

Starksboro Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, Feb. 15, 4:30 - 6:30 pm

Present: Christa Finnern, Jake Mendell, Susan Thompson, Connor Timmons, and Katie Antos-Ketcham, recorder.

Minutes for January approved, with an understanding that Susan will add circulation data from the last month's meeting.

Opener: We brainstormed a list of what we are most proud of in the last two years. In no particular order:

- Creating an annual appeal
- Funding a weekly storytime
- Easing Covid restrictions
- Creating and presenting ARPA application (based on Bill Gallup's audit and designs)
- Updating mission and vision statements
- Strategic planning work and discussions
- Connections with community groups and collaboration: Pavillion Committee, Energy Committee, Planning Commission, Selectboard, Historical Society and more.

Librarian's Report: We did not have a Librarian's Report this meeting. The Board noted that the "Love your Library" event planned for Thursday, Feb. 16 is a great outreach to the community and is grateful to Catherine for planning it.

Business:

1. Accessibility and Fire Safety project planning

Susan reported that she is continuing to research information to push the 2nd floor accessibility project forward, and that she is working to create a library subcommittee and maintain forward momentum on the project. Susan will Chair this committee.

Updates on project to date:

- Meeting with Selectboard (Feb. 8th): Susan and Katie met with Selectboard to discuss potential funding of site survey. The SB was curious if a site survey is necessary. If project is on Town Office side of the building, the Town owns the property. The question of where the septic is located for Town Hall came up and

SB recommended connecting with Denny Casey, Tom Estey, and Norm Cota for info. about the building's septic. SB supported our seeking outside funding through grants and creating a library sub-committee to work on this project. It was noted that this library sub-committee would also be subject to Vermont's Open Meeting Laws.

- Susan reported that she met the person who was Chair of the Huntington Town Hall project, Aaron Worthley. The building is almost identical to Starksboro's. The second floor also has a stage, painted curtain, and large windows to let in light. Huntington's committee included a project manager, grant writer and another coordinator, and they worked for 10 years to finish their project. Susan's main take-away from her discussion with Aaron was a recommendation to pursue specific funding opportunities, including from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB) and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). Huntington was able to cut costs by using locals to sketch up drawings and do projects such as the crash bar on front door etc...
- Susan was able to connect with Bill Gallup for 90 minutes. In discussion about a site survey Bill suggested a site survey would not be necessary if moved the project to the Town side of the building. Architectural services (\$23,000 estimate) includes engineering audit and environmental assessment. Regarding the lift, a LULA is fancy lift (Bill's words), and he suggested there are other options that are not as pricey. In learning this, Susan suggested we use the term "vertical lift" and not LULA unless we want to tack \$25k onto the project. Bill suggested our next step is to contact a local builder to do a cost estimate for concrete, site work and carpentry, and that we should tack on 10% to his estimates for inflation as his numbers are still fairly recent and solid.
- Susan made a number of calls to follow up on the current building reports on file for the Town Hall.
- Susan proposed we forgo the site survey and not get into any property boundary discussions. If we are able to move the project to the Town side of the building, than that is the clearest path forward. The Board agreed. Everyone was in agreement that it would be useful for the town to pursue a site survey at some point, but that it is not a task for the library board.

There was some discussion about the crash bar and push buttons for the first floor. Katie added that this might be a good ask for the American Libraries Association accessibility grant.

Connor reported that he had a conversation with Theresa Gilman of the Vermont Agency of Transportation about the process of creating handicapped-accessible parking for the library in front of the library parallel to Route 116. Highlights of this conversation

are that the AOT would permit this as an option, but the Town (or Library) would build it and would manage it (including snow management). She cautioned that Rt. 116-parallel parking spot(s) would not be the safest option, as this puts people who may need to use a walker or a wheelchair at greater risk due to their exposure to a busy highway, and that if there is another option that that would be “vastly superior.” Connor noted that Gallup’s “Option B” would do that.

Connor then reported that he has developed a compilation of potential grant opportunities, and that he is happy to work on the accessibility project committee with Susan and take the grant writing. He also would like to ask Erin Buckwalter, town resident, library patron, and development person at NOFA to help in this capacity, and based on earlier conversations, he is hopeful she will want to help. He also thinks that Catherine will be an essential resource for him in his capacity as grant writer, as she holds much of the history of the building and has a clear vision of its potential to the community and to the library.

The Board liked the idea of creating a flex space in the 2nd floor that would include work stations, as making the second floor accessible would create more usable space for the community, not just for events. Katie added she received an email from a community member who has never been to the library seeking a place to meet and work. The Board agreed that this is a need for the community.

Katie added that information should be coming from the Department of Libraries soon about both the DOL-specific ARPA and Congressional Directed Spending grant opportunities for library capital projects. She will continue to monitor the DOL list-serves for more information and alert the Board and committee with important updates.

Susan and Connor are leaving the Board and this is their last meeting, but they will continue to work on this project as a library sub-committee. This group did not determine how often this Committee should meet or who the liaison from the Board to the Committee will be. This will need to be determined at a future time.

2. Library personnel and policy discussion (5:15-5:35)

The Board decided to give the Assistant Librarian a retroactive raise beginning January 1, 2023. Katie will contact the Town Treasurer to implement this and also let Catherine know. The Board also started the conversation about the library’s personnel policy as it relates to holiday, sick, and vacation pay specifically. No decisions were made, and Katie will follow up with Rebecca to better understand the Town’s new personnel policy.

3. Community Outreach:

a. Annual Appeal

Connor reported on next steps. We should decide if we want letterhead, what our timing is, and whether we need to get addresses from the Grand List or on the Internet. Connor will check with Catherine about the letter. We all agreed to review the list of potential donors that we created, correct spelling, add names, remove duplicates, etc. Jake will take the lead on getting addresses either using the Internet or asking Amy about the Town's Grand List. Our goal is April to coincide with National Library Week (April 23 - 29, 2023).

b. Baby Brunch

Jake volunteered to go to the Baby Brunch on behalf of the Board. It is on March 11, 2023 at 11-12:30. We've asked Jake to let them know that our budget includes a storytime. Katie will check with Catherine about starting this earlier using Gifts and Grants funding if we can hire someone.

c. Town Meeting

Katie, Christa and Jake will attend Town Meeting. Katie will:

- 1) Thank all of our volunteers, the Town, Susan, Connor;
- 2) Welcome Leah and Kate to Board;
- 3) Share what this budget accomplishes: in addition to providing our current resources (and name them), this budget will give us the capacity to hire someone to lead a weekly storytime for children, allowing us to better support young families;
- 4) Add we are excited to report that we have been working to make progress to be able to use the 2nd floor of the building as a community venue, and that we now have a library sub-committee working on this project; and
- 5) Invite people to stop by, say hi, grab a cup of coffee, maybe a book, and, if interested, pop up to see the upstairs and to imagine, along with us, how this space might benefit our community.

4. Board Transition Planning (5:35-5:45)

The March 13 meeting will include an opener (16 Personalities); tour of the Town Hall building; a discussion of vision, mission and goals; budget overview; library director / assistant librarian job overview; and a discussion of Board roles to be determined at April meeting. Katie will reach out to Leah and Kate about the next meeting date/time and will create a board folder for them. Important documents for them include 1-pagers from the Town Meeting book and Calendar of Board tasks. It was also recommended that a "Board Buddy" system is set up so that both Kate and Leah have someone on the Board they can contact when they have questions.