION: Bob will ask Karen how much impact fee money is available to MEB

ACTION: Jim, Tracy, Janice and Heather to meet and complete the six-year MEB capital improvement plan form and present it to the MEB trustee board for discussion at the May meeting for discussion.

- **Saltwater Fish and Fish Tank Maintenance** –

ACTION: Janice and Tom to work out a time for Tom to come into the library to clean and maintain the saltwater fish tank to ensure the health of the fish.

- **MEB Staff Pay Increases** – **NOTE:** At 6:57 PM prior to this topic discussion, Greg left the meeting in order to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest due to the discussion topic and the fact his wife Katy is an MEB employee. Heather and Bob left the meeting as well since the board would likely go into non-public discussion under NH RSA Section 91-A:3,II(a).

After their departure, the remaining board members and Janice felt that it was not necessary to go into nonpublic discussion because Janice's specific question was regarding the paperwork process; salary increases were already accounted for and approved in the budget. Jim stated that we manage our payroll and we only need to tell the town each week the number of hours an employee works and the corresponding pay rate.

Jim stated that raises were to go into effect on April 1, 2020. Janice stated that she signs off on each staff's hours each week.

Lynn raised this issue of a situation that occurred a few years ago regarding shocking disparities in how the salary increases were actually allocated among individual staff by the library director at that time. She said that the board had "slacked off" in having the director submit her proposed staff salary increases to the board for approval prior to completing the salary change forms and prior to discussing the new salary with each employee. Lynn stated that Janice was not the director at that time, but that this is what the board is supposed

to do as part of the checks and balances process. Per our MEB Library Trustee By Laws, the director “proposes” the salaries; the board needs to approve them.

Janice stated she shared the proposed staff salary increases with Jim and Tracy in advance. Tracy stated that she didn’t recall seeing that information.

ACTION: Janice to send Tracy the proposed staff salary increases.

ACTION: Janice and Tracy to connect via Jitsi so that Tracy can review the salary increases proposed by Janice, and approve them as long as there are no anomalies or points of concern.

ACTION: Upon Tracy’s approval, Janice will complete pay rate change forms and send them to Karen at the Town Office.

Next meeting: Monday, May 18, 2020 at 6:00 PM. Meeting location is TBD depending on COVID-19 status and social distancing practices.

On a motion by Jim, with a second by Lynn, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Z. Austin

Secretary