

James Blackstone Memorial Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Wednesday, January 8, 2019 6:00 p.m.
Location: Blackstone Library – Conference Room

MINUTES

Trustees (Present): Maryann Amore, Sandra Baldwin, Norman Dahl, Liz Ferguson, Mary-Rita Killelea, Ed Kirk, Beth Law, Rick Mahoney, Heather Nolin, Pat Sanders, and Gina Wells

Trustees (Absent): Adam Spilka, Frank Twohill, Jeff Vailette

Guests: Hatsie Mahoney, Friends of the Blackstone Library Liaison

Staff: Karen Jensen, Library Director, Katy McNicol, Associate Librarian for Development & Outreach

Polly Fitz called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- 1) **Public Comments** – none
- 2) **Additions to the Agenda** –Sandy Baldwin requested that a report from the Governance Committee be added to the agenda.
- 3) **Approval of Minutes (December)** — Rick Mahoney made a motion to approve the December 4, 2019 minutes with the following corrections: Under the director’s report, fourth line “as” should be “was”; Under Capital Campaign Committee, Request from Donor, the line “The policy will be revisited by the board in the future.”; Heather Nolin seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- 4) **Director’s Report** –Karen Jensen had sent her written report in advance of the meeting. She noted that the elevator is back up and running in its improved capacity, the new Youth Services area has been set up and staff has relocated to their designated spaces on the ground floor near the bustling circulation desk. Karen praised the Friends’ annual holiday gift basket sale as “a roaring success,” raising the most money since its inception. Its timing coincided with Branford’s “Sip and Stroll” in the town’s center. Branford’s 375th birthday dinner will be held at Woodwinds from 5:30-9:30, tickets can be purchased through the Branford Recreation Center’s website. A workshop entitled “Purposeful Boards Powerful Fundraising,” will be held at the JCC in Woodbridge on March 27th from 8:30-4; trustees were invited to attend.
- 5) **Friends of the Library Report** - Hatsie Mahoney reported that the Friends of the Blackstone’s Holiday Basket Sale was very successful and raised \$2,800 for the JBML. She indicated that the three raffles held drove revenue up considerably.
- 6) **Treasurer’s Report** – Rick Mahoney reported the financials were sent to trustees in a separate email. He noted that the library is back on track with regard to salary expenses. The fall appeal is in and we received the pledge for \$150,000. These funds are a part of the capital campaign and will not be included in the annual balance to fund the budget. Of note, the library made \$3,000 on the donation in the strong stock market and that will go towards investments. Rick noted that he will present the budget at the February meeting.
- 7) **Committee Reports**—*only as required*

Finance Committee — Rick reported that the 2019 audit, an independent analysis, confirms that “we are a sound financial organization.”

- Rick reported that the final 4-5 pages are Blackstone generated tables, detailing our fundraising for the last five years and how much we have received; the list also tracks our funds for the construction project. Rick noted the importance of listing the history of our actual contributions, what was budgeted, what was contributed, and the difference. Ed Kirk asked why depreciation was noted in donor restrictions; Rick noted FASB’s new system for non-profits eliminated the permanent restriction column. Pat Sanders wondered why we were examining a draft and Rick noted that we needed to approve the audit at tonight’s meeting. Rick made a motion to accept the audit report; MaryAnn Amore seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Rick noted that we have the largest revenue and expense surplus in the library’s history to date. This is in part due to a very successful fall appeal, lower than anticipated health insurance costs, and a part-time staff position that remained unfilled for the duration of the library renovation.

