

Keene Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting  
May 25, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 5:05PM

The Statement of Authority for Conducting a Meeting Electronically was read.

Roll call attendance was taken, present were Trustees: Jennifer Alexander, Paul Henkel, Kathleen Packard, Judith Putnam, Jane Pitts, Carl Jacobs, Chuck Redfern, Yves Gakunde, William Stroup, Kenneth Jue, & Charles Prigge, Library Director Marti Fiske, City Councilman Bobby Williams. Unable to attend: Kathleen Kennedy Burke.

Secretary Kathleen Kennedy Burke is absent. Jane Pitts will take minutes.

Councilman Bobby Williams was introduced and welcomed to the group. He will serve as the new City Liaison to the Trustees Board.

Yves moved to accept the April minutes; Carl seconded. Ken had an amendment to make to the April minutes. He asked that his name be added to the list of Board members present since he was in attendance at that meeting. **Paul moved to accept the minutes with this amendment to be made, Chuck seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **FINANCE:**

The Treasurer had three items to bring to the Board for vote:

1. The acceptance of three donations received in the past month:
  - a. \$100.00 (Putnam) in memory of George Scott
  - b. \$100.00 (Henkel) in memory of George Scott
  - c. \$400.00 NH Humanities grant money for 2 library programs

**Kathleen P. moved to accept the funds as described, Ken seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

2. Purchase of a computer for use by the Trustees Treasurer.

Judy has been researching the purchase of a computer that would belong to the Trustees for use by the Treasurer for accounting reports and data and document storage. A laptop was deemed the best choice for portability. The Trustees would have the ability to purchase a decommissioned laptop from the City of Keene for \$70. The Trustees would need to purchase accounting, office suite, and anti-virus software to upload to the laptop. The Finance committee asked for \$1000.00 to accomplish all that. Discussion raised the question of whether it may be better to purchase a brand-new laptop instead that would last longer. **Ken moved that the amount allocated for a laptop purchase be raised to \$1500. Chuck seconded. Motion passed**

**unanimously.** Judy will gather more comparative data to evaluate which would be the better route to go.

### 3. Heberton Hall Stage Lighting Proposal.

The Finance Committee recommends that the Trustees allocate \$26,000.00 for the purchase of a stage lighting package for Heberton Hall. Funds for this could be pulled from two reserve sources: Money that was left over from the additional renovation allocation and money that was left over from the opening.

Trustees Paul Henkel and Carl Jacobs, in consultation with paid consultant Craig Lindsay from KSC Theatre Dept. have done extensive research on what types of lighting packages would be feasible to enhance the Heberton Hall stage experience. Two independent quotations were obtained with the lighting equipment in both cases coming from the same provider: ETC Lighting, an LED provider based in WI that is well known in the industry. Package highlights include lighting support bars, 16 LED lights and console, and an Architectural Control Panel that would allow programmable settings and ease of use for library staff or renters. Installation costs, additional consulting charges, and training on use is included in the package pricing.

**Ken moved that the Trustees allocate \$26,000 towards the purchase of the lighting package. Chuck R. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

\*Judy updated the Board on the progress of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) Committee's work. The group had a second meeting where City Attorney Tom Mullins was invited as a guest to answer questions the group had about the process for the acceptance of public funds. The Friends have determined their gift amount that will appear in the Trustee's 2021-22 budget, and the two groups will work together to determine the details of the gift acceptance and payment process going forward including working out reimbursement for the new P-Card system the Trustees will soon have in place. The Committee will break for the summer and resume meetings in September.

Ken gave the update that the Joint Policy-Finance Committee is very close to completing their policy revisions.

### **BUILDING AND GROUNDS:**

The Committee proposed the installation of a "Blessings Box" on the exterior front brick wall of the library between the Main and Staff Entrances. The box will be donated by Roger Weinreich, the owner of Good Fortune. Marti asked Weinreich if he would be willing to donate one to the Library. She had been contributing to the one located on his storefront and discovered that he would like to donate to other locations.

A Blessings Box is a small cupboard-like box that could hold small packaged food and personal care items. It operates like the "Little Free Libraries" where people could take an item-leave an item for others to have. The library Blessings Box would measure 4' x 2' and would be installed to ADA height specifications. The box is donated by the craftsman maker who would also take

care of its maintenance. The box would be in range of the library's security cameras. **Paul moved to accept the installation of the Blessings Box on the premises, Ken seconded. Motion passed unanimously.** The Trustees indicated that the donation be passed through the City's Finance Operations and Personnel Committee (FOP) and the City Council next.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** No report.

**LONG RANGE PLANNING:**

Jen presented a draft of the 2021-22 Strategic Plan to the Board. The report represents a synthesis and analysis the data collected from all groups who were consulted to do the SWOT analysis on the library (Friends, Trustees, Library Staff, City). It is a one-year plan due to the unique operating circumstances imposed by the pandemic, but planning has already begun towards a more traditional longer range strategic planning, with several Trustees and Library staff participating in Harwood training for this purpose.

