

Weston Public Library Board
Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 5, 2021
7:30 PM, Via Zoom

DRAFT Minutes

Attendance: Thomas Burke, Lori Goertz, Barbara Groves, Anne Hunt, Amy Jansen, Sharon Murphy, Rick Ross, Amy Sanborn, Cyprian Toczek, Karen Tatarka

Guests: Lynne Langlois, Trustee Emerita, and Susan Richard, representing Friends of the Library

Meeting called to order by Chairman Hunt at 7:34 PM

1. **Space Planning:** Director Tatarka gave an update on the status of the Children's Room remodel and Town projects related to the State Grant. Last week, she received the documents from the Town related to the draft set aside plan required by the CHRO. The documents need to be signed by the Town Administrator and First Selectman. She hopes to send them to the CHRO next week. It is possible that some revisions could be required thereafter. There are other documents required to be filed with the state before the project may commence. The project must commence by April 18th or the grant will be forfeited. The B&G Committee will monitor the progress and lend support as required.

Director Tatarka reported on the status of the roof replacement last bid in 2018 and deferred while working on the Offutt Project. She learned from the Town Administrator that the project will need to rebid. There is concern with the increase in the price of cedar roofing that there may not be enough money set aside for the roof replacement in the "sinking fund" to cover the expenses. The Town will need to decide when to send it out to bid, how to handle a possible request for additional funds, and if alternative roofing materials need to be considered. Given the significant leaks that occur under certain conditions, the Board believes that this matter should have an extremely high priority to the Town.

Member Sanborn reviewed the current situation regarding the possibility of considering a potential addition to the Library that would address the loss of crafting space and a larger maker space that would have been provided as part of the Offutt Center Project. Director Tatarka has reached out to Peter Gisolfi architect, Michael Tribe, with whom the WPL worked on the renovation. He is willing to work on a couple of alternatives which the Committee and Board would discuss. He would then connect with a professional cost estimator to understand what the costs might be. Flexible use of the space would be a critical component of the design; it could also include a larger kitchen to serve the Community Room events. The related increase in any operating costs would also be factored in.

The Committee discussed whether such a proposal might have to be part of an RFP and bid should any State Library Grant money be available.

Member Sanborn conveyed the sense of the meeting among the Buildings and Grounds Committee was to explore what the State Grant requirements might entail with respect to bidding. Further, the Committee discussed how such a project would fit within the Strategic Planning process which has been on hold during exploration of the Offutt Project. Last, the Committee discussed and agreed that the protocol should be to include the Building Committee, and pursue obtaining all required Town approvals (HDC, and P&Z), and confer with the WWHD to ascertain if such an addition, with no bathrooms being added, would have any impact on the septic requirements. Member Sanborn relayed she had spoken with the BC Chair, Mr. Wolf. He was preliminarily supportive of the concept. The recommendation of the Committee to the Board would be to adopt this path, and once all the approvals are in place, the Board would explore fund raising opportunities. The Board reiterated the need to recommence the Strategic Planning process and, as part thereof, to determine if such a space is something that would be of a true benefit to patrons and staff. The sense of the meeting was to adopt the above-delineated plan once it is determined if such a space would be an appropriate addition.

2. **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Toczek reviewed the activity for December in the Board's accounts. There was a technical issue with screen sharing during the call and the Board was unable to view the report for December. There was little activity of note during the month, including modest interest income. Donations will be moved from the Director's Fund to the Endowment Fund. Stripe fees/income were discussed (lost books and unpaid late fees paid on line). There was some confusion related to a \$30 expense. Treasurer will investigate and report in February. The Board took no action to accept the December Treasurer's Report.
3. **Budget:** Director Tatarka reported that the Library's FY '21-'22 budget packet was submitted December 21st. The Board's Budget Committee met to review the draft on December 16th. The initial budget review is scheduled for Thursday, January 7th. The Budget Committee praised Director Tatarka and her staff for all the work they did to pull together the numbers and the accompanying narrative in support of the operating and capital budget requests. The increase request was 9.96% and includes additional funds for materials and additional part time staff. The capital request includes window replacement. On Thursday, an additional request will be added to have the HVAC system balanced so the farthest conference room will be able to be used effectively. It currently does not receive proper heat or cooling. Any additional cost related to the roof replacement will also need to be added to the capital budget.

4. **Minutes:**

Member Ross made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of December 1, 2020. Second by Member Murphy. Motion carried 8-0 with an abstention by Member Goertz who was absent in December.

5. **Director's Report:** Director Tatarka reported what her approach will be to recommence the Strategic Planning process. This includes working with the staff on some preliminary state and national tools for library assessment. There might be some State Library grant money available. Current job descriptions will also be reviewed. This will be done in preparation for a full strategic planning process once the pandemic subsides.

