

Town of Hubbardston
Board of Library Trustees
Meeting Minutes Thursday, December 7, 2023

Members Present: Connie Strittmatter, Morgan Brinker, Tom Robinson, Krista Goguen
Member Absent: Lucinda Oates, Bob Cronin. Also Present: Christine Barbera, Library Director

Meeting Called to order at 7:10 pm by Chair Connie Strittmatter

AGENDA:

- **Library Director's report:** [December 2023](#)

Library Director Chris Barbera read the December 2023 Director's report. She also provided follow up info on questions from the November meeting:

ZOOM: The Town no longer has a Zoom account and the library did not purchase one. The Town now has a Google Meet business account that the Trustees can use for our meetings. The Link will need to be included with the agenda to allow remote trustee and public attendance.

Questions about remote voting. At this point we will just add the link as needed. Chris will find out how to use Google connect to use the monitor in the Slade meeting room to facilitate remote attendance. LIBRARY DATA: Chris is now adding the Director's Report data to the spreadsheet in the Trustee Google Drive. Number of Library Trustees: According to the Mass General Law, the number of library trustees must be divisible by 3. The number of trustees is set in the Town Charter, Hubbardston has 6. The Library Director can't serve as a trustee. This was done in the past, but it is considered a conflict of interest. Connie found out from the Town Administrator that changing the number of Trustees or adding an alternate would be complicated and would require changing the Town Charter.

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

Motion to approve made by Morgan, 2nd Tom 4-0-0. all approve.

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

Action Item: Tom will contact Adam Mercurio of Bella Masonry to follow up on their site visit.

- Brick repair - on hold
- Hiring a Building/Facilities Consultant
 - 1st Draft of Assessment report

Trustees reviewed the 1st draft of the Hubbardston Library Conditions Assessment Report submitted by Architect and Preservation Consultant Wendy Frontiero. Trustees noted the Report summarizes her extensive assessment of the exterior and interior structural conditions and with the exception of the extent of the water damage on the upper floor and issues with the

roof tiles, identifies mostly known issues for which we already have some town awarded funds (i.e. those listed above). Chris clarified that the water damage is old, has had some repair and there are no current leaks. Morgan noted the report also mentioned landscaping improvements previously identified as a priority by Trustees. Connie shared correspondence in a separate message to Chair. Ms. Frontiero stated: "As I mentioned (I hope several times) in the report, the building is generally in very good condition. My top priorities would be repairing the foundation at the northeast corner, lowering the grade along the Main Street facade (at least in front of the basement windows), diverting water from the foundation on the north side, cleaning up the moisture/water issues in the boiler room, and investigating the cracks in the center bay of the building. Repointing the brick and painting the windows and cornices are close behind." The report includes recommended businesses for the type of work needed and potential funding sources. Connie reminded Trustees the report does not include electrical or HVAC concerns which may also require funding for repair or upgrade. The Final draft will be shared with the Town Administrator. With the remaining CPA funds, we will also request a separate report on accessibility issues (ADA) or seek her assessment if the grant for heat pumps is funded. **Action item:** As a follow up in preparation for the final report, Trustees will request clarification on the sequencing of the priority items, identify which are quasi cosmetic items and which are structural or essential.

- **CIPC grant - heat pumps**
 - Update and Discussion on funding the electrical panel

Chris provided additional information of the library's energy usage to the Town Administrator for the Green Energy grant that would fund heat pumps for the library (approx. \$160,000). The Town Administrator confirmed the \$12,000 cost estimate for the consolidation and upgrade to the electrical panel that is needed to support the new heat pump systems. The TA requests the Trustees consider funding the electrical upgrade if the town receives the Green Energy grant. We submitted a CIPC grant for the heat pumps and we could request Town funds for part or all of the electrical upgrade, but those funds are limited. Trustees discussed options for the library funding the electrical upgrade and the electrical consolidation mentioned in the Assessment Report. We also have an outstanding CPA Grant for upgrading the electrical in the Children's Room that could be incorporated into this project. The donation account is discretionary and based on the summary of Library Trust funds, the Freetown fund could be used for library improvement and capital projects. Tom and Connie mentioned Trustees have been good stewards of our finances and accomplished several necessary electrical upgrades economically. Connie made a motion: If the Green Energy Grant is awarded to HPL to upgrade the HVAC system, the Library Trustees will commit the \$12,000 -13,000 estimated cost to pay for the electrical panel upgrade using a combination of the Freetown and Donations accounts. Seconded by Morgan. 4-0-0 All approve.

