

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

**Library Trustee Meeting**

**Thursday, March 7, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.**

The duly warned meeting of the Library Trustees was held at the Groton Free Public Library on March 7, 2024.

**In Attendance:**

The Trustees in attendance were Jennie Gaiss, Chair; Dawn Evans; Deborah Jurist; Wayne Knott; and Donna Russo-Savage. Also in attendance was Sarah Spira, Library Director.

Jennie Gaiss called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Elections:**

Jennie Gaiss and Donna Russo-Savage were elected on Town Meeting Day to three-year terms.

**Minutes:**

Dawn Evans made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2024 regular meeting and the March 2, 2024 Special Meeting. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. All approved.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Deborah Jurist presented updated financial reports for the 100 and 400 accounts showing that the library is on track for the year. The CD (the money remaining after buying the I Bonds) has rolled over; there is approximately \$12,285 in the account and it earns 1% interest. The I Bonds are earning a much higher rate of interest.

**Library Director's Report:**

Deborah Jurist and Sarah Spira drafted procedure sheets for the annual appeal, and put reminders into the Google calendar for September.

Deborah created the first draft of a job description for the Treasurer position. It would be advisable to draft ones for the Chair and Secretary as well.

Sarah drafted a job posting for the Library Assistant, which Deborah helped edit and the full Board reviewed. Sarah will ask Lisa Hart to review the posting to make sure that it conforms to Groton's personnel policies. It will be posted at the Post Office, Front Porch Forum, miscellaneous listservs, and the GFPL newsletter. Depending upon the response, we can decide at a later date whether to publish it in the Bridge Weekly as well. Sarah has created multiple alternate hourly schedules to mesh with the current volunteer schedule. Board discussion

included the length of time to accept applications, the scope of duties, and the interplay between this position and town and library policies.

Sarah thanked Deborah for working on thank you notes to volunteers and others.

Sarah will be taking some time off in the summer, possibly June.

Sarah will use 302 Cares Grant funds for pizza and related costs on Teen Nights to occur once per month, March through June.

Sarah will be finalizing the Summer Program Grant application, which is due on March 17. She's hoping that it will fund an art-related program open to both children and adults.

Sarah will be attending the VT Library Association Conference in May and will receive her Certificate of Public Librarianship at that time.

Sarah hopes to attend the Children's Literacy Foundation's annual conference on Friday, April 12, possibly virtually.

#### **Grant Application Update:**

Sarah Spira has spent much of her time in recent weeks working on the US Treasury Capital Projects Fund for Libraries Grant application.

The Selectboard voted at its March 6 meeting to support the Library's application. The Selectboard's letter is attached.

Deborah Jurist and Sarah doublechecked that the financial sections were correct (three-year average, etc.) today. Dawn Evans and Sarah had a conference call with Rural Edge on final details. After working with Rural Edge on the scope of work and cost estimate, the application is nearly complete.

If the grant is approved, the taxpayers of Groton will not be required to contribute any funds for the approved projects.

The grant funds will facilitate Rural Edge's ability to make needed improvements and repairs to the library building.

General discussion during the meeting included the potential addition of outbuildings, zoning restrictions, septic issues, maintenance of the apartment on the second floor, and the possible need for an overseer of all projects covered by the grants.

The Board finalized its letter of support for the application and all Trustees signed it.

The application is due by midnight on March 12. All are hopeful that it will be submitted much earlier in the day.

**Policy Review Committee Update:**

Sarah Spira, Jennie Gaiss, and Donna Russo-Savage will be meeting soon to discuss the next sections for review and revision.

**Election of Officers (April 2024-March 2025):**

Donna Russo-Savage moved that Jennie Gaiss serve as Chair, Deborah Jurist serve as Treasurer, and Dawn Evans serve as Secretary for the April 2024-March 2025 period. Wayne Knott seconded the motion. All approved.

**Friends Report:** There was no report from the Friends this month.

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

**Next Meeting:** April 4, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Dawn Evans made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m., which was seconded by Wayne Knott. All approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Russo-Savage, Trustee





**Town of Groton  
1476 Scott Highway  
Groton, Vermont 05046**

June 14, 2023

Subject: Letter of Support – NEK Broadband USDA Community Connect Grant Program

Dear USDA Rural Development Community Connect Program Managers,

We are writing on behalf of the Town of Groton Selectboard to express our wholehearted support for NEK Broadband's application for the USDA Community Connect Grant (CCG) Program. We firmly believe that if awarded, this grant will have a profound and long-lasting impact on our town, benefiting and improving the lives of our residents in so many important ways.

Access to high-speed internet has become an essential requirement in today's digital age. Unfortunately, way too many in our community still lack access to this vital service. NEK Broadband's project will address this for the vast majority of our unserved residents and rural businesses. Moreover, the project will also enable delivery of broadband connectivity to the state agencies operating in the Groton State Forest, home to seven state parks, as well as their visitors (over 82,000 in 2022).

In the field of education, the availability of high-speed broadband will be a game-changer for students in Groton. Blue Mountain Union School is a one-to-one school (each student in Grades 7-12 is assigned a Chromebook) that utilizes the cloud-based Google Classroom as a digital learning environment. This project will enable them to access online educational resources outside the classroom, engage in remote learning, and participate in distance education programs. It will level the playing field for our students, ensuring they have the same educational opportunities as their counterparts in more connected areas.

From a healthcare perspective, reliable internet connectivity is crucial, particularly in accessing telehealth services. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of telehealth, and with high-speed broadband, our residents will have improved access to virtual medical consultations, remote monitoring, and other essential healthcare services. This will greatly enhance healthcare outcomes and ensure that our community members can receive the care they need, even in remote areas.

Another impactful aspect of the project is the creation of a "Community Center" that will serve as a hub for the community, offering free public access to high-speed broadband and the essential information technology tools to take advantage of it. By establishing this in the center of Groton, NEK Broadband will ensure convenient access and also help us continue to revitalize our village center.

We firmly believe that NEK Broadband's CCG application is deserving of strong consideration. The proposed project aligns perfectly with the USDA's goal of expanding broadband access in underserved rural areas. It is incredibly high impact to Groton with the potential to transform our community and the lives of our residents.

We kindly request that you carefully consider and support their application.

Sincerely,

The Town of Groton Selectboard

Tristan Vaughan (Chair)

Aaron Smith

Zac Conaway