Director Tatarka also discussed the possibility of assembling a brief annual report, as has been discussed in the past. The feedback from the community has been positive and appreciative throughout the pandemic and it would be a good year to highlight the relationship the Library has with the community.

Director Tatarka reported that the Library had received \$541.44 in December via PayPal and checks. There was an additional donation of \$125 for a total of \$666.44. Checks will be deposited and a PayPal transfer will be made. She has sent thank you letters to all donors.

Director Tatarka shared that before the holidays Children and Teen's Librarian Petrino worked with Dan Pelletier of Dig Chess along with area libraries to collect discarded books for distribution in Bridgeport. 300-400 were given away and another 300-400 were donated to schools and children involved in Dan's chess program. Member Goertz, whose firm, LifeBridge Community Services, is located in Bridgeport reported that she had heard about how well this effort was received by the community and that she was proud of Librarian Petrino's involvement.

Director Tatarka reviewed the 2nd Quarter Report with the Board. Areas that have showed the greatest decline are DVDs (not as many feature films released) and Books on CD (not as much commuting and traveling). eBooks, Downloadable Movies, and Downloadable Periodicals have seen increases of 55.5%, 35.7% and 99.6%, respectively, YTD compared to the same two quarters of last year. Director Tatarka explained how these increases are putting a stress on the operating budget given the increased cost to provide these services compared to the pre-pandemic use of materials. Additionally, it requires more staff time to manage the eBook strategy and collection development in an attempt to keep wait times down for patrons to access the titles. She also explained the pay per download Hoopla process and the various limits and caps set up (number of checkouts per patron per month and daily spending caps). She also explained that new titles are sometimes delayed in being released digitally.

Director Tatarka explained that there were some serious issues with plowing and shoveling the Library complex after the December snow storm, including air conditioner compressor units being pushed from concrete pads. She is working with the Town to rectify the situation and plan for future storms.

The Board received an update on the circulation of Chromebooks. She thanked Member Murphy for her connection to the IT department at the schools. Director Tatarka is now working with the school's new IT head to upgrade the Library's existing Chromebooks and increase the number to 15. They will continue to maintain and oversee them for the Library as well as through their Google Education account. Managing Chromebooks with existing staff and budgetary restrictions would not be possible without this partnership.

Gate count for December was 1,296. Circulation was 3,510. This reflects about 25% of the Library's normal gate count, while circulations stay slightly higher than pre-renovation numbers. There have been many appointments scheduled and print circulation has been fantastic compared to anecdotal information from area libraries. Chairman Hunt commended Director Tatarka and the staff for the incredible job they are doing.

The Director's Report, Departmental reports are attached.

6. **Chairman's Reports:** Board Contact List: no changes; Committee Assignments: Member Sanborn volunteered to join the Strategic Planning Committee; Approval of Library Board Regular Meeting dates for 2021. No changes from dates discussed in December and distributed in advance of the meeting. Election of Officers:

Member Sanborn made a motion to nominate Member Hunt as Chairman. Second by Member Ross. Motion carried unanimously.

Member Ross made a motion to nominate Member Jansen as Vice Chairman, Member Toczek as Treasurer and Member Sanborn as Secretary. Second by Member Groves. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **Old Business:**

Member Sanborn made a motion to disband the Library Board created Offutt Center Committee. Second by Member Burke. Motion carried unanimously.

8. **New Business:** None

9. **Friends:** Susan Richard reported for the Friends. She reported that the Friends fund raising letter was delayed and is arriving now. The New Yorker Group has been attracting 15-16 members and is great. They had a New Year's Eve gathering to watch an opera and, again, had 15-16 participants. The Classic Short Story Hour is resuming. There will be several art programs the next few months including exploring galleries and museums. The Friends are working on the Black History Month programs—to be announced. Ms. Richard is working on how to auction the Library chair that has been donated for the Friends to sell to raise funds.

It was also reported that Margaret Wirtenberg has generously donated a number of her paintings to be auctioned to benefit the Senior Center curbside lunch program for 2021. Unclear how this will be advertised. Amid the pandemic this cannot be done physically at the Library or the Senior Center.

