

James Blackstone Memorial Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
Location: Library Auditorium, 758 Main Street

Trustees (Present): Michele Blank, Chad Edgar, Liz Ferguson, Lynette Gannon, Nancy Goldstein, Cheryl Kaiden, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Beth Law, Andy Melnick, Pat Sanders, Jack Thompson, Sue Wharfe, Ed Prete

Trustees (Absent): Jeff Vailette

Friends of the Library: Barbara Barrett

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

Yale SOM Fellow: none

Public: Victoria Verderame

Pat Sanders called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Appointment of new Board Members - Sue Wharfe presented Larry Greenberg to the Board and asked for a motion to appoint Larry as a new Board member to a term ending June 2026. Sue Wharfe so moved. Liz Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion carried. Sue presented Lisa Zwack to the Board and asked for a motion to appoint Lisa as a new Board member to a term ending June 2026. Sue Wharfe so moved. Mary-Rita Killelea seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Pat Sanders welcomed new members Larry Greenberg to the Board and asked them to say a few words of introduction. Larry addressed the Board. Larry and his wife moved to Branford 16 years ago. He retired from a career in investments two years ago. He has a 14-year-old son. Lisa and her husband have lived in Branford for two years. She is the sustainability leader for Kroeger and has two children aged six and nine.

Approval of Minutes — Nancy Goldstein moved to approve the minutes. Janice Kochanowski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director's Report – Katy McNicol shared that she completed the three-part Library HR course offered by ALA. She thanked the Friends and Garden Club for co-sponsoring new spring plantings on the library's front steps. Katy announced that the Children's Play Area Mural was installed on June 9 and shared that sixty guests gathered on July 1 to view and celebrate the beautiful work. Katy attended the Friends of the Library's Annual Meeting and was presented

with a giant check for \$70,000 representing the total amount of support the Friends have given the library over the course of the year, including a special year-end gift. She thanked the Friends for their hard work and very generous support. She also recognized the new sound system installed in the auditorium which is a gift from the Friends in memory of Betsy Klarman. Katy also shared that many new kits have been added to the Library of Things. Katy acknowledged that this will be Ed Prete's last meeting. She thanked him for his support.

Ed Prete – Ed announced that this will be his last meeting as he will not seek re-election after serving on the RTM for 10 years. He thanked the library for their partnership and announced that Victoria Verderame will take his place.

Conflict of Interest – Pat Sanders introduced the annual policy review and form and asked the Board of Trustees to complete and return to Katy as soon as possible.

Friends of the Library –Barbara Barrett reported that the Friends have given gifts totaling \$70,000 to the Blackstone this year and that the Friends are getting ready for their book sale on the green on September 14-17. In this regard they are working hard to raise \$10,000 to cover the cost of the tent. To date 60% of this amount has been raised and they are looking for businesses to volunteer. Rent negotiations are underway for warehouse space at River Run. Due to the upcoming Police Station renovation, the Friends will need to move their space in the Volunteer Services Center (VSC) to another location. They are working with Jamie Cosgrove to find an alternate space.

Treasurer's Report – Janice Kochanowski reported that the current value of the investment account is \$3.791 mm. The change in value reflects an increase of \$80k from the June 7 value of \$3.711mm.

Kathy Oxsalida presented the variance report. She stated that the variance remains positive on the expense side reflecting unfilled positions, retirements and resignations.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee—Janice Kochanowski reported that the Finance Committee met on July 6. They signed a letter of engagement for Bailey Scarano Annual Audit which will begin in August working closely with Kathy Oxsalida. The Finance Committee approved realigning expenses against the budget for repairs and the phone system upgrade. The recommendation is to realign the cost of the phone system upgrade (\$10,606) and the cost for the upgrade of the building's control system (\$6,265) against the budget. Previously these costs would be funded from the town's capital sinking fund. In addition, the Finance Committee approved \$9,279 for the HVAC chiller drive replacement against the budget. The Finance Committee voted to approve upon recommendation from the Building and Grounds Committee applying for a grant for the balcony enclosure project from the state of Connecticut Library Association. The grant would cover \$175,000 of the project if approved. The projected cost is \$350,000, with \$89,700 coming from Capital Campaign and town renovation funds and \$85,300 from the DeLaurentis

bequest. Jack Thompson moved to approve the budget and Nancy Goldstein seconded. The motion carried. Michele Blank moved to approve the certified resolution to proceed and Mary-Rita Killelea seconded. The motion carried.

NEXT Finance Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 31 at 4:00, if necessary.

Building and Grounds – Liz Ferguson updated the Board on the balcony enclosure project to create two meeting rooms from the existing balcony space. The project will require library coordination with both town and state agencies and the committee is putting together a group of experienced volunteers to assist in this endeavor. The next step will involve applying for a state funding grant.

Development Committee – Tina Strell reported that the library received 28,269 votes for the Target Circle and as a result received a check for \$2,021.87. Tina will work with the Development Committee on the October 21 Evening with the Spirits event.

Governance Committee – Sue Wharfe shared that she, Pat Sanders and Chad Edgars will be reaching out to the Trustees to confirm the committees on which they want to participate on for the fiscal year. Lynette Gannon has accepted the position of Development Committee Chair replacing Matt Roth who stepped down from the Board.

Branford Poet Laureate Program – Pat introduced the Branford Poet Laureate proposal developed by Chad Edgar. Nancy Goldstein moved to approve the proposal and Michele Blank seconded. The motion carried.

Policy Revision: Library of Things Policy and Borrowing Agreement – Katy introduced the updated Library of Things Policy and Borrowing Agreement. Jack Thompson moved to approve the policy and Michele Blank seconded. The motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Adjournment – Mary-Rita Killelea made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Goldstein seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Next regular meeting will be held on September 6, 2023. There will be no meeting in August.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Kaiden
Secretary

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