

## **Groton Free Public Library, Groton, VT**

### **Library Trustee Meeting**

**Thursday, February 1, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.**

The duly warned meeting of the Library Trustees was held at the Groton Free Public Library on February 1, 2024.

#### **In Attendance:**

The Trustees in attendance were Jennie Gaiss, Chair; Dawn Evans (remotely); Deborah Jurist; Wayne Knott; and Donna Russo-Savage. Also in attendance were Becky Masure, the Director of Real Estate Development at Rural Edge, and Library Director Sarah Spira.

Jennie Gaiss called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

#### **Adjustment to the Agenda:**

Jennie Gaiss made a motion to add Becky Masure to the agenda to talk about grant opportunities. Deborah Jurist seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **December Meeting:**

Deborah Jurist made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular December 2023 meeting. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **Capital Projects Grant Opportunity:**

Becky Masure, Sarah Spira, and Jennie Gaiss attended a webinar hosted by the VT Dept of Libraries concerning the application process for grant funding through the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund for Libraries. A recording of the webinar along with links to worksheets and additional information can be viewed at: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/capitalprojectgrants>. The application deadline is March 12, 2024.

There is a total of \$16.4 million available to VT libraries through this grant. The VT Department of Libraries anticipates that each grant will be between \$300,000 and \$1.5 million, to be awarded on a competitive basis.

Grant funding will be provided for capital projects that help ensure public access to the internet. Funds cannot be used for computer equipment or other moveable items. Capital improvements benefiting internet access will be interpreted broadly, however, and can include, for example: ADA-compliant access (interior and/or exterior); air quality improvements; additional space to support social distancing and/or for people to have privacy while accessing the internet (e.g., for telehealth appointments or quiet study); exterior improvements to enable internet use when the library is closed; and essential building repairs.

Because Rural Edge owns the building, the Library would work with it on this and any other grant opportunity involving capital funding. Rural Edge can do most of the work to apply for the

grant, and has two project managers and an inhouse support person with extensive grant-writing experience. The Library would create the account. It would also help identify the work to be covered by a grant (if awarded) and the timing of that work.

The Trustees spoke with Patrick Shattuck last year, before the details of the grant were announced. The parties identified roof replacement and HVAC system upgrades as key capital improvements for potential grant funding – estimated to cost approximately \$150,000 at that time. All parties had expected the individual grants to be much smaller than the amounts recently announced, which will enable the Library and Rural Edge to identify additional capital improvements for potential funding.

The Trustees confirmed the Library's interest in working with Rural Edge to apply for a grant through this program. Sarah Spira and Dawn Evans will be the primary representatives of the Library. Deborah Jurist will provide back-up assistance. Wayne Knott will be available to work on specific projects.

In addition to the roof and HVAC work, Becky Masure, the Trustees, and the Library Director identified the following potential capital projects:

- Exterior siding repair and paint
- Energy recovery units
- Anticipated repairs to the lift, if any
- Upgrades to the older windows
- Improvements to the historic side-entrance, about which the State Fire Marshal has identified concerns
- Better security locks
- Screens and storm windows on the existing porch to create a three-season space
- Improved outdoor space (covered, heated, etc.) for internet access when the Library is closed
- Septic work
- Backup system for power outages
- Security cameras (inside and outside)
- Exterior lighting
- Better and more energy efficient lighting inside the building
- Interior access to basement
- Improved/additional storage
- More outlets in the upstairs space
- Enlarged/fully enclosed second floor space (more meeting space, safer, noise-reducing)
- Private zoom room (education, medical, etc.) – possibly a soundproof cubicle
- Building expansion into the back yard, which would also allow existing spaces to be moved and/or re-imagined
- 24-hour access to an actual room in a building for internet use

- Fenced-in outdoor area in front of the building to provide a safe space for children to play
- Diaper changing station and an ADA guardrail in the upstairs bathroom

Rural Edge will conduct most of the follow-up work to gather information regarding the estimated costs, timing, etc. of these potential projects.