10. **Adjournment:**

Member Ross made a motion to adjourn at 8:42 PM. Second by Member Burke. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Board meeting is Tuesday, February 2nd 7:30 PM via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Sanborn
Secretary

Weston Public Library
Director's Report
January 5, 2021

Space Planning/Buildings and Grounds

- Children's Room and Related Projects eligible for State Library Construction Grant
 - Town Administrator Luiz and I discussed the remaining CHRO SAP requirements on December 10. The Town provided the necessary templates for inclusion in the CHRO SAP on December 29. I have assembled the SAP and have submitted it to Town Administrator Luiz and First Selectman Spaulding for signatures. I hope to send it to CHRO next week. Projects need to commence by April 18 or the grant will be forfeit.
- Library Roof
 - I have learned from Town Administrator Luiz that the Library roof project will need to be re-bid. The Building Committee has added the Library roof to its agenda for January 6. There is some concern that the price of cedar has increased significantly and that there will not be enough in the sinking fund to cover the expense. The Town will need to decide when to go out to bid, how to handle a request for additional funds, and if alternative roofing materials need to be considered.
- Inquiry with Peter Gisolfi Associates
 - At the request of the Library Board, I reached out to Michael Tribe of PGA to inquire about a potential library expansion. Details of the conversation and a proposal were related to the Buildings and Grounds Committee at the meeting on December 30.

Strategic Planning

- With the budget now submitted, I will begin working with staff on some preliminary state and national tools for library assessment. This will be done in preparation for a full strategic planning process once the pandemic subsides. In the past, the State Library has offered LSTA Planning Grants, which could help offset the expense of creating a new strategic plan. I will look into what options may be available for the coming year. We will also be reviewing current job descriptions. We do expect some permanent changes in services following the pandemic and job descriptions should reflect these changes.
- In the past, the Board has considered assembling a brief annual report. I am hoping we can discuss this further. Feedback from the community has been positive and appreciative throughout the pandemic and this would be a good year to highlight the relationship the Library has with the community.

Finances

- Discussion/decision regarding reinstating late fees – scheduled for another review at the January Board meeting. Library staff are currently investigating shortening the intervals between the two overdue notices as well as when a final bill is sent. The current intervals are 14-42-90 days. We are checking with surrounding libraries, which so far seem to have much shorter intervals. We hope that long overdue items will be returned in a more timely fashion if the intervals are shortened.
- The Library's FY21-22 Budget request was submitted December 21. The Board's Budget Committee met to review the draft budget on December 16. The first budget review meeting is scheduled for January 7. The increase request was 9.96% and includes additional funds for materials and additional part time staff.
- The Library received a total of \$541.44 in donations in December via PayPal and check. I will make a final bank deposit soon and I will also schedule a transfer of funds from PayPal. I have sent thank you letters to all donors.
- In the month of December, the Library received \$109.80 in revenue through late fees/lost items paid by credit card through the Library's catalog. This new system was implemented earlier this year with Bibliomation's help.

Staff

- The Library shifted operations to Contactless Curbside Pickup on December 18 and began 15 minute browsing/computer appointments in an effort to limit foot traffic in the building while still providing a baseline of services. Appointments are available for Children's, Adult/Teens, and computers. This decision was reached in coordination with several other libraries in lower Fairfield County in response to current

Covid cases and hospitalizations, and in advance of expected increases due to the holidays. We expect to remain at this level of service through mid-January and will reassess in early January. Staff who are able to work at home are being encouraged to do so to reduce the overall foot traffic through the building. Based on anecdotal information from neighboring libraries, I was expecting very few appointments; however, we have a steady number of appointments being made per day for both adult and children's browsing. We have shifted plans for managing the appointments accordingly and put back into place a defined staff schedule.

- Members of the Library Board expressed interest in recognizing the efforts of staff during the pandemic with a small gift to promote self-care as a holiday luncheon would not be possible. Gift bags were created for each staff member with lavender tea, hand lotion, and candles. Staff appreciated the gesture.
- Children's Librarian Petrino and I will be attending select ALA Midwinter programs virtually from January 22-26.

Library Programming

- January programs are available [here](#).
- Virtual programming is going well. The Library partnered with the Senior Center for a Holiday Lights program. There were 56 people in attendance. Both the Zoom scavenger hunt and literary scavenger hunt raffle went well. The Friends have a full slate of programs for January in addition to the Library's scheduled programs.
- Library Technology Assistant Lomas' Take and Make crafts for adults continues to do well with positive feedback from participants and full enrollments. December's kit was glass etching. Participants received the supplies necessary to learn how to etch as well as detailed instructions. Supplies were funded by the Friends.
- Makerspace Kits To Go have been successful, and the Library will look into offering more kits.
- For a summary of Children's and Teen programs events, please see Children's and Teen Librarian Petrino's report below.

Facilities

- The Town electrician is scheduled to come in to address issues with the Library's clock (over the information desk) and fan. Neither is currently working.
- The Library was closed on December 17 due to the snow storm. There were issues with snow removal in regard to maintaining access to the CT State Library DeliverIT shed, clearing of emergency exits and the horseshoe driveway, and air conditioner compressor units being pushed from concrete pads. I have been informed that the Town will be looking into hiring a contractor to maintain the Town parking areas and driveways as DPW lacks the proper equipment. I will follow up with the Town Administrator regarding the status of the change.

