



LIBRARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Minutes of Meeting  
Wednesday, January 19, 2022

**Present:** Gale Batsimm, Megan Butterfield, Mary Danko, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol (call in), Sally Blanchard (call in), Emily Copeland (call in), Patrick Halladay (call in), Cate MacLachlan (call in), Amy Mellencamp (call in), Jessica Nordhaus (call in), Ailsa Oneil-Dunne (call in), Laura Zhou-Hackett (call in).

**Approval of Minutes:** From November 18, 2021. Cate moved, Patrick seconded. Approved.

**Approve Agenda:** Patrick moved, Jessica seconded. Approved.

**Public Forum:** No public in attendance.

**Friends Report:** Jonathan reported that the Friends sold books at the Holiday Artist Market on December 11 at City Hall Park. They did very well. They are still struggling with book sale locations, may have one inside library in winter/spring. Sales on eBay are still strong, they need someone to volunteer to assist.

**Director's Report:** Mary said FFL is dealing with increase in area COVID case counts. She is hoping things settle down a bit, concerned about little ones that can't vaccinate and don't wear masks. One error in directors report draft was Family Playshop is also on hold along with other live programs for littles. Megan said that she will take a few programs virtual for youth. Creating virtual babytime program also to let families build community as well. The elevator project is huge, we do not have an end date yet. Staff and volunteers are lugging books up and down, getting steps in. FFL will host Courage to Remember in conjunction with the Weisenthal Center. This travelling 40-panel national exhibit may be on multiple floors, March 21 through May. The exhibit and wraparound programs will cover not just the Holocaust, but the rise in disinformation and nationalism. The exhibit will be similar to when FFL hosted Exploring Human Origins. This is an exciting time for us and major exhibits like these bring new folks. The Schematic design phase of the capital campaign began with the selected architectural firm Dore and Whittier, partnering closely with Oudens Ello. This phase will include public meetings. The capital campaign steering committee has begun meeting, expect that to grow a bit. Mary has testified for the Vermont Department of Libraries Working Group that is studying the role of libraries in the State. So far she has put in testimony on library programming and library collections. Mary is also on the Vermont Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee (VLA IFC) and that has been active due to unprecedented book challenges across the country. Cate asked whether we've seen uptick in censorship and intellectual freedom issues. Mary said there is an VLA IFC emergency response team geared toward providing support for smaller town libraries. ALA has not seen this kind of book censorship in recent history. Amy asked about NNE branch stats. Getting good use. The morning Saturday and afternoon Wednesday and Thursday are great. Friday mornings not so busy. Patrons are accessing for a variety of uses. Gale presented on annual appeal, which has raised more funds than last year at this time.

The library is still adjusting to our new computer system(KOHA/VOKAL) and still have a couple more hurdles to get through, especially as it pertains to the library branch. Everyone has adopted this flexible

attitude to serve patrons. Staff still come to work every day with enthusiasm. Friends are supplying treats to the staff today (1/19).

The group discussed a Strategic Planning Committee task force. Mary noted that she wasn't sure what funds would be available from the city to make this happen. We will need to follow procurement bidding guidelines. The Commission needs commissioners to volunteer for a small committee to get started and help consulting group shepherd through process. Jessica and Cate participated in last strategic plan with consultant Maureen Sullivan. It was a good process five years ago. Committee should review goal completion from the expired strategic plan. Jessica said with COVID disruptions and all staff had to do to pivot, it is really important to look at old document and where we are and what are new and emergent needs. Glenn McRae led that work and would probably be happy to review and talk about it. Revisit as much as we can the processes used. It's a heavy lift and with capital campaign and schematic design happening. Cate recommended not making too much work for ourselves, this plan might be about programming. A lot of overlap with capital campaign, may just be a refresh. Also want to be mindful that we have some commissioners on policy committee, some on capital campaign. For those not working on a subcommittee might be good to be on this committee. From previous strategic plan many of the steps that led to vision redesign. Amy said forums with public could feed into strategic plan refresh. Set up meeting to review old strategic plan and whether we could update it. Cate said one of things that came from it was to have Friends have MoU to be fiscal agent and give library more freedom. Jessica asked if library is mandated to have strategic plan, Mary said it is not. Consensus was to just do refresh or check in. Patrick said want to be sure that what is in the plan still reflects what public wants and needs. Moving from place where people borrowed books to place where people meet and community center. The way people knew library ten years ago is different has shifted. Cate was concerned about people moving back to old ways despite all we've learned over pandemic. Amy suggested that each Commission member serve on at least one subcommittee- Building/Capital Campaign, Policy, or Strategic Planning. If a Commission member is not yet on one of these, please let Amy or Gale know your preference.

Commission discussed possibly combining postponed winter breakfast with legislative breakfast in spring. Patrick asked if there is anything in legislation this year that we need that requires meeting soon. Mary said no and then noted that Massachusetts has legislation tied into green building, VT has zero. In anticipation of federal dollars coming, we've met with Senator Baruth about a state building fund for libraries. Once you get something seeded it has potential to keep growing. Curious where marijuana money will go, would love libraries to get a portion of that funding. Gale will contact legislators about best timing for legislative breakfast. Waiting until April we will know who new city councilors are.

**Meeting adjourned:** Cate moved, Jessica seconded. Approved.

**New Meeting Schedule:** March 16 at 7:45 am