Maximizing existing parking spaces through changes to snowplowing is a property management issue. Becky took pictures to share with others at Rural Edge. There was general agreement that the upper parking lot should not be expanded (to encourage all ingress and non-emergency egress to be through the main door) but that use of the lower parking lot could be improved if people who are using the internet from their car can be encouraged to park in the upper lot (e.g., through increased signage).

The WiFi system is currently as developed as is possible.

In addition to the Treasury grant funding, there is a smaller grant opportunity specifically for small rural libraries – the HUD Public Facilities Preservation Initiative through HUD. HUD has provided Vermont with approximately \$10 million for this program. At least one library in every VT county will receive a grant. Although the application has not yet been released, Becky anticipates that much of the work for the Treasury grant will be transferrable to the HUD application.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

The table (summary of last year's expenses, projections for next year, and income) that will be in the town report accurately reflects what the Trustees requested.

Series I Bonds have both earned extremely good interest.

The current balance of the CD (from which we withdrew funds in the past to purchase I Bonds) is approximately \$ 12,000. One-year CDs are earning 5% interest at Wells River Savings Bank. Deborah Jurist proposes allowing the funds to roll-over at the September renewal date. No Trustee action is needed at this time.

Dividends from the American Funds were approximately \$1,700 in 2023. Deborah proposes no changes to the account at this time.

After withdrawing funds last year from the Library's Money Market (Endowment) Account at Wells River Savings Bank for computers, there is approximately \$48,000 remaining in the account. The account is earning less than 1% in interest. Deborah Jurist made a motion that the Library withdraw \$40,000 from that account and deposit it into a CD at the bank that provides the best interest rate, acknowledging that Wells River is currently offering one-year CDs at 5% interest. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **Annual Appeal Update:**

Donations continue to trickle in, with a current total of \$4,710. Anything received after February 1 will be considered “other contributions” rather than a result of the Annual Appeal.

A new community member has made a recurring monthly donation of \$20.

Deborah Jurist will work with the Library Director to update the mailing list based on returned envelopes.

## **Library Director’s Report:**

### ***Policy Review Committee***

The Committee made a lot of progress in December. Other administrative duties (e.g., Library Annual Report) took precedence in January.

Collections development policy is next on the list.

### ***Update from the Department of Libraries re: Law of Libraries***

*The Law of Public Libraries document, which was a joint publication of the Secretary of State’s office and the Department of Libraries, is no longer being used by the Department and is not recommended for use by libraries moving forward. The document—last updated in 2010—was missing changes to laws affecting libraries (e.g. open meeting law). It also contained some inaccuracies, which we discovered in reviewing the document. For more up to date information, we recommend the following resources:*

*[Resources to Support Trustees’ Work](#) – used for new trustee training, updated in March 2023.*

*[Vermont Statutes and Standards Related to Libraries](#) – presented to the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont, May 2023.*

*These presentations include links directly to statute, and the Resources to Support Trustees’ Work will be updated regularly should Vermont’s Legislature update library-related laws further. Training will also be offered with the most current information available after Town Meeting each year when new trustees are elected and whenever substantial statute changes are made.*

### ***Operations/Administration Position***

Sarah has drafted the job description. She proposes an additional meeting to discuss the logistical next steps in the hiring process, if the measure is approved at Town Meeting. She also proposes that everything is ready to go immediately after the next meeting of the Trustees (which is two days after Town Meeting).

### ***Building/Grounds & Technology***

- The Fire Marshall conducted an inspection on January 11, 2024. Sarah distributed the Marshall's subsequent report, which requires Rural Edge to remedy identified issues by February 24.
- Rural Edge Follow Up (see also grant funding above)
  - Exterior building light
  - Front Door Locking Mechanism/Loft Door Alarm/Historic Door Function
  - Snow Removal parking lot
  - Bathroom upstairs- accessibility railing near toilet

### ***Budget***

Sarah made some essential purchases of supplies as well as a number of books in many age ranges and genres. She is outlining program budgets, and adding additional tracking in the spreadsheets to allocate spending more specifically and be more strategic in spending.

