

Trustees of the Keene Public Library  
Meeting Minutes  
June 25, 2024

Present: Trustees Bill Stroup, Jane Pitts, Judy Putnam, Ritu Budakoti, Justin Somma, Paul Henkel, Pam Russell-Slack, Hollie Seiler, Kathleen Packard. (Absent Yves Gakunde, Don Caruso, and Katherine Baer)  
Also present were staff members Susan Bloom and Katelyn McStravick; City Council Liaison Bobby Williams; and Sam Temple.

President Bill Stroup called the meeting to order at 5:03. He asked those present to identify themselves for newcomers present.

Bill introduced Katelyn McStravick, who has recently become a full-time staff member, and the Community Relations Specialist. Katelyn said she has been at the Library since 2020, and that she is managing spaces, creating promotional materials and overseeing social media.

Bill also introduced Matt Temple who is a prospective Library Trustee.

**Minutes:** Pam Russell-Slack moved that the minutes be accepted, Judy Putnam seconded. Judy pointed out three minor errors. (Spelling of Budakoti; Phill Faulkner (not Bill) Horatio Colony Museum is the complete name.) Minutes accepted unanimously as corrected.

**Finance Committee:** Judy reported that she had followed up on last month's discussion about funding for the summer lunch program. The NH DOJ Department of Trusts has offered the opinion that if the program is connected to other library programming, using Trustee Funds could be acceptable. Kathleen Packard asked if we indeed did have programming around the lunch program. Susan Bloom said that we do. And, in fact, it turns out that fundraising and donations have secured the program for this summer, and that Marti will not have to use any of her discretionary fund money to support the program. If the program is repeated next year, Judy urged the board to consider whether purchasing food for the program was appropriate and in line with our mission.

Treasurer Jane Pitts presented two donations for acceptance: from Keene Rotary, \$1,000 for the lunch program; from Paul and Sussan Henkel, \$500 for the lunch program. Bill moved; Pam seconded acceptance of these donations. Approval was unanimous.

Jane reviewed the 24-25 Trustee Budget presented in May. She pointed out that the increase of about \$18,000 overall reflects the expected cost of the audio improvement work in the lobby and Cohen Hall; an increase in the line for NHLTA membership and conference attendance; and an increase in the Directors discretionary allowance. Building committee member Kathleen Packard pointed out that it's still early in the audio project, and we don't really know how much it will cost. Trustees will cover costs of work in the lobby and the Heberton Hall Cost Center will

cover costs to Cohen Hall. Pam Russell-Slack moved to approve the budget for the coming year; Justin Somma seconded. The budget was approved unanimously.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Paul Henkel reported that there has been some graffiti in the bus stop shelter. Marti has also been wanting to have a bench installed. She has worked with the city to install a two-seat bench with arm rests and to have the graffiti taken care of.

Paul gave an update to the Cohen Hall/Lobby audio project. Both areas show high levels of reverberation, almost double the recommended ranges. These levels reduce speech intelligibility and music clarity. The acoustical study recommends the addition of sound-absorbing materials to reduce reverberation. These can be in the form of absorptive materials applied to the ceiling, or panel absorbers which float from the ceiling. Either treatment has implications for sprinkler systems and lighting fixtures that are now in place, as well as for the general aesthetic of these architecturally significant spaces. He pointed out that this is what we have learned from the consultant. We have yet to decide on options or who will do the work, therefore we are still a long way from knowing what this will cost.

**Community Outreach:** Ritu reported that the Pollinator Palooza in Ashuelot Park was a big success; the Summer Reading and the Summer Lunch programs have begun; there was a good turnout for the Juneteenth program; and she is working with Amy Kraemer on the International Festival having more library presence next year. This was Ritu's last meeting and Bill thanked her for all the work she has done for the Board.

**Long Range Planning:** no report

**Fine Arts:** Recognition plaques for Sally Miller and Nancy Vincent are being framed and will be on display for the annual meeting. Judy suggested that we invite Sally and Nancy for a moment of recognition before the meeting. Susan Bloom has identified and ordered a display cabinet to be used to securely display collections of objects. Exhibits could be created from Library materials or from loaned items.

**Policy:** Kathleen Packard reported that the committee is working on the maker space policy, and will present that for approval in the fall. They are also revisiting the borrowing policy, and have asked staff and the City Attorney to review it. The revision may be ready for approval at the August meeting.

**Friends of Keene Public Library:** The Annual Report by the President of the Friends (Janis Manwaring) was included with meeting materials. The Friends had a strong year (2023) with two book sales, netting about \$24,000. Participation in the Charitable Gaming program netted just over \$19,000. The Friends support the Library by budgeting over \$50,000 for support of various Library items, including programming, museum passes, maker space interns and maintenance of the aquarium. They published three newsletters this year, and again (21<sup>st</sup> year) sponsored, with the Swamp Bats, "Mr Gemmell's Reading with Ribby" elementary school

reading program. The Board expressed appreciation for the strong support of the Friends in 2023.

**Horatio Colony Museum:** no report

**Cheshire County Literacy Coalition:** no report

**Director's Report:** The director's report highlighted the hiring of Katelyn McStravick to fill the Community Relations Specialist position; the successful fundraising for and the launch of the summer lunch program, and the participation by staff in school visits to promote the summer reading program, and other outreach activities.

Kathleen asked if the Library is now fully staffed, and Susan Bloom said that there will be one new person starting in a week and then the Library will be fully staffed.

**Old Business:** Jane reported that Jeff Hoover of Tappe Associates (architect for both the 1999 addition to KPL and the 2019 renovation of the Masonic Building) was again at the NHLTA annual meeting, and she shared promotional materials from their booth that highlighted our recent project.

Bill noted that the City Budget has been passed. The date for the Library Trustees Annual Meeting is August 27, 2024

Sam Temple, candidate for appointment to the Trustees, told the board that he grew up in Keene, and returned a few years ago and has a business downtown. He admires the Library's commitment to public space and would like to be part of the support of the library.

**New Business:** Susan noted that a draft of the nomination for the New Hampshire Library Trustees' Library of the Year award had been submitted. Jane spoke for all the Trustees when she congratulated and thanked the staff for the amazing breadth of outreach they perform. The letters of support from different sectors of the community that were part of the application were very powerful.

President Stroup thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 6:10.

Judy Putnam  
Temporary Secretary