

Newport Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes ~ Teleconference  
November 19, 2020  
4:30 PM

Attendance: Stephen Waluk, Brad Carter, Michael Dutton, Robin Skuncik-Jones, Adrienne Shaw, Peter Baylor, Kyle Martin, Scott Skuncik, Janine Weisman, Edwina Sebest, John Davies

Joseph Logue Library Director, Patricia Fetta

Excused: Matthew Leys, Jennifer Gee

1. Call to order:

Stephen Waluk called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM.

2. Amendments to the Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Minutes of the October 2020 meeting:

The minutes were approved as presented.

4. Finance Committee Report:

Michael Dutton reported the financial statements are standard. Wells Fargo did not perform as well as we hoped for - losing \$10,759, or 1.1% decrease in overall value. The good news is the funds maintains a \$52,000 lead over last year at this time. We need to reclassify some of the payroll expenses as they have evolved. Overall, everything looks good.

5. President's Report:

Stephen Waluk states he has nothing to report as Joseph Logue has been keeping him up to date as items arise. Stephen Waluk notes, for the record, Matthew Leys sent him an email stating he would need to be excused from this meeting.

6. Building & Grounds Committee Report:

Scott Skuncik notes that Jim Mass reports standard maintenance for the past month. We are looking into installing sensors to inform us if/when the pipes freeze or there is a water leak. This is partially covered by a Grant from our insurance company and by Hartford Steam Boilers. For the group's consideration, the first year is covered by insurance and then it would be approximately \$900 per year for maintenance. I pulled the records for what we paid for damages in the last eight years and the costs were approximately \$40,000. For the \$900 maintenance fee, we can mitigate - not prevent full amount of an incident but we would know early enough to prevent larger costs. For example, one of the incidents in the past did occur in the middle of the night and this system would email Jim Mass early enough for him to arrive at the library before the administrative office was entirely flooded. We are getting a finalized quote for installation and monthly costs going forward. When that comes through it will be presented and Jim will cover same in his maintenance plan.

7. Financial Development Report:

Joseph Logue stated his report was standard. It does consist of the 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration taunting us at this time. We put a lot of thought and time into this and I wanted to make sure I looked at this in a 360-degree fashion. Each year we have an Annual Appeal letter which we rely on for people to give funds to the library. I do not think it is a great idea to ask for funds at this time. The letter will go out by next Wednesday and basically states that these have been extraordinary times, we are in this together... thank you for all of your support throughout the years... if you are so moved to make a donation and we are in this together. I would like to state that we did have a couple of walk-in donations but I think the letter is good public relations tool. Peter Baylor stated the library has been his only form of entertainment, has been a savior over the past several months and to look in the mail for a modest check from a devoted Trustee. Peter Baylor stated

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he just had to say that he goes to library all the time, the curbside pick is always packed and it is a wonderful service to the public. Stephen Waluk asked if the list has been made more manageable and geared toward individuals that are more apt to donate? Joseph Logue replied that the list does have active members/supporters that are still in town/local. Joseph Logue noted that the letter is the way to go and it will be created in a very respectful way. I do not think that our list has members that are impacted by the but the impact is becoming universal. On top of all we have done, we are still down \$14,000 in fines which is making it into the letter. A couple of other revenue streams have also been impacted. I think in a couple of years we can come back with a more robust fundraising capability.

8. The Friends of Library Report: Jon Davies states that Friends will continue with the current hours, Tuesday through Friday, noon to 4:00 pm. We have added Saturdays from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. We are now in our 6<sup>th</sup> week of lobby book sales. It has been very, very successful. The DVD's and books are 50 cents to \$1 and children's books are 25 cents. I have a correction to last month's statement: we have reopened Ebay sales not Paypal sales. We are busy preparing for our holiday book sale which is from Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> to Dec 10<sup>th</sup>. We have to see what happens within the next month with Covid-19 restrictions and hope this all works out as this is our biggest money making sale and very popular with clients.

