



Fletcher Free Library
LIBRARY BOARD of COMMISSIONERS
Wednesday, November 20, 7:45 am
Minutes

Present: Gale Batsimm, Sally Blanchard-O'Brien, Megan Butterfield, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Emily Copeland, Chol Dhoor, Sam Doherty, Samantha Donalds, Emer Feeney, Patrick Halladay, Amy Mellencamp, Nick Tatakis, Rebecca Thompson, Mona Tolba.

Approval of minutes: from September 18. Emily moved, Becca seconded, approved.

Approval of agenda: Nick moved, Emily seconded, approved.

Public Forum: No public in attendance.

Friends of FFL Report: Jonathan encouraged people to purchase knit hats and other merchandise from the Friends. The Friends received a couple of bequests to the library. The organization moved monies to interest-bearing accounts. The Friends had a stall at the Non-Fiction Comics Festival. Their next book sale will be December 7 and 8 at the library. The annual appeal has been sent out, the Friends encourage Commission participation. The Capital Campaign submitted an EPA grant application to transform the library into a Community Resilient Hub. Capital Campaign Events with authors Barbara McQuade and Robert Putnam, as well as Senator Leahy's Reception, brought people to the library. Chol noted the extraordinary outreach to organizations through the EPA grant and large events.

Director's Report: Emer noted that people came from around the country to attend the annual Non-Fiction Comics Festival the past weekend. The Green Mountain Book Festival was earlier in the month, also a popular event. Senator Leahy's photo exhibit was well attended. The library will soon post the embedded social worker position. FFL is in the process of hiring for in-house security. We hope this will have a positive impact since it will be a consistent staff member people will get to know. The number of recent trespasses has decreased. For staffing, FFL hired two staff from within; these promotions help younger members move up and claim their leadership. Leaving staff will have an exit interview, usually life changes cause people to depart.

The library will be open on Thanksgiving and Christmas. To-go meals will be available beginning Wednesday. On these holidays we see unhoused folks, elders who are alone, families with kids who need extra space--a wide variety of community. The library will soon implement the Rapid Pre-Charge program, a small pilot program with the Community Justice Center. This allows people on the verge of being arrested the opportunity to enter agreements for support services in order to not receive criminal charges. When we are about to trespass someone we'll have the ability to offer the Rapid Pre-charge Program that might help decrease or remove the trespass. The Community Justice Center would immediately send someone over to work with the person. It is like restorative justice but is immediate and will connect people to resources.

Youth Department Update: Megan shared about youth programming and collaborations. Burlington City and Lake Semester is an award-winning semester program where students apply to be part of the program and the city is their campus. They practice self-directed learning and inquiry. Teens are not normally Megan's age group, but she was filled with so much joy and hope working with these young people. The project was Books that Matter. Megan talked to them about censorship, representation, windows and mirrors—that we need both windows into others' experiences and mirrors reflecting our own experience back to us. She shared those books with these students.

Belonging, Truth, Liberation, Inclusion were some of the topics students prioritized. Chose book based on their values. Many teens Megan knew from when they had attended her story times some years ago. Students brought the books to IAA and Sarah Holbrook to read to kindergarten and first grade students. One teen sent an email thanking Megan for the connected space and noted that her remembering him made him feel like he was home. Chol noted that these are profound relationships that define what this library is all about. Patrick commented that Megan also shares her knowledge with UVM early childhood and literacy students and has made an impact there and that these college students know that FFL is a resource for them.

Subcommittee update: We will review policies in the coming months, as well as finalize the strategic plan. We will plan the Winter Breakfast for city council and the commission. We will start with a brief business meeting, then breakfast. Nick is happy to extend invitations to that meeting. We may call subcommittee meetings to move policies ahead. Patrick suggested we may invite a student to speak at the Winter Breakfast.

Amy noted that in the spring we met with the Mayor and it made a difference to bring forward those issues and great to see that we've seen attention to what we've asked for. We are a vital part of the city. Becca noted that the Mayor's team is using library space for meetings as well. Chol inquired how to acknowledge to Mayor that we are feeling those changes. Emily said it might be good to have an annual meeting she attends, perhaps the May meeting. Once security and social worker are hired, commissions will send a letter and invite her to next meeting.

Gale will send out an email asking Commissioners to select a subcommittee: Recruitment, Strategic Plan, or Policies.

Adjournment: Patrick moved, Mona seconded. Approved.

New/Other Business: Next meeting is Wednesday, January 15, 7:45am.