

James Blackstone Memorial Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Wednesday, October 3, 2018, 6 p.m.

Trustees (Present): Maryann Amore, Sandra Baldwin, Matt Hughes , Beth Law, Jan Day, Polly Fitz, Ed Kirk, Rick Mahoney, Robin Sandler, Frank Twohill, Gina Wells, Liz Ferguson, Pat Sanders

Trustees (Absent): Keira Cervoni, Norman Dahl, David Henderson, Jan Day

Staff: Karen Jensen, Director; Katy McNicol, Development and Outreach Associate Librarian

Robin Sandler called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA

1.) Public Comments: none

2.) Additions to the Agenda: none

3.) Approval of Minutes (September) – action: Rick Mahoney moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Polly Fitz. The motion was passed.

4.) Director’s Report: Karen reported that the Friends’ Annual Book Sale was seemingly a success; she does not have the numbers yet. Karen noted she volunteered on Thursday and Friday; both days were busier than the year before. Karen thanked everyone who volunteered for their help with the book sale and for selling raffle tickets. She also noted that the decorated pumpkins were a big hit.

Karen announced that a library trustee training program will be held Friday Nov. 2, 2018 and encouraged board members to sign up to attend. Robin commented on the Director’s Report; circulation is up, the lock picking class and game nights were discussed. Robin noted it’s exciting that the Blackstone offers myriad activities for a broad range of people with different interests: “We are more than books!” Robin praised the library as a meeting place for people of all ages to socialize, be a part of a community, and exchange ideas at any stage in their lives. Karen made an announcement that Katy McNicol, Development and Outreach Associate Librarian, is expecting. Congratulations, Katy! Lastly, Polly Fitz noted the donation of Iwo Jima related material from Vinnie Thomas, one of approximately 200 living Iwo Jima survivors; Karen noted that Mr. Thomas has a lot of primary source materials. The Blackstone is grateful for the donation.

5.) Treasure’s Report: Rick noted the report is only through August and that “everything’s normal and within budget.” Rick noted the auditor was supposed to come back at the end of last week, but she hasn’t; unfortunately, there is no audit report as of yet. However, Rick assured the Board that there were “no issues or alarm bells,” so the report should be essentially the same report received annually. Rick pointed out how well the Blackstone’s investments are performing: “it’s the highest it’s ever been.” Marianne pointed out that donations are higher than projected and Karen informed the board that we received new donations from our annual appeal.

6.) Committee Reports – only as required

Project Planning Committee –

Project Update: Rick, Karen and Robin met with the architect, construction manager, and First Selectman to discuss what to do with the four bids that came back high (site work, millwork, plaster, and dry wall). Borrowing from the library's endowment was considered and deemed not prudent. Additionally, Robin noted that the town appropriated a budget for the renovation budget and the funding from the town may not exceed that amount. Downes Construction came back with the plan to re-bid select bids and Robin noted that "the last bid was at the height of the season," so many contractors were "too busy to submit bids." Robin noted that Downes "tightened [the bids] up," and that "value engineering" was done. The re-bids are due October 16th. Rick, Robin, and Downes all reported to the Board of Finance as well. Mr. MacDonald of Downs informed them that we have confirmed bidding interest from five companies. One of the site work bidders was Fischer Excavating, a local company. Robin was optimistic that the bids would be more reasonable: "We are looking at ways to move forward. By our next meeting, we will know more because the bids will be in."

Development Committee –

"An Evening with the Spirits" Update: Beth Law announced that the event will take place Saturday October 13th at the Blackstone. Beth noted that "we need the full support of the board." She is hoping the event will raise \$7,000 for the operating budget. Unfortunately, the food will not be donated and the library will have to pay for the psychic (unanticipated expenses). Platters of food will be ordered. Beth acknowledged the help of an enthusiastic community volunteers –James Kaiser, who has gone to local businesses and collected 15 silent auction items, and Cindy Dorman, who created the "Test your Own Ability" stations and photo booth area. Beth also thanked Katy McNicol, who created the visually appealing program and signage. Beth noted that there will be spirits tastings, eight different testing stations, a silent auction, raffle tickets sold (\$25 gift cards to local businesses), and psychic readings at the event. She encouraged Board members to sell tickets. Beth also noted that volunteers are needed to coordinate the psychic readings and silent auction. Marianne Amore volunteered to help with this effort. Polly Fitz and Sandra Baldwin offered to help with the silent auction. There will be a piano player at the event, location TBD.

Capital Campaign Committee—

Town-wide Mailing Update: The Blackstone has collected approximately \$19,000 from the mailing and we are still getting donations.

Raffle Ticket Sales Update: 150 raffle tickets have been sold; the goal is to sell 1500 tickets. Karen noted that the Capital Campaign Committee will strategize as to how to meet that goal and what should happen if the goal is not met.

New Haven Community Foundation Grant Update: The Blackstone has applied for the grant and will hear back from them at the end of October. Pat Sanders asked Karen if there are other family foundations we can reach out to; Marianne volunteered to discuss another possible grant that she is aware of with Karen.

Governance Committee – Sandra Baldwin reported that the committee is concerned that David Henderson's term will be up in June. She is hoping the committee will secure a new Trustee to take on the position of Assistant Treasurer and work with the Treasurer, Rick Mahoney, for a year, before Rick's term ends in 2020. Rick noted that the Treasurer doesn't have to be a CPA and that there are no specific requirements for the position that, according to Rick, "is more finance than accounting." Sandra also noted that the president's term will also be up in June. It was announced that there may be up to 15 Trustees on the Board at any given time. Sandra announced that there will be a Governance Committee

meeting on Wednesday October 10th at 5PM in the Lucy Hammer Room. Trustees were encouraged to attend.

7.) 2019 Meeting Dates and Holiday –action: The meeting schedule and holiday/early closings were noted. The July meeting was changed to July 10, the second Wednesday in July, as opposed to the first. Polly Fitz made a motion to approve the meeting dates and holiday/early closing dates as discussed. The motion was seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Hatsie Mahoney from the Friends of the Blackstone Library stopped by the meeting at this time to report on the Friends' Annual Book Sale. Hatsie did not have any numbers to report, they will be available on Saturday September 8th the book sale recap meeting. She did note that the weather wasn't fully cooperative, but that on Friday, they made approximately \$18,000 –a record – and that Saturday was very busy early in the day. The proceeds from the sale benefit the JBML. "Thrift Books" picks up the unsold books. She noted that the Friends can arrange to pick up donations of books for next year's sale. Hatsie reiterated that the mission of the Friends is solely to support the Blackstone. At their upcoming October meeting, she will propose that the Friends make another donation to the Capital Campaign to be used towards the renovation. (The Friends have already donated \$25,000 towards the renovation project, securing naming rights to a conference room.) She also noted that anyone can join the Friends of the Blackstone Library for just \$15.

9.) Next regular meeting – November 7, 2018 – Blackstone Library Auditorium

The meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.