

Town of Hubbardston
Board of Library Trustees
Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2023

Members Present: Morgan Brinker, Connie Strittmatter, Krista Goguen, Lucinda Oates, Tom Robinson; **Absent:** Bob Cronin, and Christine Barbera, Library Director

Meeting called to order at 7:09 pm by Chair Connie Strittmatter at 7:06 p.m. in the Slade Building.

Connie noted the October meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum. This meeting was rescheduled to comply with Open Meeting Law agenda posting requirements.

AGENDA:

- **Library Director's Report**

Connie reported Chris is working at a library program tonight. The link to the October and November reports was shared with Trustees and both are submitted as part of these minutes.

- [October 2023](#) and [November 2023](#)

Morgan noted the number of classes and students in the November report appear to be transposed (correction 3 classes with 66 students). She also noted Chris had to troubleshoot a problem with the Furnace in order to open the library one day. Morgan shared she has seen and heard a lot of positive feedback about the Artist Corner display in the library and she noted this is an example of community engagement. Krista noted these Director Reports now show only the current info. Trustees would like to also have access to the previous data trends spreadsheet as part of the Director's report.

- **Approval of Meeting minutes for [September 2023](#)**

Motion to accept minutes with the corrected meeting date and attendance made by Morgan, 2nd Tom. 4-0-1 (4 approved; 0 opposed; 1 abstained).

- **Town awarded funds for repairs - Next Step**
 - **1st floor rehab** - work on this is still on hold.
 - **Foundation repair**

Tom will follow up on whether Adam Mercurio of Bella Masonry made a site visit

- **Brick repair** - Pointing work is also still on hold
- **Hiring a Building/Facilities Consultant**

Building consultant Wendy Frontiero completed two site visits on Oct 23 and 25. Connie reported Wendy did a very thorough examination of the exterior building, grounds and the entire

interior (basement, main and 2nd floors, and attic) over about 10 hours and she took several photographs. Tom and Connie met with her on 10/23 and Chris met with her on 10/25. Wendy shared she was impressed at the level of Town support for the library. A range of documents have been shared with Wendy and are also available to Trustees through the Trustee Google Drive. Documents include summaries of previous and current library capital projects, detailed building plans from the 1999 renovation, the Library's National Register of Historic Buildings MOU, and a previous library energy assessment. Connie noted any changes to the library building need to be submitted for approval by the National Registry. Trustees should receive the initial report in December. The final Report can also be shared with the town through a Town Manager update. It will also be useful for justification for grant requests for future projects. The remaining \$800 from this grant can be used for a separate review of library accessibility (ADA).

- **CIPC grant - heat pumps** - [Quote](#)

Tom and Morgan reported on the site visit and evaluation of the building for installation of a new "heat pump" heating system for the library. The Town Administrator submitted this \$196,195.59 proposal for *Hubbardston Library VRF Heat Pump Installation* from Energy Conservation, Inc. as part of the Town's application for a Green Energy Grant. Trustees reviewed the "heat pump" proposal and identified concerns and questions about the proposal related to the configuration and number of units proposed for various rooms and ability to expand the system with the installation of additional units upstairs in the area not currently accessible to the public that houses the Historical Society collections. Preservation of these collections is an essential concern. The historic nature of the building is also an important consideration so the company should be experienced with historic buildings. This is only a preliminary proposal. Tom and Morgan explained the placement and configuration of units is affected by the needs/constraints of routing of the connecting cords to the exterior unit and exterior condensate draining. The actual project will require an RFP and at least 3 bids. Trustees would like to have them presented at a Trustee meeting in coordination with the Town Administrator and building consultant Wendy Frontiero. Trustees will also need to reach out to the historic registry prior to starting any work on the building.

Connie has submitted a proposal for a CIPC grant for \$100,000 to help fund this library heat pump project. The CIPC application includes details such as: the age of the boiler, increased fuel expenses, and closure days due to lack of heat. Electrical upgrade is not on the current Capital Improvement plan. The only library project currently on the Town plan is \$4400 for ADA Capital improvements and the Building Consultant. The previous Town Administrator requested the Trustee remove the other project from the plan in 2021. The Town Capital Improvement budget is tight and the number of requests exceeds the money available. Our goal is to focus on completing our existing grants to strengthen additional requests. We will hear if Hubbardston is awarded this grant in early 2024 and that will determine the next steps. If the Town doesn't get this grant, we will decide how to proceed with other funding options for the HVAC upgrade.

