



LIBRARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Present: Gale Batsimm, Sally Blanchard, Nora Kane, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Emily Copeland (call in), Mary Danko, Chol Dhoor, Patrick Halladay (call in), Cate MacLachlan, Amy Mellencamp, Jessica Nordhaus, Ailsa Oneil-Dunne, Mona Tolba (call in), Julie Skelly (guest speaker).

Approval of Minutes: From September 21, 2022. Cate moved, Chol seconded.

Approve Agenda: Jessica asked for Public Awareness to be added to the agenda. Nora moved, Jessica seconded. Approved.

Public Forum: No public in attendance.

Friends Report: the Fall Book Sale raised over \$3,000 during the 5-day sale. It was a lot of work and turnout wasn't as high as pre-pandemic. Friends' volunteers are growing rapidly and the board is identifying roles and responsibilities, trying to give agency to everyone but also address specific work that needs to be done. The Friends are excited about the Capital Campaign and Public Awareness Committees and the work they will be doing. Cate inquired about membership with the Friends and Jonathan said that they eliminated membership after signing the MoU with the City, but now describe anyone who gives time or money as a Friend. They have 15-20 regular volunteers and increase to about 40 with book sale volunteers. They are tapping into City Market volunteers and volunteers at UVM and looking at BHS. Mona inquired about increased advertising of the book sale and multilingual marketing. Mary would like to meet with Mona and Gale to discuss. Gale will also send a link to the CEDO multilingual newsletter to the Commission.

Public Awareness: Jessica is co-chairing the Public Awareness Committee, a Friends' subcommittee, with Phil Morin from the Friends' board. This campaign includes the 150th anniversary of FFL on July 14, 2023, and celebrates all the library can be. Meetings are typically once per month on Thursday afternoons. Commissioners are invited to attend. The next meeting will be 11/17 at 4:30 at the library.

Director's Report: Mary noted that yesterday was one of the busiest days she's seen at the library. There has been an increase in UVM students and teens. Increase may be due to new teen librarian, Amanda, whose programs have been well attended. Also Champlain housing nearby may make a difference, as well as coffee shops closing in the afternoons. Allowing food and drink on the 3rd floor has been well received.

There are still gaps in staffing, but library is being creative using subs and temps. The new volunteer coordinator will start at the end of November.

Mary noted that FFL has full-time weekend security. The Pods are not opening until December. Sometimes the unhoused move south this time of year. The library has a compassionate approach with a level of behavior expectation reinforced through trespasses. There have been recent issues with a tent on the lawn with needles inside and someone trying to enter staff cards during the day. Emily inquired about staff being Narcan trained, which they and the security guards are, but no one is required to

administer. Mary will discuss a possible public Narcan training program with Barbara. She said most overdoses happen in homes when people are alone. Staff did recently take a Verbal Judo de-escalation training. Staff also rotates, attending weekly Church Street Marketplace Safety and Security Meetings. Burlington is highly focused on supporting people.

Juliana Skelly, Outreach Librarian: Julie has worked at FFL for two years. She works at the NNE Branch Library on Tuesdays, teaches the weekly ELL class in the evening, is a reference librarian at the Tech Desk, and has assisted with Summer Challenge Program outreach, but her main focus is on senior outreach. She has three volunteers, including Peter Ireland who was a Library Commissioner. She visits 10 locations each month, mostly senior residences, and A New Place, a low barrier facility where she brings free books. Her latest assistant is Queen, a robotic cat that has been making friends (The Kids Department also has a cat, Sox.). Julie works to build relationships and fill gaps. One woman said she was a lifesaver to her during COVID. Others have said the library visit is the most exciting part of the month, when Julie sets up an array of carefully selected books at the outreach site. She also brings an ABLE book on tape player to get them acquainted with the free service. She noted that the library offers the only free evening ELL class. She recently partnered with St. Mike's to find tutors for her intermediate students. Chol asked whether a needs assessment is conducted to identify gaps. Julie noted that she responds to needs expressed to her but hasn't conducted a survey.

Subcommittee Updates: Amy asked commissioners and trustees to let her know whether they would like to serve on the strategic planning or policy subcommittee.

Winter Breakfast: Will be scheduled for February.

Chittenden County Legislators Breakfast: Will include libraries and legislators from throughout Chittenden County. To be held December 9 from 8:30 to 10 am here at FFL. Commission is invited.

Other Business: Mona inquired about web page translation. Currently the library uses Google Translate. Mary suggested that she, Mona, Gale and CEDO meet to discuss.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 18 at 7:45 am