



Newport Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes ~ Teleconference  
April 15, 2021  
4:30 PM

Attendance: Stephen Waluk, Michael Dutton, Brad Carter, Peter Baylor, Edwina Sebest, Kyle Martin, Janine Weismann, Jonathan Davies, Joseph Logue Library Director, Patricia Fetta, Scott Skuncik, Matthew Leys, Andrea Gross.

Excused: Robin Skuncik-Jones, Adrienne Shaw, Jonathan Davies

1. Call to order: Stephen Waluk called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.
2. Amendments to the Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.
3. Minutes of the March 2021 meeting: The minutes were approved as presented. Motion carries. Next is the Financial Report, Michael:
4. Finance Committee Report: Michael Dutton reports that the Profit & Loss looks very well as does Wells Fargo. Wells Fargo increased by 1.2%. The Balance Sheet and all accounts are looking good. Income is up and expenses are down.
5. President's Report: I would like to welcome our new member, Andrea Groce. Hopefully, one day, we can meet in person. And that is my report. Welcome.
6. Building & Grounds Committee Report: Scott Skuncik reported that we are still concentrating on routine maintenance. We are continuing efforts to clean the Library four times per day. The revised CDC guidance- states that surface transmission is minimal. They have not changed the recommendations, so we are keeping to the cleaning four times per day. We are holding off on any large scale projects as we are running thin with the cleaning efforts. The is one piece we are missing for the HVAC proposal, which is needed for the presentation to the Board. By next month, we should have the capital costs on that.
7. Financial Development Report: Edwina Sebest reports that we are still looking for Board members and if anyone has any suggestions please let Edwina Sebest or Joseph Logue know your recommendations. We mentioned Lisa Becker as possible contender in the last meeting and it was determined to wait for the election in September before we add anyone, so we have Lisa on the back burner for now.
8. Friends of Library Report: In Jonathan Davies absence, Edwina Sebest reports: The book cart arrived and plaque is engraved. If anyone would like to see the cart, it is in the Bookstore.
9. Director's Report: Joseph Logue reported that it has been a month of challenges, but we are doing well and staying on top of the changes as they arise. The vestibule curbside pick-up is doing great-it is super popular. I don't know if we ever have to move things inside. I am looking at a couple purchases. One is a super sleek, copier, printer, fax and scanner. The other is pursuant to conversations Stephen Waluk and I have had, and pursuant to the Personnel Committee/Finance Committee, the Library is suffering staff wise. I think one aspect that would help would be looking at our hours of operation. The Library of RI Standards dictates that we stay open 60 hours per week-this is getting a big wave from OLIS' State Office. We just need to keep them notified of changes. There is no form to fill out, which caught me by surprise. They are being very liberal in this regard. I have done a lot of work with OLIS with regard to our weak points. I am going to share my screen to show the items we have checked out each day of week since July 1, 2020. These totals are cumulative. Wednesdays and Thursdays, after 5 p.m., we have very little activity. Saturdays are certainly busy so I do not want to change those hours. I am looking at after 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. We have checked out 530 items on every Wednesday since July 1, 2020 and on Thursdays after 6 p.m., 250 items were checked out since July 1, 2020. This is every Thursday. These are two weak spots.

Because of some ongoing staff concerns. I checked with OLIS and Steve regarding the pressure valve with staffing concerns and I would ask the Board consider that the Library close at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This would solve a few immediate staffing problems, while we work on staffing solutions going forward. I would ask that the Board consider this today or wait perhaps wait until May to vote. I would like to have this in place for a good three weeks before summer arrives so we are not going through an upheaval. I do have other reports that show there are periods of time where there is no one here. A couple of weeks ago, on a Friday, I went upstairs and all the lights were off. There were staff members at their desks, but no patrons in the building. Stephen Waluk asked if we are leaving Mondays and Tuesdays alone and closing at 8:30 p.m. Joseph Logue indicated that Tuesdays are always going to be more robust days as there are many Monday holidays. Stephen Waluk reiterated that the Library will be saving six hours per week? Joseph Logue indicated that that was the case. Joseph Logue stated the Library would go back to 60 hours per week as soon as possible or at least, on Labor Day. Let the numbers dictate the hours. I would ask that the Board consider this as I think it is a good solution to for the moment. I loathe, both professionally and ethically, withdrawing services from patrons - I mentioned earlier that the property manager worked the reference desk. Closing for six hours per week may not sound like a lot but it would really help out. Stephen Waluk noted we should wait until the next meeting so we can have some more input on this and stated we should put something to vote at the next meeting. I think 7:00 or 7:30 may help with the saving hours. I would like to look at this further. Maybe closing at one time, consistently throughout the week would be better. I know I find myself rushing back to town during the week in an attempt to be here on or before 5:30 and there are times where it doesn't happen and I want to be mindful of those who work far enough away where they are unable to make it to Newport before 5:30 p.m. I think a five to six-hour reduction in hours is reasonable, but it is where we grab it from. I would like to look at this further to see what scenarios work best closing at 7:00 p.m. may work better. Michael Dutton stated that the hours being more consistent across the board on Mondays through Thursdays would be better than only closing earlier on two evenings per week. Brad Carter has two questions, one; would that leave us at 54 hours per week? Joseph Logue stated, yes it would. And are there any community groups or other activities or populations that make more use of the Library at those times? Joseph Logue noted that most programming is over by 7:00 p.m. Stephen Waluk asked if there programming is happening now? Joseph Logue stated that they are and are on Zoom not in building. Joseph Logue answered Brad Carter: I think those most impacted with this would be those using public computers. I can't differentiate who is applying for a job, on Facebook or playing Tetris. We are utilizing eight of the thirty-six computers due safe distancing and are operating at 25% of our public computers. That would be the population's biggest hit, those who use public computers after 5:30 p.m. Stephen Waluk noted that being consistent is easy for regular Library patrons. Let's put something together and bring it back for a vote for the next meeting so you can start preparing for the changes. Scott Skuncik noted that there some questions have been raised with staff safety at night with so few patrons. Some staff members feel uncomfortable being alone with the lights turn off, very few patrons and whoever happens to walk in. I think consistent closing hours a little early would help with those concerns. Edwina Sebest agrees with that also. Janine Weismann asked if cutting back would be a concern or issue on tax day? What is the date? The next meeting is May 20, 2021. Joseph Logue suggests that if the Board passes the change in operation hours, that we do so with a good two to three span of time to properly advertise this change. We would use bookmarks, banners messages and screen savers, etc. One other thing, regarding the ALA Membership-at-Large, there was an election and I ran and out of 49 candidates, I finished 49<sup>th</sup>!

10. Old Business: The board reaffirmed its commitment to hiring a Human Resource Firm as discussed approximately three or four months ago. I have four contacts for same. We did receive a quote from The Singer Group in DC. There are many levels to this, some of which are compensation, accrued time and benefits, which are a small part of it. I want to make sure we are being staffed properly. Neither Patti Fetta nor I are Human Resource guru's, so it is particularly difficult when certain questions or topics are presented to us. Covid has given me a little more latitude in that while the policy may say this-but this is my decision for now. We have had three particular instances. I have sent out a request for info and I have a meeting tomorrow morning with the first one that responded. I hope to have a report for your consideration. Which actually brings up the new business.
11. New Business: Stephen Waluk asked Joseph Logue if that information was in the Director's Report and Joseph Logue agreed. Stephen Waluk asked Board members if were any questions for Joseph Logue? There were none.
12. Adjournment: Stephan Waluk called for a Motion to adjourn. All in favor and meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m.