

**Ashland Town Library
Minutes of Library Trustees Meeting
September 22, 2020**

Trustees Present: Alice Staples, David Ruell, Mardean Badger

Others Present: Sara Weinberg, Library Director; Kathleen DeWolfe

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM via a Zoom virtual meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **A motion was made (Staples) and seconded (Ruell) to approve the minutes of August 18 and August 25, 2020. The motion was approved unanimously, 3-0.**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The library staff has been busy re-arranging furniture, re-organizing space, providing more access to the second floor, moving program supplies out of the kitchen area, etc.
- More of the Scribner records will be moved to the Town Hall and other items will be moved out of the building, with the help of the DPW staff.
- Sara will provide the trustees with a future virtual tour of the re-organized space.
- The new staff work station for the reference room will be ready soon. The Library Trustees previously approved the purchase of building materials; the construction of the desk is being contributed by a library friend. A Plexiglass shield will be installed for the work station and a keyboard tray added.
- The Plexiglass shield for the circulation desk is being custom-made (due to the multiple angles needed). An estimated invoice for \$675 has been submitted to the Finance Officer as part of the Covid-19 relief grant.
- The interlibrary loan (ILL) van stop at our library will also serve the Hebron Library, as the new director now lives in Ashland.
- The state interlibrary loan program is back in operation, with protective quarantines of materials being included in the process by all libraries. The ability to borrow materials from other libraries has been announced in the newsletter and library website, and will be mentioned in the Record Enterprise.
- There are still a few materials checked out from the spring when the library closed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- We reviewed expenses and income, and approved the current financial report and reconciliation statements.
 - Recent expenses have included books, videos, audios, supplies, cleaning, electric, telephone, post office box, storage shed and materials for construction for a work desk.
 - Due to decreases in spending for wages and materials during the period the library was closed, we may have a budget surplus at the end of the year, although our expenses for wages, materials, etc. are now increasing as our services are increasing. We may be able to make a few additional repairs at the end of the year. We will continue our improved communication with the Scribner Trustees as we evaluate building needs.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Funds Policy**
 - We reviewed the draft of the *Ashland Town Library Funds Policy*. The policy including the various budgetary and special funds controlled by the library, their allowable uses and relevant NH RSA references. We will send some minor typos/corrections to Sara.
 - **A motion was made (Badger) and seconded (Staples) to approve the Funds Policy as corrected. The motion was approved unanimously, 3-0.**
- **Thank You letters** – Alice is drafting some thank you letters for various people who have provided assistance recently.
- **Covid-19 Expenses**
 - Plexiglass shield for the circulation desk is being manufactured now and an estimated invoice has been submitted to the finance officer.
 - An additional staff work desk is being built for the reference room. A Plexiglass shield and a keyboard drawer will be added to it.
 - Air purifiers were discussed for use in the library to screen airborne contaminants. Because of the number of smaller distinct areas in our layout, we determined that we would need a number of individual units (reference room, children's room, circulation area, front and rear of library stacks area).
 - **A motion was made (Badger) and seconded (Staples) to authorize the purchase of up to 5 medium-sized air purifiers (approximately \$250 each) and the necessary replaceable supplies, from the Equipment and Supplies budget lines. The motion was approved unanimously, 3-0.**
- **2021 Budget**
 - We reviewed the Excel spreadsheet of our proposed budget and the narrative description. We have added four new lines to our General Expenses portion of the budget. The new categories for property expenses are heating oil, fire alarm monitoring, fire alarm phone line, and general maintenance, which were items previously covered by the Scribner Trust.
 - For wages, we are proposing the same amount which we originally proposed last year, which provides for a \$1/hour raise for each employee.
 - With the four added property expense categories, our total proposed budget reflects an 18.27% increase. Without the property expenses, our proposed budget would show a 5.9% increase.
 - **A motion was made (Ruell) and seconded (Badger) to approve our 2021 budget request for \$81,045. The motion was approved unanimously, 3-0.** The budget will be submitted to the Town Manager.
- **Credit/Debit Card Information** has been forwarded to the Town Office for the audit process.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Planning for Opening**
 - The library staff is working on plans for gradual re-opening of the library. A Visit-by-Appointment process is being considered as the first step, probably one day per week at the beginning to work out the process. A limited number of

visitors per time slot would enable appropriate social distancing, with a block of time between each appointment to allow cleaning.

- Appointment days and pick-up days will probably be kept separate and distinct. Appointments will be made by phone, allowing the staff to explain procedures to each patron.
- Appropriate policies and signs will be created for appointment procedure, number of visitors at a time, masks, etc.
- Visits by appointment may start mid to late October.

- **Library Response to Scribner Statement**

- The Trustees had a lengthy discussion regarding our response to the Scribner Trustees statement recommending the dissolution of both the Scribner Trustees and the Scribner Trust.
- We support the idea of dissolving the Scribner Trustees, which would turn over the management of the building and the property to the Library Trustees.
- We discussed at length the idea of dissolving the trust fund, which is a complex issue. We are aware that the actual amount of the principal in the trust fund is in question and may take some expert assistance to clarify. If the trust fund were to stay in place, the Trustees of the Trust Fund would still be in charge of the investment and management of the funds themselves (as is their legal responsibility) while the Library Trustees would likely be the ‘agents to expend’ for building and property maintenance purposes. The trust fund could also be allowed to grow; and it might be able to expand with additional contributions (that would need to be verified).
- Maintaining the trust fund could be considered as a way to continue respecting and honoring the original gift and the donor, with an eye toward some future library development in honor of the donor. Our discussion tended to favor maintaining the existence of the trust fund.
- Alternatively, if the trust fund were converted to cash and just handed over to the Library Trustees, would some members of the public consider that action a “free gift with no strings attached?” Our intent is that any action should be seen as positive and forward-looking.
- We agreed that if changes in the Scribner Trustees and Trust Fund are made, we would like to be a part of any discussion by the town about the future use of the property for the benefit of the library and the town.
- We reviewed the timeline that the Scribner Trustees proposed in a September 8 email – (1) Scribner Trustees write a proposal and submit to the Library Trustees; (2) Library Trustees submit response to the Scribner Trustees by October 5; (3) then, the final proposal be submitted by the 2 groups of Trustees to the BOS on October 19.
- Alice will write a draft response for the Library Trustees to review and then send to the Scribner Trustees for further discussion between the 2 groups. We are not quite clear on whether the final submission to the BOS will be a joint one-part proposal or be a two-part (Scribner and Library) proposal. But our first step will be a short, separate statement of our views/opinions to further our exchange of ideas with the Scribner Trustees.

- **Library Future Vision**

- Our next important task is to begin brainstorming and discussing our vision of the library going forward. Issues we will have to consider in our discussions will include physical space planning, capital reserve funds, budget process, warrant articles, etc.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Halloween** – The school safety committee has recommended that there be no Halloween Parade this year due to the pandemic. We will await official word regarding that, although the Library’s participation would not be possible as in years past.

NEXT MEETINGS

Library Trustees

- September 29, 2020, at 6:30 PM – Library Trustees Regular Meeting via Zoom

Scribner Trustees

- October 12, 2020, at 5:30 PM – via Zoom

Board of Selectmen – Scribner Trustees and Library Trustees

- October 19, 2020, at 5:30 PM – via Zoom

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Minutes submitted by Mardean Badger