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Education Committee Minutes  
Branford Community House  
February 5, 2024

2024 FEB -6 P 2:55

  
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Representative Keefe, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm

Roll Call

- Representative Brooks - Present
- Representative Greenberg - Not Present
- Representative Keefe - Present
- Representative Laich - Not Present
- Representative Loffredo - Present
- Representative Maresca - Present
- Representative Soomro - Present

Opening statement by Representative Keefe on the purview of the Committee and how the Blackstone and the Committee work together.

New Business

Presentation from Blackstone Library

- Katy McNicol - Director (Primary Presenter)
- Patricia Sanders - Trustee
- Janice Kochanowski - Trustee

History

- The library opened in 1896

Library Operations

- Blackstone has been visited 111,677 times and borrowed 199,446 items.
- Talked about how Blackstone holds positions for members of the RTM and Board of Finance.
- They raised \$72,000 dollars in their annual book fundraiser, before costs, which goes directly back into the library.
- Regulates a 1.9 million dollar budget per year.

Goals For the future

- Promote the community through educational and new experiences and so much more that was set in 2022 and have continued to grow those ideas until today.

Current Activity

- Currently, hold classes that are fun and engaging for all ages.
- They provide online Books, CDs, Courses, and Activities

### Future Focus

- A program that connects people
  - Training their staff
  - Building and upgrading their building
  - Strengthening relations with the town and the community
  - Make it cheaper to access and purchase E-Books
  - Continue to offer the space 63 hours a week 9 months a year and 24/7 online service
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### Questions

Rep. Keefe - What was your favorite part of being Library Director?

Katy McNicol - Loved the updates and new program they are bringing to Blackstone, in addition to a current event that happened and it brought the community together. Library of Things (All different activities that give access to the community to learn and explore).

Rep. Maresca - Why would you want to close the patio, when you just finished the current renovation?

Katy McNicol - Not the patio, we want to close off the balcony so we can add additional meeting rooms for smaller groups to meet in.

Rep. Maresca - Where does wedding money go?

Katy McNicol - All money goes back into the library, people love to take pictures, but the library does not have all the resources to run a wedding, some basic items like chairs, tables, and a small kitchen but not more beyond that.

Rep. Maresca - We see that not many people know about the opportunity to hold events or even take pictures.

Katy McNicol - They are looking to hold events that bring in money like fundraisers and different events.

Rep. Keefe - What keeps you up at night about the library?

Katy McNicol - The current weather has been very damaging to the building they have noticed some items have been worrisome to them.

Rep. Brooks - Is all the maintenance that you undertake, in the house?

Katy McNicol - They work with the town to discuss items that they may need to contact out but they aren't controlled by the town when it comes

Rep. Keefe - Members of the public do you have any comments?

Majority Leader Tracy Everson - Commend them for their work, what is the endowment process between the town and the library?

Katy McNicol - The town and the library worked together, the library took a withdrawal of 4 or 5% and they worked it down to 3% and then the library reduced their rate to 2.5% over the years. Longevity - 31 or 30 and was given different rates of return.

Rep. Brooks - Why wouldn't we want to add to the endowment?

Katy McNicol - The Endowment is invested, they have people who monitor the endowment and they control how much comes out and is used, and how much is left to grow, the money will not run out in the 30 years. Also, some donations are given, some go to the endowment and some go to projects, it depends on where it's left.

Patricia Sanders - They do add money to the endowment, one part goes to the operations need, and the other half goes to growing the investment in the endowment. At a mutually agreed amount cost to the town, we have come a long way with working with the town and made the right mix

Rep. Keefe - Do you know what your investment strategies are? Any divestment issues needed due to geopolitics?

Janice Kochanowski - Our investment is 55% stock and 50 Bonds, they use GYL and Jim (BOF) helps make their plans

Rep Keefe - Are there any Blackstones alive?

Director Katy - Yes, there are still a lot of them alive and in our community.

Rep. Keefe - May I have a motion to adjourn.

Rep. Loffredo - I'll make a motion to adjourn.

Rep. Maresca - I'll second

Rep. Keefe - This meeting is adjourned.