### ***Grants***

- Capital Improvements Grant – see above
- 302 Cares Funding – This entity received grant funds and are giving the Library \$450 for drug prevention programs. Sarah will follow-up to learn the details.
- Summer Programs – The application from the VT Department of Libraries is due in February, but the application does not require lengthy paragraphs. Sarah is hopeful that some partnerships she's developing will work into this (see below).

### ***Volunteers & Staffing***

There has been a lot of support from young people recently.

While Martha and Kirsten were working on repairing the book drop bin, a neighbor offered to repair the leg.

The Trustees greatly appreciate the volunteer efforts of so many members of the community.

### ***Outreach/ Connections***

- Sarah has been in contact with the head of service FAST, and FAST will be at the opioid overdose response training on March 15. She's hopeful there will be 3 or 4 other similar events throughout the year.
- 302 Cares – see above
- BMU – Sarah met BMU's principal and had a tour of the building. She is hopeful that contact has been established and excited to see where it may lead.
- Yankee Kingdom Media – Sarah met with Josh Smith and took tour of the station. Josh is an avid podcast storyteller, which might present opportunities for the library and also fit well with the Historical Society's oral history project.
- Peacham Library – The Director has been very helpful with questions.
- Wells River/ South Ryegate Libraries – Sarah has been in contact to begin preparing for the Ryegate Summer Fair in August.
- Bradford Library – The director there is very helpful.
- Sarah is exploring opportunities re: Solar Eclipse programming. She is compiling a list of programming to be provided by other entities in other locations. She is would also be interested in collaborating with another entity if the opportunity arises.

### ***Marketing***

- Local Media: Bridge, Trendy Times, The World
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram
- Email Newsletter
- On Site Signage
- Front Porch Forum, Groton Area listserv
- Radio – Sarah is hoping to expand into radio as well (see above)

### ***Collection/ Materials***

- MANGO – MANGO is a language learning program supported by Green Mountain Library Consortium. It is free to library users and will be available soon.
- New Clif Books – There are approximately 115 new titles – board books through young adult – on the shelves and already being checked out.

### ***Programs***

- Jan. 31 - Clif storytelling program – 23 people attended
- Feb. 11 - Trapper Education Program, VT Fish & Wildlife, fully booked
- Feb. 22 - NEK Council on Aging
- March 8 - Book Club – hopefully to create “A Community of (Adult) Readers.” The first meeting will be a facilitated discussion of the VT Reads book for 2024, and then a discussion of what to read next.
- March 15 - Opioid Overdose Response Training with Groton FAST

### ***Continuing Education***

Sarah submitted her continuing education progress, and has finished all 150 CEUS.

### ***Other***

Sarah hopes to begin updating the website soon. The Trustees discussed ways that time might be created for her to devote focused, dedicated time to the project.

### **Friends of the Library:**

*“Thank you for supporting our first ever Friends of the Library Holiday Cookie Sale! Thanks to your help, we raised over \$500 for library programs. In addition to the sale during open hours on Friday, we were able to donate gift bags of cookies to the residents of Clark’s Landing, and Sarky’s sold the remaining cookies on Saturday & Sunday in their restaurant. We hope to meet in the next month with Sarah to talk about next opportunities and the ways that we can continue to support GFPL and our community.”*

### **Town Meeting Preparation:**

Treasurer Deborah Jurist feels ready to address questions about the proposed budget. All Trustees are prepared to explain why an additional position is necessary.

The Library will set up a table to be a visible presence on Town Meeting Day. Sarah will talk with Carrie about logistics.

Jennie’s and Donna’s terms end this year.

**Public Comments:** No public members were present.

**Next Meeting:** March 7, 2024 at 6:30.

Dawn Evans made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Wayne Knott. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Russo-Savage, Trustee