

RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

11/20/2024

Meeting at Rutland Free Library Fox Room

Attending: Ann Bannister___X___; Joe Bertelloni X via Zoom___; Clare Coppock ___X___; Leonard DeLorenzo_X___; Allyn Kahle__A___; Kevin Klamm___X___; Carolyn Meub___X___; Matt Olewnik___X___; Joanne Pencak___X___; Cathy Reynolds_X___; Cathy Solsaa_X___; John Skinner_X___; Ken Watson___X___; Randal Smathers_X___; Amy Williams _A_ (X is present, A is absent)

Presiding: Clare Coppock_____ **Secretary:** ___Cathy Reynolds_____

Guests: Elisabeth Kulas, Dustin Harrington, Gabby Bourassa, Amanda Münch

Clare opened the meeting at 5:16. The meeting started with introductions by Board members.

Agenda Additions:

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: Minutes were amended. Allyn Kayle will be the Secretary. Lenny moved/ Kevin seconded approval of the amended minutes of the 10/16/24 meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Financial Committee Report: Joanne presented. Next month the audit report will be presented. The 13th check was received from the Fox Fund (reconciliation). We see included in the budget increased programming which is being funded by the Fox overage account. There is a special account which holds \$393,731 held in Vanguard and also a Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation. Randal is working on website upgrades which is a large expense; this effort is under budget but not budgeted for this FY. Website was budgeted for \$60,000 in the 2024 FY year; total cost will be ~\$45,000. There were some building expenses this past month.

Fundraising is needed to make our budget balance. The Development Committee will begin planning ASAP. The Annual Appeal went out and we are beginning to receive donation checks. Investment accounts are down in October but up for the year.

Suggestion that the QR code to our "Donate Now" button be available in the Library to encourage our patrons to also be our donors.

Joanne will present an RFP for accounting services at our next meeting. The Finance Committee recommends a compilation annually.

In the FY 25 budget, health insurance costs are up 25%.

Committee Reports and Actions: All committee assignments have been made and each committee needs to meet and elect a chair or two co-chairs.

Personnel: Did not meet. The Union has sent their request to initiate union bargaining negotiations. Darby is working hard to pull together the requested information. Sarah Marcus, a previous Board Member, has volunteered to work with the Committee to negotiate the new contract. The Board needs a negotiator to represent us and Personnel will work towards this. The Board discussed releasing all the requested information in the AFSCME letter. Brief discussion about anonymizing health insurance information and safety and incident reports. Lenny moved that the Director release the requested information, seconded by Lenny. Approved by unanimous consent.

Executive: The RFL Board needs to do a new Strategic Plan. The last plan was completed in 2015 and covered the term 2016-2018. The Ex. Board would like to create an RFP to hire a consultant to lead us in a new Strategic Plan. This is not currently budgeted. A Community Grant could be applied for to pay for this activity in the spring, but the Ex. Committee would like move forward sooner. The Friends may be willing to finance this activity. Citizens, Friends, Board members, staff and others will be invited to participate. Carolyn moved that the Board embark upon a strategic planning process with the Executive Board to guide this process. Seconded by Lenny. All in favor. A committee will be formed to work with the consultant and share the tasks.

Clare asked the Board to support the 21st Century Library Committee in hiring an architect to work on the Asa Bloomer Building. We need to help the Rutland Community understand the needs of a 21st Century Library and what is envisioned. Elisabeth Kulas explained the process for hiring an architect to explore the conversion of the AsaBloomer Building. A handout explaining the process was provided. The process envisions the RFL taking the lead on the architect selection and renovation and the City of Rutland, as building owner, participating and remaining informed and engaged in the process.

Approximately \$24,000 has been spent so far in pursuing this option. RFL has ~\$1.5 million saved to move this project forward. We do not have full project costs yet. We have the support of the Mayor to work together on this project. The State wants to sell Asa Bloomer to the City for \$1. RFL will be a tenant. The issue is still in committee with the Board of Alderman. The Board needs the city to participate in order for this to become a reality. The Board paid for the assessment for 10 Court Street the existing Library building. An architect assessment of Asa Bloomer will allow the Board and the City to have comparisons between the two sites in terms of potential renovation costs and pros and cons of each site.

The City/Mayor has been working with the State and the Dept. of Building and Grounds, as well as lining up Legislative support for the gift for \$1.

Kevin asked if the Mayor and the Board of Alderman are committed to moving forward with Asa Bloomer with RFL as a partner and future tenant? Matt asked if the City is willing to move City Hall?

Discussion on next steps and City commitment. The Board of Alderman offered \$18,000 for project development if we received the State Library grant. It is suggested that the next step be that Randal go to the Alderman/Mayor/City and ask for the \$18,000 to help pay for the architectural services which are the next step. If they do not approve, what does the Board of Alderman need to make a commitment to allow this project to move forward?

If the Library Board is confident that the City is committed to the project, the Board is willing to go out to bid for the Architect assessment as presented by Elisabeth Kulas.

Director's Report: Please see his 7 page report. Randal is presenting the budget to the Rec Department tomorrow and is hoping that the 4.5% increase be reduced to 3% as this will be more acceptable to Mendon and Rutland Town who both experienced high property tax increases. The Board will need to show up to support the Library when the budget is presented to the full Board of Aldermen.

Dec. 4 at 2 pm Chris Graff will do a presentation which is sponsored by the Dept. of Humanities. Please come and tell your friends.

State Librarian Catherine Delneo is supportive and willing to come to Rutland to help; her perspective is that the existing building needs to be torn down.

11/21 website review at 1 pm, all invited.

Randal is being disposed in a trial involving the Dover Librarian who was fired.

Randal is recommending Russell Glitman as a new board member.

Amanda Münch, Children's Librarian presented her report in person.

Development: no report

Building: no report

Policy & Planning:

Adjournment: 6:53 PM

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday December 18, 2024 @ 5:15 pm