Operations

- Gate Count was 1,296 and circulation of traditional materials was 3,510. This reflects about 25% of the Library's normal gate count while circulations stay slightly higher than pre-renovation numbers.
- A limited number of Chromebooks are now available for circulation outside the building. Thanks to the connection initiated by Member Murphy, I have worked with the Schools IT to discuss the continuation of the Chromebooks program now that there is a new IT head. The Schools will be upgrading the Library's existing Chromebooks soon and will increase the number to 15. They will continue to maintain and oversee them for the Library as well through their Google Education account. Managing Chromebooks with existing staff and budgetary restrictions would not be possible without the partnership.
- RBDigital titles have migrated to OverDrive. We will work to assess how these titles appear in OverDrive and how we can run reports to determine usage. RBDigital Magazines should be migrating in January, but I do not have details on that migration yet, but will communicate with all RBDigital subscribers once I have a firm date and details.
- Staff have completed an inventory of the adult fiction, audiobook, and travel collections. They have started an inventory and condition assessment of the Fine Arts collection.

- Please see attached draft of the 2nd Q report. A full version will be submitted for the February meeting. I will highlight shifts in collection use, collection development strategies, and funding strategies at the meeting.

Departmental Highlights

Children's and YA – Alessandra Petrino

Notable Children's/YA Notable Programs/Collections:

- Our S.H.E.L.F. Packs and Launchpads are now in circulation! We have already had many go out and patrons love them.
- The Friends of the Library sponsored several programs for us in December. The first set was Food Explorers. There were two sessions where families could learn how to make a recipe. We had great feedback from participants and will be doing 3 more sessions with them-1 each in January, February and March.
- Another Friends Sponsored program was our winter wonderland buckets. We had 50 requests and 45 people picked up throughout December. Each box came with 2 popcorns, 1 hot chocolate per person, 1 candy cane per person and then 2 movies and 1 book(per person), and a popcorn bucket. These seem to really be successful.
- Our Cookie Decorating program (also sponsored by Friends) was wonderful. We had a full group with 12 families participating. We limited it to this number as it requires a lot of supplies. The Friends are willing to sponsor this program again so we can have more people and we will be doing another cookie decorating in February for Valentine's.
- Our annual Noon Years' Eve Party was different this year as it had to be virtual. We provided the families that registered a party pack to participate with us that included: decorations, crafts, activities, snacks, and a balloon drop of their own. We had 25 families (our limit) register and 23 showed up. In attendance we had 62 people. The Friends also decided to sponsor this event.

Upcoming:

- In January we will be doing more of our successful Winter STEM programs and bringing back our Making It: Science! Videos.
- January will also be our Cutest Pet Contest for Weston. Weston residents can enter their pet into the contest, patrons will vote and they will even have a chance to show off their pet in a talent show that will be recorded on zoom and shared with our patron voters. The winning animal (chosen by the public) will get a specially crafted gift basket.
- We will be starting our Winter Reading Bingo January 4. We have 3 age groups for this-children, teens and adults. Cards can be picked up throughout January in the vestibule and must be turned in by March 1. Anyone who completes a bingo line (different book reading goals), is entered to win the basket for their age group.
- We are working with Successful Study Skills 4 Students again next month and they will be hosting "Motivating the Unmotivated Student" for parents on January 5.
- Our Book C.H.A.T. Boxes from December were picked up and we have had more registrations for our book discussions for those books that will take place in January.

Other:

- We continue to fulfill Binge Box requests weekly for those that continue to request.
- Our appointments are still very active. Patrons are very happy we are allowing them to still come in.
- I plan to attend the ALA midwinter Conference (virtual) during January.
- We are still waiting on some books that were backordered for some of our WPL-made S.H.E.L.F. Packs and we are hopeful we can get those into the collection in January.

Technical Services – Karen Bennett

Added more SHELFpacks to the catalog for the Children's Department, started on project to simplify the call numbers for the Juvenile Series collection, and ran many reports to facilitate collection projects in all departments.

Administrative Department – Karen Tatarka (meetings not included above)

Professional Meetings/Outreach

- 12/2 – Library Journal Webinar, Preparing Your Digital Library for the End of Year Rush and Beyond
- 12/9 – FLAG meeting
- 12/9 – Southwestern Connecticut Library meeting on Covid response
- 12/15 – CLC Coffee Talk
- 12/16 – ACLPD Meeting
- 12/18 – Call with Michael Tribe from PGA
- 12/18 – Tour with Shamrock to review cleaning schedule with new custodian
- 12/22 – Received and began review of bids for CLC non-print media contract

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