

James Blackstone Memorial Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 13, 2022 6:00 p.m.
Location: Branford Police Department, 33 Laurel Street

The meeting was conducted as a “hybrid”; participants were able to attend in person or remotely via Zoom teleconference.

Trustees (Present): Maryann Amore, Chad Edgar, Don Gentile, Nancy Goldstein, Cheryl Kaiden, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Beth Law, Matt Roth, Pat Sanders, Adam Spilka, Jack Thompson, Sue Wharfe

Trustees (Absent): Michelle Blank, Liz Ferguson, Ed Prete, Jeff Vailette

Friends of the Library: Barbara Barrett

Staff: Katy McNicol, Library Director; Kathy Oxsalida, Business Manager

Public: Patricia Murphy

Adam Spilka called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Governance Committee – Pat Sanders referred to Nancy Goldstein’s c.v. that had been circulated with the materials for this meeting, described her background, and asked for a motion to appoint Nancy Goldstein for a three year term as a Trustee on the Board of the Blackstone Library. Maryann Amore so moved. Janice Kochanowski seconded the motion. The motion carried. Pat then invited Nancy Goldstein to join the meeting and say a few words of introduction. Nancy highlighted that she is a lifelong resident of Branford and an avid patron and supporter of the Blackstone Library. She has a professional background in physical therapy and has worked in the field for over 30 years. The Board warmly welcomed Nancy.

Additions to the Agenda – none

President’s Remarks – Adam Spilka noted that it was his first meeting as President. He will work to permit Trustees to concentrate on substance – making informed decisions – and keep procedural obstacles to a minimum. He stressed that all voices and ideas will be welcome, and invited views of how processes can be improved. On behalf of the Board, he presented Beth Law with a bottle of Champagne in thanks for her excellent leadership over the past two years.

Approval of Minutes— Adam Spilka presented the minutes of the June 1, 2022 meeting of the Board that were circulated with the materials for this meeting. Cheryl Kaiden made a motion to approve the minutes. Jack Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director’s Report – Katy McNicol circulated a written report prior to the meeting. She highlighted some items from that report. The 125th Anniversary Birthday Bash, held on the grounds under bright blue skies, was a huge success, with over 250 people attending throughout the day. Katy thanked Trustee Michelle Blank who chaired the event and the staff, trustees, Friends, volunteers and all the participants, including Jamie Cosgrove, Bill O’Brien, the Town of Branford, Ashley’s, Hornet’s Nest, Covergirl and Timothy Blackstone for their contributions toward making this event so successful. Jared

Torello has joined the Blackstone Circulation staff. The Strategic Plan team is drafting write-ups for each of the eight initiatives. At their Annual Meeting the Friends announced a special gift of \$20,000 to the library.

Katy expressed the library's deep appreciation for all the Friends do to support the Blackstone.

Friends of the Library – Adam Spilka welcomed Barbara Barrett as the new President of the Friends. Barbara has a corporate background and worked at AT&T for 35 years. For the past 7-1/2 years she has worked part-time as a Circulation Assistant at the Blackstone. Barbara set forth her two goals for the Friends. First, since membership has decreased over the years from 600 members to 250 members, she hopes to increase membership and she extended an invitation to Trustees to join the Friends, volunteer at their events and attend an Open House. Second, Barbara and the Friends plan to partner with Katy and the Blackstone to develop new programs and events.

Treasurer's Report – Janice Kochanowski reported that today's approximate value of the investment account is \$3,477,000 which reflects a decrease of \$168,000 from the June 1 value of \$3,645,000. Kathy Oxsalida presented the May variance report. She noted that it was consistent with prior months and stated that positive changes will be coming in June with receipt of additional revenues from the mini-golf and shredding fundraising events.

Committee Reports—

Finance Committee—Janice Kochanowski reported that the Finance Committee met on July 7 and addressed three matters.

