

James Blackstone Memorial Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Wednesday, March 4, 2020 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

Trustees (Present): Maryann Amore, Sandra Baldwin, Norman Dahl, Liz Ferguson, Polly Fitz, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Beth Law, Rick Mahoney, Pat Sanders, Adam Spilka, Frank Twohill, and Gina Wells

Trustees (Absent): Ed Kirk, Heather Nolin, 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: 6:02 PM. She introduced Yale SOM Fellow, Eloise Owens, to the board. Eloise will be working with Karen on the strategic plan as well as grant applications. Karen thanked her for her participation.

- 1) **Public Comments** – none
- 2) **Additions to the Agenda** – Sandra Baldwin requested that the formation of a nominating committee be added to the agenda.
- 3) **Approval of Minutes (February)**—Adam Spilka made a motion to approve the minutes; Rick Mahoney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- 4) **Director’s Report** – Karen Jensen had sent a report in advance; she noted that we have two book carts in the library to sell books for the Friends. Karen mentioned that Jean Polka was highlighted as Branford’s Person of the Week. Jean has created a painting of the library and we sell note cards with its image; she recently worked with the library and Branford 375 to create a frameable map of the town, which she invited Trustees to view. Trustees are invited to a Groundbreaking celebration for the Shore Line Trolley Museum on April 25th and should RSVP to Karen so she can reply collectively. Reference Assistant Jenna Anthony had a poster session accepted for the annual CT Library Association Conference in April for Books & Brews, “not your grandmother’s book club,” which offers two titles to choose from, each with its own discussion group that takes place at the Thimble Island Brewery. Adam Spilka asked how the library was preparing for the potential COVID-19 outbreak. Karen reported that the Town held a meeting for department heads on Monday and the library has hand sanitizer at public desks and disinfecting wipes available in the computer lab. Overall cleaning of frequently touched surfaces has been enhanced and flyers and information from the CDC is posted in the library. The health department is also holding an information session at the library on 3/7. Multiple staff are trained in all aspects of operations. If we needed to close or reduce hours for lack of staffing, we have a notification process, much like when we are closed for a snowstorm. We can also handle some work remotely, and many library resources are also available remotely.
- 5) **Friends of the Library Report** – Hatsie Mahoney reminded the Trustees that the Friends Mini Sale is scheduled for May 16th on the Town Green. The sale will have a spring/summer theme, featuring gardening books and other seasonal titles.
- 6) **Treasurer’s Report** – Adam Spilka presented the January report, noting that a surplus of \$99,000 exists, which is due in part to the overwhelming success of donations, lower salary costs due to circumstantial part-time employment, a winter season with very little snowfall, and some large invoices (such as accountant’s fees, etc.), which have not been received yet. The Finance Committee will be working with staff on the surplus. The volatile market was noted and Adam underscored the Committee’s approach, which is not to react and to pull through it for the long term.

7) **Committee Reports—**

Governance Committee—

- Sandy Baldwin introduced new Trustee, Janice Kochanowski, to the board. Trustees introduced themselves to her in turn. Sandy reminded Trustees that there are four upcoming vacancies which we need to fill. Interviews are being conducted this month.
- Nominating Committee – Sandy made a motion that Polly Fitz, Sandy Baldwin and Pat Sanders be appointed to the committee to nominate Trustees to fill officer positions for the FY 2021 year. Rick Mahoney seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Finance Committee—

- FY 2021 Budget – Adam Spilka reported that he, Rick Mahoney, Karen Jensen and Kathy Oxsalida met with the First Selectman and Town Finance Manager to discuss the library budget request. He indicated that the meeting was positive. Their next meeting is on March 16, 2020 with the Board of Finance and then they will meet with the Education Committee to hear their recommendations for the budget.

Project Planning Committee—

- Update on Roof Repair – The committee is scheduled to meet on March 12 to review a proposal for the work.

Development Committee—

- Mini Golf March 28th & 29th – There are only two holes left to sponsor at \$300 each. The committee would like everyone to get the word out to encourage attendance. Branford Wine and Liquor is sponsoring the adult event Saturday evening; tickets are \$40 each. There are several interesting silent auction items, and the evening will be fun with spirits, food, and golf in the library. Beth noted the need for volunteers to help set up the course on Friday night from 4:30-7:30. Our teen librarian will meet the teen group to help set up as well; teen volunteers will be offered tickets to play mini golf during the day.
- Road Race Update – JB Sports is finalizing the course in partnership with the town; JBML is the non-profit partner for the ½ marathon. Karen has set up a separate bank account for the race to keep finances separate. Katy has submitted edits to the sponsorship brochure and we are waiting for the final version. The date of the race is tentatively set for October 25th.
- Shred It Event – The committee has set the date for June 27th. Four Thursday evenings in June are set aside for programming related to the event, such as estate planning. Maryann Amore is coordinating the programming and welcomes feedback from the Trustees.

- 8) **Formation of Strategic Planning Committee** – The library’s last plan was created in 2012 and it is time to work on a new plan. Polly Fitz and Karen Jensen touched on reasons why a plan is necessary to effectively meet the community’s needs. Eloise will help and her first course of action will be to apply for a \$5,000 grant to hire a consultant to help us with a plan. Gina Wells made a motion to form a Strategic Planning Committee, and Sandy Baldwin seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

- 9) **Next regular meeting—**April 1, 2020—Blackstone Library Conference Room. Rick Mahoney made a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Pat Sanders and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Wells, Secretary