



LIBRARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Present: Gale Batsimm, Sally Blanchard, Emily Copeland, Mary Danko, Chol Dhoor, Patrick Halladay, Nora Kane, Amy Mellencamp, Ailsa O'Neill Dunn, Barbara Shatara (guest speaker), Mona Tolba (call in), Laura Zhou-Hackett

Approval of Minutes: From January 18: Patrick moved, Chol seconded. Approved.

Approve Agenda: Sally moved, Chol seconded. Approved.

Public Forum: No public in attendance.

Friends Report: In Jonathan's absence, Amy sent his message along to Commission -- Friends need volunteers for finance committee. Their capacity has increased and they need an Investment Policy, something which is usually very simple but prudent. If you are not interested but know of someone interested, connect them with Jonathan. The Friends and Commission will host a Spring Breakfast for city councilors on April 20; this event helps them understand the library and its role in the community. This year Mary, Jonathan and Amy will speak, no guest speaker.

Director's Report: Staffing has been a challenge with people out sick or caring for sick family members. We received the CDS earmark and there will be a lot of paperwork involved. We are working with City HR, hiring for 2 Computer Assistant positions, one full-time and one part-time. Mona inquired about diversity of candidates. Mary noted we do receive EEO (equal employment opportunity) candidates and that Vanessa from HR does attend the Vermont Professionals of Color Career Fair (April 1 this year). Hiring for computer assistant/help desk right now, postings closed. Fulltime needs a lot of technology skills, Part-time not as much. We have 25 computers and also loan out a fleet of hotspots and laptops. Patrick suggested graduating students might be interested, he works at UVM now. VLA announced two grant opportunities, only one is applicable for FFL. Amy asked how NNE Branch is working. Mary said demolition happened and it is now one big space. We asked the city for some ARPA moneies for more fitup to reconfigure the space a bit. If that isn't available Mary will ask for impact fee money. Those monies are available for some departments like library, fire, police, and some public works. The idea is that as more people come into the city, some departments are impacted by that. Flows will work better with the enlarged space. Now that NNE Branch is permanent we can invest in it. We have a designated staff person.

Barbara Shatara: Programs and Partnership Librarian Barbara is most senior member on staff. When Mary came on as director, the Exploring Human Origins (EHO) exhibit was taking place and she saw Barbara's enthusiasm for turning FFL into a museum and all her energy for programs. Barbara began in 1998 and the city and library have seen many changes during that time. Programs and partnerships have grown and changed. Book clubs are timeless. Currently we have offsite book club for seniors at Heineberg, online general book discussion, and cookbook club. Smithsonian EHO exhibit was FFL's first large exhibit, previously the library had only done art exhibits in upstairs rooms. EHO put us on radar for ALA that FFL could handle these exhibits and programs and has made it easier for us to do other

exhibits. In April the library will bring in Miami University in Ohio's *Telling a People's Story: African American Childrens Illustrated Literature*. It highlights the work of Black illustrators and authors. Picture books are one of the first opportunities for children to understand and read about history. Books on display now in youth area include everything from "The Talk" to immigration as picture books. We can translate our culture through picture books. We have two wonderful illustrators coming who are featured in exhibit. Emily will spread word at St. Mikes, Patrick at UVM. Ekuu will be keynote on April 4 at 6:30 pm and James Ransome will speak on April 12 at 6:30 pm and will be here the morning of the 13th for 4th and 5th graders. Exhibit will be here April 3-30. The next series coming is the Future is In Our Hands about what is happening in community about environmentalism. Much focus on negative, lot of really innovative things happening to adapt to changing environment or to ameliorate issues we are experiencing. Goal of series is also to provide programming to help individuals make impacts: community science is a part of that, we've worked with SciStarter to create kits. Green Mountain Book Festival will welcome Alison Bechdel the last weekend of September and Nonfiction Comic Fest will be in November. Had nearly 500 people for each of those programs in 2022. We did things we hadn't done before. We did a movie screening at Roxie, it worked well. Learned a lot last year. Part of Mascoma grant for the Future is in Our Hands is to fund an assistant for Barbara. Mary is conscious of stretched staff. Gale worked hard to get grant and build relationship. Grateful to Cindy who does the accounting and Friends who have the grants pass through. Position will be 10 hours each week through August. Emily feels like Mary is always empowering her staff to be leaders, she is so pleased with culture at library that fosters that. Barbara can say that where we are at as library is so much better than where we have been.

Subcommittee updates: Strategic Planning group is meeting Friday. Survey is out to public. That process will fit nicely into capital campaign. May be focus of May meeting. Amy attended NPA wards 2 & 3 and had unsolicited nice comments about library. A few people filled out survey, she will update info. Public awareness committee selecting a 150th badge and determining a birthday celebration: celebrate the past and look to the future. Capital campaign is on hold but we are working on geothermal testing.

Other Business: Mona inquired about public health. The City hired new public health equity policy staff person under REIB. Community Partners Desk has relaunched (using glass room for conversations). Library has served as vaccine site and offers COVID test kits, gun locks, and soon will have harm reduction bags. Emily said so many good things in the air with conversations about the importance of libraries in relation to libraries being closed.

Meeting adjourned: Patrick moved, Nora seconded. Approved.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 17 at 7:45 am