

**James Blackstone Memorial Library**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, March 2, 2022**

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

**Trustees (Present):** Maryann Amore, Michelle Blank, Cheryl Kaiden, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Beth Law, Heather Nolin, Ed Prete, Pat Sanders, Adam Spilka, Jack Thompson, Susan Wharfe

**Trustees (Absent):** Norman Dahl, Liz Ferguson, Don Gentile, Matt Roth, Jeff Vailette

**Friends of the Library:** Al Bertoline

**Staff:** Karen Jensen, Library Director, Katy McNicol, Associate Librarian for Development & Outreach, Kathy Oxsalida, Business Manager

**Guests:** Alyson Matthews, Yale SOM Fellow

**Public:** none

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

**Additions to the Agenda – none**

**Welcome to Alyson Matthews –** Karen Jensen welcomed Alyson Matthews, the new Fellow from the Yale School of Management, and introduced her to the Board. Alyson is a graduate of Georgetown University with a major in Economics and Government. She has a professional background in economic analysis and an interest in non-profit organizations. Karen also noted that Alyson was impressed by the financial stability of the Blackstone. Alyson thanked the Board and staff for their warm welcome and said she was looking forward to her association with the Blackstone Library.

- **Approval of Minutes—** Beth Law presented the minutes of the February 2, 2022 meeting of the Board that were circulated with the materials for this meeting. Janice Kochanowski made a motion to approve the minutes. Pat Sanders seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- **Director’s Report –** Karen Jensen circulated a written report prior to the meeting. She highlighted the development of a new Friends logo and thanked the Friends for again sponsoring the Spring Calendar. Karen also noted the extensive and diverse programs offered this Spring. The staff and Trustee Michele Blank continue their work on developing a Strategic Framework and the library is participating with other town buildings in lighting the building in yellow and blue in support of Ukraine.
- **Friends of the Library –** Al Bertoline also acknowledged the Friends’ new logo and reported that they are developing a new brochure that includes information on the history of the Friends and the work they do for the library. Al reminded the Board to save the dates May 14 and 15 for the annual spring book sale.

- **Treasurer's Report** – Janice Kochanowski reported that today's approximate value of the investment account is \$3,544,000. The change in value reflects a decrease of \$94,000 from the February 2, 2022 value of \$3,638,000, reflecting continued volatility in the markets. Kathy Oxsalida reviewed the October variance statement, noting that expenditures are on track with the budget.

- **Committee Reports—**

**Finance Committee**—Janice Kochanowski announced that the Finance Committee met in February and welcomed Matt Roth as a new member. She reported that there is a slight change to the FY 2022-2023 budget to reflect the way the withdrawal from the endowment is calculated. The FY 2022-2023 budget adopted at the February 2, 2022 meeting used the traditional approach, proposing to withdraw 3.25% of the average of the last three year-end balances of the endowment. The approach agreed upon last year applies an annual increment to the prior year's withdrawal, based on the 2.25% inflation factor used in last year's Monte Carlo analysis. This approach is designed to create more predictability, thereby causing less variation in the amount withdrawn from year to year. The FY 2022-2023 amended budget now proposes a withdrawal of \$88,397, \$16,804 less than the original proposal, and an equal increase in the request from Branford for a total of \$1,650,816. The Finance Committee voted to recommend that the Board adopt the amended budget. Adam Spilka moved that the Board adopt the FY 2022-2023 Amended Budget. Cheryl Kaiden seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Development Committee** – Mary-Rita Killelea updated the status of the mini golf event. A \$1,500 event sponsor has been secured along with sponsors for all three of the \$500 holes, 7 out of 15 of the \$300 holes and 4 out of 15 of the \$100 ad spots. Auction items are still needed and Board members were encouraged to reach out to potential hole sponsors and auction donors. Katy McNicol announced that tickets are now on sale online and at the checkout and reference desks. Michelle Blank discussed with the Board the possibility of having a venue to distribute free tickets to those who might not otherwise be able to afford them.

**Governance Committee** – Pat Sanders discussed two Board forms that were revised and distributed for review prior to the meeting. The Donor Development Checklist was created to support Board members in the location and development of new donors and will be incorporated as part of the orientation process. The Board Skills Inventory was updated with the addition of several categories and will be distributed to all members at the annual meeting in June. Pat also noted that the Board Self-Evaluation, which appraises the performance of the Board on a yearly basis, will be distributed in April.

**125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee** – Michelle Blank discussed programming options for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Birthday Bash with the Board. It was decided that the event will be held on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> and will include a storyteller and pizza for children in the morning and a picnic lunch with live music for all on the library grounds in the afternoon. The Blackstone Time Capsule will be sealed for 25 years and Timothy's, an IPA created to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, will be introduced. Katy McNicol reported that banners for the flagpoles have been installed and banners for the front entrance will be installed in a few days. She also noted that submissions for the time capsule are open until the end of April and library artifacts to place in the capsule are now being collected.

**Strategic Planning Committee** – Michelle Blank reported that she continues to meet regularly with the staff and that they are making good progress writing the Strategic Framework.

**Director Search Administration Committee** – Adam Spilka reported that the committee had met on four occasions since the February board meeting. Members of the committee include Beth Law, Pat Sanders and Jack Thompson, with Adam as chair. Representatives of the committee have met with library supervisors for input and have consulted a variety of resources as they move forward with the search. To date, an updated job description has been approved and a position listing is being prepared for posting in professional media including Indeed, CLC and ALA job boards, as well as on Blackstone’s social media. Staff will be notified when the listing is posted and the committee will begin reviewing applications immediately on receipt.

**Public Comment** – Karen Jensen read a letter to the trustees from patron Doug Bottume, who has requested information on the library’s policy and procedures for deciding what is purchased for the materials collection. Karen will respond to the patron on behalf of the trustees.

- Next regular meeting—April 6, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Mary-Rita Killelea

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