9. Director Report:

The Governor threw us a curve ball today with the 2-week pause. I have spoken with the department heads, except for Jim

Massachusetts is out today, to just take the next couple of days thinking about reverting to 'April mode'. This means we will remain open for curbside pick-up and utilize our virtual presence. Jim Mass and I can be here every day. The Children's Department can continue to put out videos. We need time to digest this and determine what we do next. This would be the most drastic step if the library needs to close. If this 2-week pause takes place, we need to consider if we need to close the library. Libraries were just categorized as public institutions and will remain open. Today we had a membership meeting with several libraries. Karen Miller the head of Library Institutions and she will consider what the Governor said and will get back to us this evening with how libraries will be proceeding. Kyle Martin asked if we do go back to 'April mode' what would that mean in terms of staffing and payroll? Joseph Logue would advocate for continued payroll if it is a 2 week shut down. If it is any longer than that, we would need to discuss what other options there are for us. Joseph Logue does not want to get into furloughs or laying people off. Back in March we thought that it would be just a couple of weeks and the Board did back me on my advocacy for continued payroll and benefit accrual. Can we continue to do so? Will it be wise? I have not seen any numbers from the City regarding October. We have been receiving our checks as budgeted last March or April. I am unaware of the any tax shortfalls with the City. Keep in mind that a big part of it is because we are a non-profit and do not pay into unemployment, we pay 50% of it so layoffs are not a way for us to save money.

10. Old Business: No old business to report.

11. New Business: Joseph Logue stated he received an email today from Jennifer Gee stating that she needs to resign from the board as she has been very busy with her own business and family. We would like to thank her for her service.

We have this new item called Press Reader and it is really fun. It is intuitive and easy to operate. I want to say it didn't cost us anything. It sort of did and did not. When I filed for the Library's Annual Report I asked for an additional \$10,000 to dedicate to this new addition. Many patrons come in to sit and read magazines and now it is increasingly difficult to do so and many patrons have smart devices to utilize this service. Kirby Lee designed some really cool book marks so that people are aware of this service. The cost is approximately \$6,000 per year and we are hoping to offset this by not having paper copies of all the magazines. The Press Reader also supplies numerous amounts newspapers. This is a great tool as most people in Newport do come from elsewhere.

We made a few policy tweaks to notify the Board about: some language needed to be tweaked for the MakerLab. A person was asking that we print them hundreds of PPE items in order to sell them and we had to put a little bit of language in the policy, as this person wanted to know where in the policy it states that he can't do this?

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And now we will take replacements for lost or damaged items. Again this is a consideration for people that can find replica. Instead of paying \$30 for an item, if they find one for less we will accept same as we do not know their financial situation right now. This is not a good time to come up with barriers for people using the library. Kirby is a great Collection Development Librarian and she is flagging every replacement to make an assessment.

On another note, the Board usually makes a holiday donation of gift cards from a grocery store to the staff and would like to proceed with that this year. In the past the cards were \$25 for part time and \$50 for full time. Might I just say, I always thought it should be the other way around. Because a part timer would benefit from higher amount. If this is ok with the board, I would like to proceed as it is budgeted for this. I always write a note thanking them for service along with the gift card is from the Board.

Kyle Martin noted that he wants to talk to Joseph Logue after the meeting with regard to the gift cards.

Joseph Logue: going back to new business regarding the new UV book cleaner from Ristech. Edwina, Jon and I have talked about this and this really awesome new machine; an item sterilizer. We call her Hazel. Joseph Logue shows a clip to the Board on how it works and extends his appreciation and thanks to The Friends for donating this great tool. Hazel will be moved upstairs to the Circulation Department right after Thanksgiving so patrons can see how this sterilizer works. Hazel allows the sterilization of items, so they are back in circulation for other libraries and on shelves for other patrons. Peter Baylor asked for the cost. The cost was \$6900. We are the 2<sup>nd</sup> library in the state to have one, we can put all children's items, keyboards, cellphones, etc. in for sterilizing. If anyone would like a demonstration, I would be happy to show you.

When I was in California, we went to a library that had it out for patrons to use. Stephen Waluk asked if we run things through this machine when they are returned. Joseph Logue stated we do and before this machine arrived, we were quarantining items for 72 to 96 hours. The problem with that was that items sit on your record for an extra few days.

Stephen Waluk asks if anyone has any questions for Joseph Logue before we adjourn? There were none. Stephen Waluk reminded all that the next meeting is January 21, 2021.

12. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 4:57. Motion to adjourn was agreed and granted.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!