

**Ashland Town Library  
Minutes of Library Trustees Meeting  
March 30, 2021**

**Trustees Present: Alice Staples, David Ruell, Mardean Badger; Kathleen DeWolfe (Alternate Trustee)**  
**Others Present: Sara Weinberg, Library Director**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM via a Zoom meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Budget Adjustment**

- An additional adjustment is needed in the 2021 budget. **A motion was made (Badger) and seconded (Staples) to reduce the Maintenance line in the 2021 budget by \$300, for a new total of \$2,913. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote, 3-0.**

**Credit Card**

- Sara has researched the information on a credit card through Amazon; it provides a line of credit for businesses with Amazon. We do frequent business through Amazon, but many orders result in constant balance changes (debits and credits) for each order. The Amazon credit card would include a monthly report and monthly payment.
- **A motion was made (Badger) and seconded (Ruell) to approve applying for the Amazon credit card. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote, 3-0.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Friends of the Ashland Town Library**

- The Friends have not met since last fall, nor have they had their annual (November) meeting. They will arrange a meeting soon. It was noted that the Friends' importance is not just as a fund-raising group, but also as a vocal and community support.

**The Library's Role**

- Mardean shared a journal article from *Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities*. Jennifer Howard's article "*The Complicated Role of the Modern Public Library: Something for Everyone*" speaks about the library as the one truly public place that "remains open to everybody." A few of the relevant phrases include "inclusivity," "adapt to changing times," "important thread to a community's well-being and health," "something for almost everyone." Research has shown that "having a child under the age of six is the biggest predictor of library use . . . ; parents of young children like the family-friendly programs libraries run. . . . families often see libraries as sanctuaries." We shared the concept of the library being a welcoming, quiet, safe space for all.

**Library Facility Planning**

We discussed at length various issues with our current space and ideas for the future library. The library director is the one who has the vision of what we need to be looking for in a library.

## **PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT LIBRARY**

Sara talked about some of the issues that the staff and patrons deal with in the current space. The circulation desk area is like Grand Central Station. It is situated between the front door, the children's room door and the only 2 comfortable chairs. This creates a lot of congestion in a small space. A patron cannot have any private conversation with the staff, such as requesting materials on a medical condition – any conversation is heard by everyone in the library.

Other traffic flow issues exist – people frequently walk into the pole between the door and the circulation desk or collide with the door that swings open. There is no quiet corner to sit to read the paper, use a laptop or do research. The only table in the library doubles as workspace for patrons and staff workspace. When there are two staff at the circulation desk, there is no room to work with materials.

The upstairs has 4 small rooms, narrow doorways, and narrow hallway. It is not practical for staff workspace, as staff working upstairs have no visibility of the patrons downstairs. Some use of the upstairs for storage is possible, but it's not practical to take any large or heavy items up the narrow, steep stairs. Adding an elevator is an expensive alternative, takes up too much space, and is not a good return for the money spent.

A major problem is determining the best use of the current building, for either the short term or long term.

If a decision were to be made to tear down the existing building, how would we deal with town sentiment, town attitude, and naysayers who think we don't need a modern library?

## **WHAT WOULD OUR FUTURE LIBRARY NEED?**

We need to consider how areas relate to each other, where they are in relation to each other, and the size of areas. The Ladd report has its shortcomings, but its calculations re: size of spaces are good for different areas of the library.

- Circulation desk – in the middle, with visibility to all areas; doubles as the reference desk
- Main stacks closest to the circulation desk
- Larger children's room – separate space to contain noise, but maintain visible supervision (glass?)
  - Make it a “destination” for families
  - Child-size and adult-size furniture
  - Fun exciting things to do -- wood puzzles, activity boards on the wall, reading fort/tub
- Young Adult area with their own furniture and materials
- Comfortable chairs/reading area – in various areas throughout the library
- Couple small group/study areas
  - For example, a private space that could be used by social service agencies meeting with clients (job search, health care sign-up)
- Staff workspace directly behind circulation desk with visibility (glass?) to patron areas
  - Storage space, lunch area, etc.
  - Work room can double as office, private space for phone calls, etc.
- Meeting/program space

- Able to close it off from the main library area for use when library is closed
- Access from the main library area and separate entrance from outside
- Accessible or shared restroom and kitchenette
- Audiovisual/presentation capabilities
- Two unisex restrooms, both with changing tables
- Consider appropriate line-of-sight for supervision of all areas
- Open flexible space can be adapted in the future
- Allow sufficient shelf space for collection growth
- Special collections area (historical and local interest materials)

Addition to the current building should be at the back

- Most of the areas listed above would be in the addition
- Main entrance facing Pleasant Street, possibly between the current building and the addition
- Addition would blend with the style of the existing building, but modern interior
- Farmer's porch
- Take advantage of natural lighting and passive heat where practical

Check ADA requirements for new space

Check ADA requirements for old or renovated space

Check grant and loan requirements and their impact on ADA upgrading of old areas

Use of outdoor space and grounds – Bring the library outdoors

- Parking near the entrance, especially for handicapped patrons
- Teaching garden, butterfly garden
- Story walk
- Incorporate flag and granite benches
- Work with Garden Club

Do we have enough space for an addition? Do we have space for parking?

- Do we need to acquire more land (e.g., former Bricker lot)?
- Should we inquire about sharing land (e.g., town-owned land where American Legion is located; inquire about sharing parking with walkway to library)

## **INFORMATION GATHERING & SHARING**

- We need to do a new survey, as the other one was many years ago.
- Survey, input from users
  - Use several types of questions -- Statistics & data, ideas & suggestions
  - Open-ended questions
  - Could do a first survey, then do a second survey as ideas form
  - Review the past survey
- How to distribute? How to reach more people?
  - Reach a variety of groups and use different methods

- Zoom session, online, mailing, survey at town office or library, website link to online survey, Facebook and other social media
  - Are we allowed to use patron information to distribute survey? (Probably not)
- Project out 20 years for population – what is changing?
  - Phase II of Squam River Landing
  - Winter Street Commerce Properties
  - Pandemic effects on population distribution
  - Check population projections and change in population demographics.
- Advisory committee
  - Size and purpose?
  - Gather expertise from local people
  - Engage the community
- Architect (Ward d'Elia)
  - Need to collect more data from the public to share with Ward
  - Let Ward know that we are arranging a survey with Tony Randall; ask Ward if he wants the contour lines on the boundary survey
  - Let Ward know that we will accept a contract with him and pay him
  - Listening session or public presentation by architect with proposed plans
- Walter Durack
  - Joining new to old space
  - Take care of the new space first, and then go back and work with the old space

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.

*Minutes submitted by Mardean Badger*