

Groton Free Public Library, Groton, VT

Library Trustee Meeting

Thursday, November 9, 2023

A duly warned meeting of the Library Trustees was held at the Groton Free Public Library on November 9, 2023.

In Attendance:

Trustees Jennie Gaiss, Wayne Knott, Deborah Jurist, and Donna Russo-Savage (remotely); and Library Director Sarah Spira.

The meeting was called to order by Jennie Gaiss at 6:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Deborah Jurist moved approval of the October 12, 2023 minutes. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of the duly warned Special Meeting held on October 31 will be considered for approval at the December meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

Deborah Jurist referred to the updated account information and indicated that expenses for the year to date are approximately as anticipated. Expenses attributable to the 100 Account that have exceeded projections in any one area (e.g., books and digital) will be accommodated elsewhere.

All WiFi equipment and additional wires have been purchased and checks have been written from the Endowment Account. Up to \$1,300 was authorized and \$900 (865 + 75) was spent.

The only remaining large expenditure from the 100 Account is for the online catalog through the Green Mountain Library Consortium. The membership fee is based on patron numbers and usage. The Library budgeted \$350 for this year.

Library Director's Report:

- Sarah Spira expressed appreciation of the Trustees' support in connection with recent incidents. The Library is well on its way to repairing relationships and welcoming all community members.
- The shelf for WiFi equipment was built and installed. The new equipment will be installed within the next week.

- Sarah Spira and Jennie Gaiss met with the Rural Edge Property Manager to discuss security issues. Options discussed included: moving the main entrance to a different door so there is a clear sightline from the circulation desk; installing a mirror and/or camera at the current entrance; improving the locking mechanisms on the doors; and installing a proper fire exit door. The Property Manager is exploring options and costs – as well as who would be responsible for those costs – and will report back. In the meantime, the focus will be on completing easier tasks, such as making it possible to lock the main entrance from the inside and potentially adding motion sensing light fixtures and additional cameras outdoors. Deborah Jurist has confirmed that triggering the fire alarm will alert 911, but that the sprinklers are only activated by heat.
- The Library will be closed November 18-28, 2023. The Trustees agreed that the building can also be closed at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 17.
- The recent NE Kingdom Council on Aging listening session resulted in a good conversation. Sarah Spira intends to arrange for similar sessions for other stakeholders, such as parents of neuro-divergent children.
- Planning is in progress for the Winter Lights event on December 8. There was discussion of a possible wreath-making or other winter craft events.
- Sarah Spira is finalizing collections/materials purchases for the year.
- CLif grant: The grant will support a storytelling program at the end of January and \$2,000 in new books from CLif's curated list to enhance the Library's early literacy collection.
- Capital Improvements Grant from the Department of Libraries: The application for the Treasury fund money (\$16.4M) should be available by December. The application for the \$10M funds specific to small, rural libraries through HUD will be available later. The parameters for the HUD money are more complicated, which is causing the delay in implementation. Libraries that are eligible for a HUD grant do not have to apply for the Treasury grant. More details should be available soon.
- Sarah Spira attended the CLif Rural Library Conference virtually. She's digesting the many ideas discussed during the conference to determine which could be implemented by the Library. She anticipates that the Library would need someone to conduct outreach, etc.
- The Vermont Library Association Board reviewed information about and from more than 50 smaller libraries in Vermont, including Department of Libraries statistics on staffing, hours, and financial resources, as well as information on individual library websites, social media, newsletters, and library trustee minutes. The VLA board selected ten exemplary libraries – including Groton – and has offered each complimentary membership to the VLA and free registration to its conference in April or May.

Deborah Jurist moved that Sarah Spira's title be changed officially to Library Director. Donna Russo-Savage seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Annual Appeal:

Jennie Gaiss is finalizing the narrative portion of the Annual Appeal and will share it electronically with the Trustees for review. Her goal is to deliver it to the printers on Monday November 13 and mail it by the end of that week.

Budget Committee's Revised Proposal:

In response to recent Trustee discussions, Sarah Spira determined that the Library would benefit from hiring an assistant for 12 hours per week – 10 hours of “active duty” and 2 hours for administrative tasks. It would cost roughly \$10,500/year to fund the position at \$15/hour, including payroll taxes, social security, etc.

Sarah Spira and Deborah Jurist, as Treasurer, proposed including this amount as a separate line item on the Library's budget proposal. It would be several months before the budget could be approved and a person could be hired, so the 2024 expense likely would be less than the full amount estimated for the year.

Sarah Spira has compiled data regarding patron numbers, library usage by day and month, staff hours, and volunteer hours and will create charts that demonstrate the growth in these areas during the last couple of years.

Wayne Knott moved approval of the proposed revised budget including the additional line item for an assistant librarian. Jennie Gaiss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Donna Russo-Savage will represent the Trustees at the Selectboard's December 2 budget presentation meeting.

Policy Review Committee – Patron Responsibilities and Code of Conduct:

The Policy Review Committee (Sarah Spira, Jennie Gaiss, and Donna Russo-Savage) met on November 2, and expect to present a single document that rearranges, clarifies, and adds to the existing policies for the Trustees' review in early 2024. In the meantime, they proposed revision to the existing Appendix A to more clearly state the Library's goals regarding the rights and safety of patrons and materials and to explicitly authorize the Library Director to develop a code of conduct that includes potential consequences for failure to adhere to the code. The Committee explained that both the new, proposed policy language and the draft code are based on language the Committee identified in the policies adopted by other libraries. The Trustees will have an opportunity to review the patron responsibility policy again when it considers proposed revisions to the entire set of Library policies in early 2024.

The Trustees discussed the proposed language and reviewed a new copy of Appendix A, reflecting minor changes to the Committee's proposal suggested during the meeting.

Deborah Jurist moved approval of the amendment to Appendix A. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The three Trustees then-present signed and dated the amended policy. The others will do so when they are in town.

Date of Trustees' Meeting:

Several years ago, the Trustees' monthly meeting was moved to the second Thursday of the month so that it did not conflict with the Selectboard meeting. Donna Russo-Savage requested the Trustees to consider moving the regular monthly meeting date. Discussion ensued regarding days that would conflict with other town meetings, the relative merits of evening and daytime meetings, and the wisdom of waiting until January to implement any change.

Donna Russo-Savage moved that the Trustees change the regularly scheduled meetings to the first Thursday of the month, at 6:30 p.m., to begin in January 2024. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Friends:

The Friends will be assisting with the Winter Lights event in early December.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Deborah Jurist and seconded by Wayne Knott. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

The next regular meeting is December 14, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Russo-Savage, Trustee