

Town of Hubbardston
Board of Library Trustees
MEETING MINUTES February 3, 2022
Meeting held at the Library

Members Present: Josephine Amato, Connie Strittmatter, Tom Robinson, Bob Cronin,
Morgan Brinker, Krista Goguen

Other present: Chris Barbera, Interim Library Director, Mike Stoll, guest.

Call Meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

AGENDA:

- **Library Director's report (including potential upcoming library events)**

Chris Barbera presented an overview of the January Library Director's Report. Facebook reach, likes, followers and views continues to increase. Wifi connections increased with 81 in January compared to 39 in December. Circulation also increased in January. The Director's report also includes a summary of the library accounts. The Library Annual Report was submitted to the town. Weeding of unused books is continuing. The library was closed January 6 - 10, 2022, due to a staff member testing positive for COVID, and January 17, 2022 for MLK Day, and January 29, 2022 due to the snow storm.

Library Programs: The Senior Book Club met and discussed "The Rose Code" by Kate Quinn, with 5 in attendance. The February book selection is "The Reckoning" by John Grisham. January displays: new titles in the Adult reading room and MLK books for the Juvenile reading room. The 5th grade and 3rd grade classes continue to visit weekly, the Kindergarten classes will hold off until April. The library will be hosting three gardening workshops via Zoom with the Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens in the next three months. We will also be participating in a Quabbin Community Read with the other Quabbin libraries (Barre, Oakham, New Braintree and Hardwick) in April and May. We will be reading "the Witness Tree" by Amy Pendino, who will host a walk/talk about her book and the tree somewhere in Harvard forest. We are also exploring other speakers and activities with an Arbor theme.

- **Discussion about "fine free" policy**

Chris presented an overview of the current library overdue policy and the rationale for removing overdue fees for books, CDs, and DVDs. Articles on the trend to remove

overdue fines from the American Library Association and other libraries were shared with the Trustees. Currently overdue books are shown in 'amnesty mode' with overdue fees accruing on the patron's account. When patrons bring back an overdue book, the fines are erased. Overdue fines can discourage library use, particularly by lower income patrons. Under a 'fine free' policy, overdue fines would continue for books, owned by other libraries, museum passes or library 'things' such as the telescope. Patrons will still be responsible for replacing books that are damaged, lost or destroyed. Chris works with patrons to find the most economical replacement.

Tom made a motion to adopt an 'overdue fine free' policy. Morgan 2nd. All approved.

- **Meeting minutes for December 2021**

The Trustees did not meet officially in December due to lack of quorum. Summary minutes will be presented for approval at our March 3, 2022 meeting.

Morgan made a motion to approve the November 2021 minutes, Bob 2nd All approved.

- **Introduction to the new Trustees Google account**

In order to maintain Library Trustee documents and comply with open meeting rules, Krista and Chris set up an HPL Trustees (Hubbardston Public Library) Google email hubbtrustees@gmail.com and account to access trustee documents. The Trustee minutes will now be taken on a library-purchased Chromebook. The Chair will continue to email Agendas and Minutes directly to Trustees and also to this shared account. Chris will investigate whether the Town of Hubbardston also uses Google or another service and how documents will be backed up or archived. Krista will contact Toni Walker about posting the Trustee's minutes on the Town website.

- **Review and vote on the draft volunteer and facilities use policies.**

Postponed to March meeting. To facilitate review of library policies, Trustees can log into the Trustee Google account using a personal email to make individual comments on the policy revisions.

- **Heat pump replacement discussion**

Tom reported that the library has \$60,000 in Capital Improvement Funds to replace the boiler. The library currently burns about \$7-8K worth of oil and \$3,000 worth of electricity annually. Tom has done preliminary analysis and he recommends the Trustees consider installing heat pump 'mini- splits' for heating and air conditioning. This system would be more efficient, sustainable and reliable than replacing the boiler. We could also consider participating in a community solar project. Because Heat pumps are only effective for temperatures above 15 degrees, the library will need to keep the oil boiler as backup. Tom will investigate grant opportunities.

Tom discussed concerns about the complexity of coordinating and managing the various already-funded library building projects (window replacement, brick replacement, electrical upgrades, boiler) and wish-list library capital improvement projects (e.g. an elevator). To avoid project overlap, make sure funds are spent within the timeframe and meet the various Federal and State requirements, Tom recommends the Trustees consider hiring a 'project manager' or building engineer. We also need to figure out who to hire to help get these jobs done. Tom will consult the MBLC list of qualified contractors. Mike Stoll, meeting guest, is a civil engineer with construction project management who has experience working on similar projects. Mike volunteered to work with Tom to draft an inquiry/request for proposal/scope of work for professional engineering services to accomplish currently funded goals and future sustainability and ADA compliance.

- Follow up on Historical Society display
Tom is working with an electrician to install outlets and he is coordinating with Gary to install the donated display case. Once installed, the Historical society will curate a rotating exhibit in this display case.

News item:

Chris earned her Bachelor's degree from UMass Amherst. She will enroll in a 2-year Library certification course in Spring 2022. The Trustees will coordinate a recognition reception for Chris' graduation and Johanna Henning's long time services as a library trustee and secretary.

Future Agenda items:

- Discussion/ideas about ADA compliance
- Discussion of activities for 150th anniversary
- Further Grants research information/discussion

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Krista Goguen

Next Meeting: 7:00 PM, March 3, 2022