LIBRARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, November 15, 2023

Present: Gale Batsimm, Sally Blanchard-O'Brien, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Emily Copeland, Emer Pond Feeney, Patrick Halladay, Vivian Halladay, Melissa Hutson, Grace Maley, Jessica Nordhaus.

Approval of Minutes: From September 20, Jessica moved, Patrick seconded. Approved.

Amy welcomed our two new youth commissioners: Vivian Halladay and Grace Maley

Approve Agenda: Patrick moved, Sally seconded. Approved.

Public Forum: No public in attendance.

Friends Report The Friends of FFL received a bequest that has some restrictions, it can be used for ADA accessibility. We received the first check. The Friends engaged Ed Adrian as pro bono attorney. The Friends want to put the funds into a CD at least until we can use money for intended purpose. With election season coming up, the Friends decided it would be valuable for mayoral candidates to have forensic tour. Entered into annual appeal season, please participate. Amy noted Friends are backbone of capital campaign.

On another note, Jonathan said that the Water Wheel foundation held flood relief concerts. They have more money than people to take it--any nonprofit affected by flooding can ask for funding. This may support affected libraries, relieving some of the pressure for flood relief from VT Dept. Of Libraries.

Director's Report, presented by Emer Pond Feeney: Restoration and preservation project has been ongoing. First contract extension with architects was passed by City Council. A new staffer, Peter, came on yesterday in the head cataloging position. The Library will be open noon to 4 pm on Thanksgiving, Mary will be admin in building. FFL has unionized staff so most staff don't work that day. We give out coffee and cookies. Meals coming from Farmhouse Group that we are giving out. All kinds of people come that day. We will have volunteers in the building.

Mary is completing the strategic planning survey data. There has been a refresh of the tech center, the expanded desk will allow two people at desk the same time. Looking at having CSL (Community Service Liaisons) at desk. Lighting and treads are close to being finished in the building. NNE Branch furniture is coming in. New COVID test kits are available, must be used by December 20.

Library is continuing to see challenging patron behaviors and is working to strengthen security team and look at other options in city for support. As the weather changes, situation changes. One of the security guards did sustain an injury from a patron, charges were pressed. Mona noted that city must address the complex addiction and unhoused crisis. Vivian noted she wrote an article for BHS newspaper on how students are feeling unsafe. Friends have been helpful in having meals and other ways of supporting staff. Mary is advocating for it to be addressed as a health crisis. Emily asked if as an action step for the Commission could be to address some pointed questions that people have been assigned to ask at forums. It would help to have some data for candidates to absorb about how many incidents, etc. This way the public starts to hear this as well. What is the value we are getting out of the library. Emer noted

the report of the working group of libraries just came out, there were some points about safety and security. Emily said an emergency group needs to be created, we need to call it an emergency in this room. Jessica noted that as a commission we can write a letter asking what the plan is, no need to wait. Let's treat it as an emergency. Patrick said this is the physical building in the city where this crisis might be felt the most. It was decided that a small group consisting of Mary, Emily, Grace, Vivian, Patrick and Mona would meet the week after Thanksgiving to identify points before a letter is drafted by Patrick. A doodle poll should be sent out for morning meeting. Grace noted this is an opportunity for candidates to latch onto something specific in our letter. Jessica noted that there is funding to support this grassroots public health community crisis. Sometimes it involves working with partners that are not obvious partners. We have a new response team at BFD. It takes a bigger coalition to work toward having imbedded social worker. Is UVM involved with Center on Addiction. Melissa noted that response people next door have been good; we're finding that it is because we're open, not much is open but the library on weekends and the only bathrooms. Mona had said COVID monies provided temporary measures, didn't build permanent housing with wraparound supports for them.

Emer wanted to end with wonderful things happening, like the very successful Green Mountain Book Festival at the end of September and the upcoming Non-Fiction Comics Festival, a nationally-recognized event. NFCF still needs volunteers. Computer classes are being offered. The shopping online class is particularly for seniors who have anxiety about buying and selling safely online. Patrick noted a virtual class might be popular as well. PLA digital literacy grant allowed us to try different computer classes. Annual Books for Children Gift Campaign began for the year. NNE patronage is very grateful and it is well used. Place for seniors in the area to go in their daily lives.

Subcommittees:

Trying to make the Bulletin Board Policy clear that it is for local events, not for selling things. Circulation manager makes decision if anything falls into gray area. A vote will be taken again at next meeting as by vote time there was not quorum.

New business: Winter Breakfast will occur at the January 17 meeting. If anyone has a suggested speaker, send name to Mary or Gale.

Meeting Adjourned: Emily, Patrick seconded. Approved.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 17 at 7:45 am Winter Breakfast and brief meeting.