



AYER LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thursday, January 11, 2024 6:00pm Open Meeting

Present: Susan Kennedy (chair), Andrew Wilson (Vice Chair), Brenda Richard (Treasurer), Sharon Slarsky, Rebecca Myers, Becky Campaner.
Trustees not present: Maggie Durand, Robert Gardner, Cyndi Lavin
Also Present: Luke Kirkland (Library Director) Sarah Gomes (Library Administrative Support Specialist)
Taking minutes: Andrew Wilson

Agenda Item: Call to Order. The meeting was called to order by Chair Susan Kennedy at 6:pm.

Agenda Item: Review and Approve Agenda. No changes.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to accept the agenda. Vote: Unanimous

Agenda Item: Approval of Minutes of 12/14/2023 meeting. No changes.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes. Vote: Unanimous

Announcements: Luke Kirkland introduced Administrative Support Specialist Sarah Gomes, who will be assuming new responsibilities on the library staff. The Board welcomed Sarah to the meeting.

Public Comment: None.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Brenda Richard reported that the library funds balance began this period at \$183,891.17, earned \$384.55 in interest (posted to our accounts on 12/29/2023), and ended the period at \$184,275.72.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report. Vote: Unanimous

Director's Report: Luke Kirkland shared highlights of his Director's Report.

Action Plan: Progress on the Action Plan includes policy reviews and document retention. Asked if any items on the Action Plan are to be addressed by the Trustees, Luke pointed out that the Trustees have a role approving policies and entering into MOU's. Though the Action Plan is posted on the website, Luke will continue to report on specific items monthly.

Friends: Pre-discussions have taken place regarding entering into an MOU with the Friends. This will be further discussed in February, and as noted below under New Business..

Facilities: As for facility issues, two small roof leaks were discovered following recent heavy rain events. There is a cover missing from a roof vent, but progress in tracking down the leaks is being made. Luke is looking to orient with Chuck Schultz as to any proposed changes to the facility, as well as looking toward a potential MOU with the Town.

Operations: The Baby Bag program is still on track to start Feb. 1, 2024, and the question as to whether this program might be expanded to include new families moving to Ayer will be explored,

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though different packaging would be needed. Staff are now training on the new search overlay, Aspen, which will improve the search experience for patrons. This is still on track for March, 2024 implementation.

Personnel and Professional Development: An offer was made to a candidate for an open Library Assistant position, but the candidate ultimately pulled out from contention. This position will be added to another posting for a second library assistant position in January. Sarah Gomes has experience with WordPress, and will thusly take a role in maintaining the library website. The library will be closed on March 22, 2024 for an all-staff professional development and appreciation day.

Programming: Luke shared impressive numbers for the robust programming the library is putting on for patrons. There is a new format for reporting on programming. The library is now in a good rhythm of programming, and this has noticeably increased foot traffic in the library.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to accept the Director's Report. Vote: Unanimous

Old Business: The following was discussed.

Trustee Orientation and Evaluation: A checklist of responsibilities for new and ongoing trustees was circulated. While some of the items on the list are one-time actions (e.g. being sworn in) while others require regular certification. These responsibilities appear to have fallen by the wayside in recent years, due, in part, to COVID disruptions and the Director's search. It was suggested that trustees orientation requirements could be tied to an annual calendar to simplify compliance. Certain tasks could be mapped to the library FY calendar, such as the Director's annual review and budgeting. Automating this process could also be helpful. The question was raised as to whether this annual process should be mapped to a 10-month calendar, since there is a tradition of not holding Trustees meetings during the months of July and August, and would there be enough time to do it all with that shortened timeline. Information as to these responsibilities will be sent out in February for presentation at the March meeting. Trustees will receive a "report card" document for self-evaluation. There was also discussion regarding public interest in serving as a trustee. It was thought that perhaps the Friends might have a role in encouraging such participation, especially while waiting for positions to open up on the Board.

Action: A subcommittee of Susan Kennedy and Rebecca Myers was appointed to receive and collate trustees self-evaluations.

New Business: The following items of new business were discussed.

Annual Town Report Submission Draft: Last year's submission was compared to a draft of the 2024 submission.

Combining Bank Accounts: Brenda spoke with the Town, and every Town department is being asked by the Town Auditor to voluntarily consolidate some or all of their bank accounts to simplify and streamline Town bookkeeping. The Town can continue to report out individual account activity even after accounts have been consolidated. This would allow individual targeted funds to continue to be tracked by donors and other interested parties. It was noted that some of the library funds no longer serve their original purposes. Luke mentioned that he maintains state aid funds as a de facto emergency fund for the library. A decision is due by the end of the fiscal year. As several funds are maintained in CD's, the suggestion was made to maintain at least one fund in a separate

conventional savings account to allow the library to receive and deposit gifts and other funds as needed.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded authorizing the Treasurer to enter into discussions with the Town regarding consolidating the library bank accounts. Vote: Unanimous

Gift to Ayer/Library: Luke reported on a discussion he had with Town Community and Economic Development Director Alan Manoian about the possibility of the library hosting a large work of public art. A local couple has come forward with the idea of making a significant donation to the town, and it was thought that public art, or some other benefit to the library, might meet the criteria for using such a donation. Luke has already been in contact with the couple, and many ideas were considered. This raised the issue of an endowment for the library. Several aspects of how institutions such as the Ayer Library could develop and manage such an endowment were brought up. Treasurer Brenda Richard, who has professional experience in this area, will continue discussions with Luke.

Friends MOU for the February Meeting: the Trustees will plan the first part of the February meeting as a joint meeting with the Friends to discuss an MOU. Following that will be the regular Trustees meeting, with plans for a lighter agenda.

Adjournment: Next meeting will be February 8, 2024 6:00pm. Adjournment called at 8:02pm.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Vote: Unanimous

Minutes respectfully submitted by Andrew Wilson, 1/18/2024

