

**James Blackstone Memorial Library
Board of Trustees' Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 1, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
Location: Library Auditorium, 758 Main Street**

Trustees (Present): Maryann Amore, Michele Blank, Chad Edgar, Liz Ferguson, Cheryl Kaiden, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Beth Law, Matt Roth, Pat Sanders

Trustees (Absent): Don Gentile, Nancy Goldstein, Ed Prete, Jack Thompson, Jeff Valette, Sue Wharfe

Friends of the Library: Barbara Barrett

Staff: Katy McNicol, Library Director, Kathy Oxsalida, Business Manager, Tina Strell, Development Director

Yale SOM Fellow: Alyson Mathews

Public: none

Beth Law called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Beth took a moment to share some fond memories of occasions with Adam Spilka. In one instance, sitting next to Adam on a sunny day, Beth noticed that Adam's ever present black journal was shooting forth rays of bright sparkling light. Upon closer inspection Beth discovered that Adam's journal was decorated with gemstone stickers which seemed contrary to his typical presentation and they both joked about it. Adam was a great mentor, a patient listener who offered wise counsel, a giver who graciously immersed himself in projects big and small. Beth and the Board agreed that Adam was a true gem and will be dearly missed.

Additions to the Agenda – None

Approval of Minutes—Beth Law presented the minutes of the January 4, 2023 meeting of the Board that were circulated with the materials for this meeting. Pat Sanders made a motion to approve the minutes. Maryann Amore seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director's Report – Katy McNicol circulated her written monthly report prior to the meeting and highlighted some additional items. First, Katy shared the entire staff's deep sadness at the sudden loss of Board President Adam Spilka and thanked the Trustees for their support during this difficult time, noting that he will be deeply missed.

Katy reported that the Branford Historical Society sent a thank you note to the Blackstone expressing their appreciation for the library's permanent gift of furniture and artifacts of historical significance to the town of Branford. An intern from Southern Connecticut State University will begin his library journey at the Blackstone and will work for 10 hours a week. Carly Lemire, Associate Librarian for Youth Services, is leaving and will become Associate Library Director at the North Branford Library. Carly has worked at the Blackstone for 14 years. She is a supportive colleague and has a wonderful way with children.

Friends of the Library –Barbara Barrett reported that the Friends are getting ready for the Spring Sale, which will be held the first two weekends in May. One weekend will be for adults and one weekend will be for children. The Friends received a onetime donation from Hamden of a large number of collector quality books. The Friends may hold a special sale for dealers in the near future. The Friends continue to focus on reducing expenses and generating income.

Treasurer's Report – Janice Kochanowski reported that today's approximate value of the investment account is \$3.589mm. The change in value represents an increase of 116k from the January 4 value of \$3.473mm.

Kathy Oxsalida presented the December variance report. She stated that these are the figures for the first 6 months of the year that are used to develop the budget for next year. The figures continue to show a positive variance due to the Salary and Benefits line. However, percentages have started to shrink as staff vacancies continue to be filled. Other items to note on the income side include; Contributions rose from \$19,000 to \$45,000 due to returns from the Fall Appeal, the Development and Fundraising line has a negative variance due to a budgeted fall fundraiser that was not held, and the large expense variance in the Professional Fees line will be closed when fees for the 2022 Financial Audit are submitted after approval by the Board at today's meeting.

Committee Reports—

Finance Committee—Janice Kochanowski reported that the Committee met on January 26 and that work on the budget has begun. After meeting with Jamie Cosgrove and Jim Finch on February 27 the Committee will be presenting the budget to the Board at the March meeting.

Included in the materials circulated prior to this meeting were the Communications Letter from Blackstone auditors Bailey Scarano and the FY 2022 Financial Statements. The Finance Committee voted to recommend that the Board approve the Financial Audit. Maryann Amore made a motion to approve the 2022 2022 Financial Audit. Mary-Rita Killelea seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee requested funds to purchase lawn furniture, including 3 sets of tables and chairs, 4 Adirondack chairs and 6 umbrellas for the patio. Q Gardens' price is \$6100 and they are the supplier for the town. Funds will come from the DeLaurentis Gift. The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve the purchase of the lawn and patio furniture. Matt Roth moved that the Board approve the purchase of lawn and patio furniture. Cheryl Kaiden seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Development Committee – Matt Roth reported that the Committee continues to focus on the mini golf event to be held on April 29-30. The event is off to a good start with 11 hole sponsors committed and 3 auction donations so far. Tina Strell reported that the Fall Appeal met budget and exceeded last year's amount.

Governance Committee - Pat Sanders reported that the committee is developing a one- page task sheet that sets forth the duties and responsibilities for each standing committee. A sheet for the Governance Committee has already been developed and she will be contacting committee chairs soon in this regard.

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Liz Ferguson reported that the Buildings and Grounds Committee is moving forward on a number of projects. New railings have been completed and the new memorial bench has been fabricated and is awaiting installation. Shelley Brothers will refurbish the other granite

benches on the grounds. The feasibility study on balcony enclosure options is going forward and a purchase order for the \$9300 cost is being prepared, to be funded by an existing balance in the Town's renovation project fund. The Committee is accepting quotes for a sound system, which will be funded by a special gift from the Friends of the Blackstone Library.

The Committee accepted the proposal of artist Brooke Sheldon to paint the new mural in the Children's room. 17 proposals were submitted and this proposal was the clear staff choice. The Buildings and Grounds Committee recommended that the Board accept the Brooke Sheldon proposal. Liz Ferguson made a motion to accept the Brooke Sheldon proposal. Janice Kochanowski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Adjournment –Pat Sanders made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Maryann Amore seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:42pm

Next regular meeting— March 1, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Mary-Rita Killelea
Secretary

Note: minutes are provisional until approved by the Board of Trustees.