Project Planning Committee—

- **Project Update** – Karen reported that at the last owner’s meeting, there was considerable discussion about the damage to the rear dome over the auditorium stage. Participants unilaterally decided to pause on the project until a solution is designed. Subsequently, the necessary painting, ductwork, and structural work needed to complete the auditorium and balcony conference room will be put on hold until the roof damage is appropriately addressed. Karen noted that Kathy Oxsalida put together a timeline explaining the events leading up to this point; she will share it with trustees. The status of the project is therefore “still in progress.” Karen noted that the auditorium will not be used for programs in the coming months until the roof damage is addressed. There was a discussion regarding various potential solutions for the issue and the trustees’ role in weighing in on the options, in order to ensure the integrity of the building. Assurances were made regarding members of the Special Building Committee’s level of expertise. Both Karen and Polly committed to better communication with trustees and invited all to join the January 23rd Owner/Architect/Contractor meeting with at 1:00 in the library conference room. In addition, Polly may call a special board meeting at a future date to review the architect’s forthcoming design proposal.

Development Committee—

- **Fall Appeal** – Beth Law reported that the appeal raised \$43,387 so far, a significant increase from last year. Katie McNicol cited several reasons for the increase: donors gave more than their past amounts, new donors made contributions, and there were more donors overall. In addition, Katie recently attended an appeal workshop and employed several strategies she learned. She also noted that writing personal notes on the appeal letters appears to be well worth the effort.
- **Mini Golf** – CaddyStacks will make a comeback at the Blackstone on March 28th and 29th. Set-up is from 5PM-9PM on Friday March 27th. All teen volunteers will get a free ticket to participate. Branford families will be invited to participate during the day on Saturday and Sunday. The adult-only event on the evening of Saturday March 28th will feature whiskey and spirits distributors gathered by our generous supporter Branford Wine and Liquor, who also provided this feature at our successful “Spirits Night.” Beth indicated the need for trustees to sell tickets, secure auction items, acquire business sponsors, and recruit volunteers. She noted that the event already has 3 sponsorships for the 18 holes, so 15 more are needed.

- Road Race Proposal** – JB Sports approached the Development Committee about an October 2020 sponsorship opportunity – a 5K and ½ marathon road race entitled “The Foxon Law Stony Creek Brewery 5K and ½ Marathon.” The event was formerly held in Madison, where the Rotary Club was the sponsor. JB Sports has successfully run many ½ marathons in CT. Beth outlined the terms JB Sports presented to the committee. The overall cost is estimated at \$27,000. It was stated that JBML will net approximately \$7,800 on this partnership with JB Sports. JBML’s logo will be prominently displayed, although the race starts at the Stony Creek Brewery. In return, the library is asked to recruit 80 volunteers to man the water stations and provide runners with direction. Beth noted that she and her committee are hoping to bundle sponsorships for both CaddyStacks and the road race to maximize benefit. The funds collected from Blackstone sponsors will go directly to the library. Hattie Mahoney noted the potential difficulty in securing 80 volunteers. There was board discussion about the proposal. Gina Wells asked to table the vote so trustees would have more time to consider it, as the meeting was running over its typical end time. Liz Ferguson noted that the library is being offered an incredible opportunity; she pointed out the inordinate amount of time and effort it would take to organize a road race on this scale by ourselves. She reached out to the manager of Sound Runner, who noted that without the support of JB Sports, in all likelihood it would only attract 200 people. She underscored how the road race will highlight our community’s visibility and become our “signature event” over time. Karen Jensen shared her support for the proposal, noting the tenet “sound body, sound mind” and how the Blackstone’s mission supports the proposal. MaryAnn Amore was praised for her lead-up workshops before last spring’s “Shredding Event,” and similar efforts before the proposed October road race, such as “How to Train for a ½ Marathon,” were enthusiastically endorsed by all. Beth Law made a motion to hold the October 2020 road race in conjunction with JB Sports; Liz Ferguson seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Governance Committee –

- Sandra Baldwin reported that the committee had met and identified some potential candidates for upcoming board openings and officer positions. She noted that the committee may approach board members with requests to serve in leadership positions and she hopes trustees will be willing to step up when needed.

Grand Opening Celebration – Sandra reported that the committee will meet at the end of January with a report to follow at the February board meeting.

8) **Social Media Policy** – *action*

- This item was tabled until the February 5, 2020 meeting.

9) **Next regular meeting** – February 5, 2020– Blackstone Library Conference Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Wells, Secretary