Action item: Connie will email the Town Accountant to confirm about how the Freetown funds can be accessed.

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

- Hire a consultant? - Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

Connie is working with Chris on a summary of what aspects of the Strategic Plan have been accomplished, or not. Connie mentioned that some of the Plan was very prescriptive and in some cases we accomplished the goal without following the specific steps. For example, we increased library hours, but did not conduct a pilot project. Trustees discussed next steps to complete and submit the new Strategic plan by Oct 2024, with an initial Action Plan submitted in Dec. 2024. Connie complimented Chris for accomplishing so much of the Strategic Plan. Trustees could be more involved in supporting the plan goals. Trustees value her input in updating the strategic plan. Chris would like to have library staff also participate in the process. Trustees also discussed the possibility of incorporating library questions into the town survey, and additional online survey techniques to gather info from patrons and residents who may not use the library (e.g. QR codes, social media). Morgan found out that Tracy Murphy from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission is working with the Town of Hubbardston on the Town's strategic and long range planning. We will designate a portion of meetings to Strategic Planning, and we may still need to form a subcommittee and/or hold separate dedicated meetings.

Action Items:

All Trustees: Trustees agreed to review the current Strategic Plan, community survey, and the annual action plans for January meeting. Specifically, Consider which of any unmet action items are still a priority. Connie and Chris will reach out to the Town Administrator to let him know we are updating the library Strategic Plan and find out how we can coordinate with the Town's planning process. They will work on a progress report for the current Strategic Plan. Krista and Morgan will contact: Tracy Murphy to find out how we can coordinate with the town's process. Collin Center for Public Management; District Local Technical Assistance grant; MBLC - consultants or interns?

- **CERT Collaboration for emergency kiosks.** <https://cefls.org/library/3992/>

Morgan is on the Town CERT committee and she provided an overview of CERT kiosks that provide emergency preparation information. Trustees discussed and supported the possibility of hosting an emergency kiosk in the library. **Action Item:** Morgan will get additional info on the program.

- **Library Policies Subcommittee**

- **Review revised Mission, Goals and Vision**

Trustees discussed a potential revision of the library Mission and Vision statements suggested by the subcommittee and library director. The goal of the revision is to change the focus as a meeting place to focus more on what the library offers. No action was taken. The subcommittee and library director will reconsider how to make it more aspirational (i.e. not just meeting needs) and incorporate participation in regional CW MARS.

- **Patio clean-up and furniture**

Town employees have asked about adding a table and chairs to the sunken area on the south side of the building as a place for lunch. Would it also be possible to add a screen door to better ventilate the work area in the summer. The screen door may have issues related to the air conditioning and historic building requirements. This lunch area would primarily be used by town staff but would need to be open for public use if library funds are used. Trustees support 'beautification' of the area for use. We will schedule a clean up day in the spring to prepare the area and consider how to proceed. Tom will consider how to make the hand railing safer.

- **Library Website Review Update**

Chris described the new features of the upgraded and redesigned library website. She is planning to launch the new website before the new year. It will have the same website address: hubbardstonpubliclibrary.org. She will add Google analytics to track usage and how people are finding the website, e.g. from Social Media posts. She will test accessibility prior to going live.

- **Standing Item:**

- Review calendar for the Trustees, financial and other activities

Trustees discussed reorganizing the Agenda to include Strategic Planning, Policies Review and Town Awarded Funds to the Standing Items.

Motion to adjourn: Connie, Morgan 2nd. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Krista Goguen

Next meeting: Thursday January 4, 2023, 7 p.m. at the Slade Building.