Highlights of the draft summary included the following three goal categories:

1. Marketing & Communication
2. Optimizing Assets
3. Information is accessible and inclusive for all.

Multiple Board members acknowledged the hard work of this committee and chair, and expressed their thanks and support of the draft plan. Discussion touched on FT vs. PT employees, the diversification of the collection, and the creation of a Collection Development Policy for the Library. Marti will share statistics on the library's FT & PT employees. **Ken moved to accept the draft 2021-22 Strategic Plan with the corollary that the notated grammatical changes be made, Carl seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**FINE ARTS:** No report.

**POLICY:**

Kathleen presented the new "Hot Spot" policy. It has been reviewed by the City Attorney. Nine hot spots have been purchased with grant funds and are ready to be loaned out, once this policy has been approved. The nine hot spots are fully funded by a one-year grant, after that the library will assess whether we need all nine. Borrowers would be required to sign off on the policy prior to using. There are plans for the hot spots to be used as a part of library programs too. **Kathleen moved to pass the policy with the possibility that further edits could be made by City IT to align with their language if necessary, Carl seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

The committee has also updated the Internet Usage Policy with help from library staff, and is currently reviewing the Non-Monetary Gifts Policy.

#### FRIENDS OF THE KEENE PUBLIC LIBRARY:

The Friends continue to work with the Trustees on the MOU Committee. \*See MOU update in Finance Committee report. The Friends are preparing for their Annual Meeting scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7PM held by ZOOM.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- 1.) First round interviews are complete for the Assistant Director position. Three candidates will be here for full-day in-person interviews on June 8, 9 and 10.
- 2.) Keene qualifies for a first round grant of \$5,260 from American Recovery Plan Act sub-grant through the IMLS and NH state library. The amount was set to be easily managed for all libraries on short notice and considers population, and poverty indexing. Gail and I have decided to spend the money on an outdoor theater system, with portable projector, sound system, and collapsible screen. We will do outdoor programs onsite during the transition from COVID and at other locations post-pandemic for outreach events. The grant will go through the City Council process and be managed by City Finance Department due to higher reporting requirements and the RSA that requires a public hearing to accept funds \$5,000. It will go to Finance Operations and Personnel Committee June 10 or 24. Awards are expected in June and checks in July. Another grant, competitive \$10,000+, will on in August. Gail and I are considering options for that grant.
- 3.) Gail and I are working with Human Resources, the City Attorney and University of Denver to have a local MLIS student do an internship at the Library. The student will be working with Gail, primarily on the Summer Reading Program.
- 4.) Eva Medvidofsky joined the Library staff on May 5. She will be working as an Aide-Programming and Meeting Room Supervisor. She grew up in Keene and previously worked with the KSC Redfern Arts Center.
- 5.) The City ended their contract with the existing board of Cheshire TV at the end of Saturday May 22. On Monday, their keys collected and the locks were changed. The City is working on reforming the channel's board and getting interim coverage of the City's meetings. It is my understanding that the income to Heberton Hall will continue, as it comes in from the Cable provider. The new version of CTV would remain in the Heberton suite.

6.) The quarantining of materials ended two weeks ago. Last week the Magazine Rooms seating areas reopened at limited capacity. Soft chairs were returned to a few areas. We are considering reopening smaller meeting rooms in July and the large event spaces in August.

Smaller in-person, distanced programs will return in late June. Because youth under 12 cannot be vaccinated, summer reading will have some smaller in-person, distanced programs planned for outdoors. When possible, they would be a hybrid of in-person and online. Programs would move indoors to Heberton where people can be more distanced if it rains.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

The City has ended the outdoor mask wearing ordinance, and will end the indoor mask wearing ordinance on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The library staff is particularly concerned about the safety for youth attendees under the age of 12 and teens who are not yet vaccinated. Staff also recognizes that “policing” mask wearing will become more difficult after the June 1<sup>st</sup> City ordinance is lifted should the library continue to ask patrons to mask up.

Two proposals for the Board’s consideration: 1) Continue mask wearing until June 1<sup>st</sup>, and mask wearing for staff afterwards in situations that put staff in close proximity with young children, with visible signage that provides public health recommendations; 2) Wait until after July 6<sup>th</sup> which would align with the library’s return to full time hours, with visible signage that provides public health recommendations?

In discussion, Trustees felt that maintaining a longer mask wearing policy than what was out of step with both the City and the CDC’s statements would put undue pressure on staff to maintain the policy. Higher volume of youth attendees to the library wouldn’t happen until after school ends at the end of June. **Carl moved to discontinue with the requirement of wearing masks within the building as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, with a recommendation that masks be worn within close proximity to others, in particular, children. Signs would include that for the public wishing accommodations, curbside service is still available. Jen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### NEW BUSINESS:

July 6<sup>th</sup>, the library will return to extended continuous hours and the re-opening of the Atrium space. Even pre-pandemic the library was experiencing staffing issues for the expanded building, but in the pandemic has lost more than 50% of their atrium volunteers. Marti is advocating for a permanent reduction in library hours. A proposed schedule for consideration is: Monday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

No staff hours will be cut, there would just be a re-assignment of those hours, with more cost-effective use of higher paid staff.

The Board noted that it was 7:20PM and that this was a proposal that many would welcome more time for further consideration and continued discussion. There is one more Board meeting scheduled before the July 1<sup>st</sup> decision target, so further discussion was tabled until that June 25<sup>th</sup> meeting and this item will be placed on the agenda again.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Pitts, Trustee