

Library Trustee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, 1/7/25 on Zoom

In Attendance:

Kerry Sullivan, Chairperson

Amy Mills, Treasurer

Susan Murray, Secretary

Katherine (Kate) Gomes, Library Director

1. Meeting minutes from 12/9/24, unanimously approved.
2. There are no citizens present.
3. Kate updated us on discussions with the Capital Planning liaison to the library. Capitol Planning,
 - Sees the elevator as the number 1 concern, where Kate's number 1 concern is the water leaking through the roof.
 - Suggests we fix the elevator immediately without going out to bid which Kate believes is not allowed. We will speak with the Town Administrator.
 - Believes the space heaters are not to code, but Kate feels these are vital to the comfort of the library staff when the library drops to the low 60s on cold days.
 - Kate believes we should speak to Habeeb and Associates and see if they will come out to assess the water leak and see if that's what's flooding the elevator shaft.
4. Kate spoke to us about the FY26 budget.
 - Increased the Library ADM/Clerical Salaries line item by \$38,341 over FY25. This Includes increasing hours and making two part time employees to full time. Also includes step increases.
 - Increased the General Expense by \$5000 to account for the need for educational reimbursement. The language for this in the new contract will be more explanatory than in the previous contract.
 - Library Utilities increased by \$5000 to account for the increase in price of everything.
 - This budget is based on the current contract. A new contract is being negotiated which may require additional changes.
 - Kate would like a line item for Overtime work. Overtime in our case being extra hours when the need arises as in for example covering a shift for someone who is out sick. Kate will speak with the Town Accountant to see if this line item can be added to the FY25 budget.
5. Kate discussed her starting to create a new 5-year Strategic Plan which is working towards renovation.
 - We are part of the town conversation of needing a new facility. The town is considering what funds could be used.
 - Though we are seeing great improvement in library use, Kate and staff are thinking of ways to better insert the library into the community. Current statistics as presented in the draft of the new Strategic Plan are as follows.
 - There's been a 54% increase in library attendance since 2019!
 - Total book circulation for adults has gone from 24000 in 2021 to 28000 in 2024!
 - Children's book circulation has dropped since 2021 and 2022. So, we will watch to see which books are being used in the library vs taken out and start to make note of that. We already do this with Newspapers and Magazines.
 - Self-directed activities such as puzzles and make and take have become extremely popular!
 - Children's programs have become so popular that we really need another full-time person to better accommodate.
 - Kate will be using the information in this Strategic Plan for her Finance committee presentation, as well as for info packets to show the public what's been happening and what we hope to do.

6. Kate discussed the challenges and opportunities for the library.
 - Library Cards: Currently 22% of Holbrook residents have a library card. Yet there are many people using the library who don't have a card. We have decided to set a goal that we want 3000 residents with library cards by FY end. The question is how to do that.
 - Middle Schoolers and Manga: We trialed giving library cards to middle schoolers using their school id. It turned out great!! They've been checking out Manga and graphic novels, using the library multiple times per week, and even leave recommendations for more Manga books!!
 - Gen Z and Millennials: Kate did a lot of research about the library habits of the Gen Z and Millennial age groups. We will use this information to better accommodate them.
 - 23% of Gen Z and Millennials visit the library in a 12-month period that don't identify as readers.
 - Gen Z prefers graphic novel versions of popular books. They also prefer physical books! Jess is working on Juvenile graphic novels, being careful to make sure it's age appropriate.
 - Both age groups appreciate word of mouth and are more interested in what social media has to say. So, our goal will be to develop a "Staff Favorite Books" list, along with a Blog on the website to discuss the books staff are reading.
 - Along with the above, we will be asking patrons and staff to review books and tell us what they think. We will have that information available for everyone to see.
 - Millennials respond to programming exclusive to them such as Mocktails and Board games.
 - Patron Point will be used this Friday to send out our Newsletter. We need to optimize for mobile use, along with the website!
 - Gen Z prefers short videos like TikTok, whereas Millennials prefer YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.
 - Discussed getting adobe suite which is Makerspace like without needing the space. Sue suggested a green screen.
7. We will try to work more with schools. There are two upcoming STEM nights at the JFK Elementary School, and we have been given permission to attend and run an activity.
8. Since kids are often coming in to play video games on our computer, we are considering getting a dedicated gaming computer, though we are unsure just now where to put it. We hope this will bring in more kids to play and get more book and video game recommendations.
9. The Homeschool group is doing well. We are going to add more sessions.
10. Working on a new mom support group. Amy suggested we run concurrent workshops, one for mom and one for child.
11. We cemented our community partnership with the COA. We will create a library card for the COA. They will check out 20 books / month for display at the COA. People can take those out and the COA director will keep track of who takes what. In this way, the COA doesn't need to spend money on purchasing more books, and we can look at trends to better accommodate this age group.
12. We will be pursuing a National Endowment for the Arts Grant. We will design programming around nature books.
13. Kate asked the question if we were over serving anyone? Even if we are, it's though we shouldn't stop that, we should just try to reach others.
14. Reading is good for mental health. We will advertise this as self-care.
15. Catherine is advertising computer classes in conjunction with our grant. She left flyers around town, including at Ramblewood and Maple on Franklin.
16. Kate posted pictures of her walk through of Baird and McGuire. She said it is beautiful even though its toxic.
17. A new person showed up for the Fund meeting. Unfortunately, the meeting had been rescheduled.
18. We would like to get the MLBC Construction grant. We are open to all ideas. We will create infographics on what the library is doing in the community and use ideas from other libraries.
 - The MLBC grant is open to two options, remodeling our space, or new building reservation. The grant can be millions of dollars for new construction!!

19. The Friends of the public library are thinking about not charging for children's books since they have so many. Kate will be asking them to fund the summer reading prizes.
20. Union contract negotiations are underway. In the initial round, it appears that the COLA rate was multiplied due to an increase in steps. Kate will look at the COLA increases for new hires in town and see how that compares. We also wondered if as staff pay goes up because of these negotiations, should Kate's pay go up as well?
21. Our new Assistant Director Shane starts Thursday!!
22. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 4 at 6:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Murray – Secretary