Trustees also discussed the related issue that the current library electrical capacity is not adequate to support the upgrade to the HVAC system. The Town Administer requested Trustees consider funding all or a portion of the cost of an electrical upgrade using Library trust funds. Connie has requested a more specific quote on the cost of this project, but it is estimated as \$10,000 - \$20,000). To fund this project, we could consider submitting a new CPC proposal and/or if the CIPC grant is funded, determine if some of those funds could be used for this purpose, and/or pay all or a portion from library trust funds. Trustees generally support the use of library trust funds to facilitate this upgrade rather than continuing to 'bandage' the current HVAC system. Tom noted Trustees have previously used Library Trust funds for asbestos removal and previous electrical upgrades. Tom suggested we consider trying to complete this electrical upgrade work in the spring in preparation for work on the new HVAC system. Connie pointed out this timeframe will require using only library trust accounts because Town grant funds would not be available until July. Also, we will need to make sure the upgrade will accommodate the proposed HVAC upgrade and future needs. Trustees will discuss funding the electrical upgrade after: we receive the Building Consultant's report, get a more specific quote for the cost of this work, review the current financial statement, and determine which accounts can be used to fund this project.

- **Strategic Planning** [2019-2024 Plan](#) Review

The Trustees will need to update the library's current (2019-2024) Strategic Plan and submit a new 5 year plan to MBLC by Oct 2024. Connie led a discussion on options for how to proceed with strategic planning, including: forming a subcommittee to bring recommendations to the Trustees, setting aside part of each meeting to work on strategic planning, and/or schedule additional meetings devoted to strategic planning. MBLC does not provide a specific format for the strategic plan so we can choose to follow the same format of the current plan or consider other formats. This was the first strategic plan done in a while. The updated plan will be beneficial for future grant applications.

Connie provided an overview of the process used for the 2019-2024 plan which was mostly worked on by a subcommittee including the library director and two trustees that brought recommendations to the trustee board. The subcommittee conducted a community survey and also worked with a consultant who assisted with conducting focus groups. Connie was on the subcommittee and she thought that process went well for figuring out how to structure the plan, but involvement of the other trustees was limited by the process.

Connie proposed the trustees conduct another community survey to identify the current community opinions of the library and identify what library programs and services are important. For example, Hubbardston Center School no longer has a library or librarian and this has impacted library programs and use. Morgan suggested we view this more as an update, rather than creating a new plan from scratch. She proposed that trustees closely review the current Strategic Plan and the strategic goals and objectives, as well as the library's Annual Action Plans and data trends and bring comments and suggestions for updates for discussion at trustee meetings. Connie will work with the library director to summarize progress and gaps on the goals and objectives in the current Strategic Plan. Tom proposed the trustees bring the work on the Strategic Plan to the Select Board during the process. Trustees agreed to add this as a standing item to the agenda and set aside part of each meeting for strategic planning. We will

consider adding additional meetings focused on strategic planning and possibly forming a subcommittee as needed.

- **Library Policies Subcommittee**

Morgan and Krista have been meeting to consider what additional policies are needed for the library and how to organize the related component policies. In early 2024, we will present the overall list of proposed policies. This will include integrating the recent already approved policies with proposed new policy statements. A draft of a revised Mission, Goals and Vision will be presented at the next meeting. The current Mission, Goals and Vision is in the Strategic Plan and we are proposing minor changes to update these statements. Tom suggested the Trustees consider a separate public meeting to focus on reviewing the policies.

- **Meeting Process Discussion**

- **Attending remotely**

Trustees discussed options to facilitate remote attendance in order to make quorum due to inclement weather or illness. Connie confirmed with Candace that remote attendance to in-person meetings is allowable as long as the link is also made available to the public. Library Trustees previously approved the purchase of a Zoom subscription and we will also investigate if the Trustees Google Meet to see if it is stable for meeting use.

- **Alternate Trustees**

Connie explained that the Hubbardston Cultural Council has alternate trustees because all 5 members must be present for that committee to operate. Tom noted the Planning Board has one permanent alternate. It may be challenging for an alternate to keep up-to-date, but it could be a way for future trustees to learn about the board. Connie is checking with the Town Administrator to find out if alternates can be set up for the library trustees.

- **Announcement:** Volunteer Appreciation Event November 20, 5:30 pm Senior Center

- **Standing Item:**

- [Review calendar for the Trustees, financial and other activities](#)

Consider planning for CPC Grants to submit in January. Community preservation grants are State funds to support open space, recreation, and historic preservation. The library has received a few grants. Suggestions include grants for the HVAC upgrade and/or upgrading the library sidewalk to match the Town sidewalk upgrade, and/or re-doing the walkway to the lift. There may be other priorities in the Building Consultant's report.

- **Policies Review** - discussed above,

Tom complimented Bob for organizing the Poet Speakers event. Consider how to advertise more widely to improve attendance. Consider offering more programs like this.

Motion to adjourn made by Morgan, Tom second. Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Krista Goguen

Next Meeting: Thursday December 7, 2023 7 p.m. at the Slade Building.