New Webster Bank Accounts: The Committee recommended that the library move its banking relationship from Wells Fargo Bank to Webster Bank, including accounts for the restricted LOEB Lecture Fund and the Hughes Fund. She noted that Webster Bank supports community activities and is also very convenient to the library. Janice noted that the resolutions that had been circulated with the materials for this meeting (and attached as Exhibit A) are intended to authorize these changes and were recommended by the Committee. She asked for a motion to adopt such resolutions. Maryann Amore so moved. Pat Sanders seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Friends of the Blackstone Library Gift: The Committee discussed the Friends' gift of \$20,000 to the library. The gift contains two restrictions; \$5,000 for current best sellers and \$15,000 for a project to be reviewed and approved by the Friends. Katy will meet with the Friends to obtain more information regarding the restrictions and then the Finance Committee will discuss the gift in more detail and report to the Board.

DeLaurentis Bequest: The Committee and Katy discussed the existing list of potential uses for the remaining bequest value of \$275,000. Katy will consider adjustments to the list and work with the Committee before presenting formal recommendations to the Board. The Committee also discussed ensuring that the conversion of the upstairs balcony into a meeting room would be in keeping with the new strategic plan. In addition, because of changes to the State Grant process the library is unable to apply for state funds for this project until the fall of 2023.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for September 1.

Development Committee – Katy McNicol reported that the Spring Appeal was very successful, raising \$8,981, and the combined results of the Spring and Fall appeals was \$57,000. The Shred-A-thon raised \$951 and the Mini-Golf event results totaled between \$14,000 and \$15,000. The position of part time

Development Associate has been posted. Katy has already started receiving responses and will begin interviewing in August. Matt Roth noted that the Development Committee will meet in September to begin planning for next year.

Strategic Planning Committee – Katy McNicol reported that Michelle Blank and her team of library staff are competing write-ups for the eight strategic plan initiatives. These write-ups will be compiled into a draft framework document which will be presented to the Board in September. Suggestions were made that Michelle and her staff hold an informal working session for the Board to familiarize them with the new strategic plan.

125th Anniversary Committee – Katy McNicol recognized Michelle Blank individually for all her work in organizing the 125th Anniversary Birthday Bash and thanked Michelle, her committee, staff, and all involved in making the event so successful. The board discussed using the library grounds for future events.

Collection Development Policy Amendment – Katy McNicol described how libraries across the country are facing two kinds of book choice challenges from patrons: those who object to an item in the library's collection, and those who want the library to acquire an item that might be controversial. She described two recent challenges from Blackstone patrons. Most libraries, including the Blackstone, have established a process to use when such challenges arise. This formal challenge process is initiated by the patron filling out a form. The form is given to the Library Director who forms a committee to research the issue and make a decision. The patron is informed of the decision and may appeal to the Board. Katy proposed that the Blackstone Collection Development Policy be amended to address these concerns by adding a new Appendix B, which underscores the rights of children and the responsibilities of their guardians. The Board discussed whether the existing Appendix E should be split into two separate forms. Adam asked for a motion to approve the Policy in the form circulated with the materials for this meeting (which included the new appendix) and requesting that Katy do some additional work and come back to the Board with a view about splitting Appendix E into two forms. Maryann Amore made the motion; Janice Kochanowski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Adjournment – Maryann Amore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Goldstein seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Next regular meeting— September 7, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Mary-Rita Killelea
Secretary

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

Exhibit A to Minutes of July 13, 2022 Meeting

RESOLVED, that each of the President, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer and the Director (each, an "Authorized Signatory") of the James Blackstone Memorial Library (the "Library") is hereby individually authorized on behalf of the Library (a) to open, maintain and close savings, checking and other bank accounts, (b) to act individually as a signatory of each account, and (c) to take any and all actions necessary or appropriate in connection with the foregoing; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that one or more Authorized Signatories will cause the Library to open one or more accounts at Webster Bank, and to close bank accounts at other banks and cause funds to be transferred to Webster Bank accounts, all in consultation with the Library's Business Manager.