

RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

3/20/24

Meeting at Rutland Free Library Fox Room

Attending: Joe Bertelloni ___X___; Candice Britt ___A___; Matt Britt ___X___; Barry Cohen ___X___; Kevin Coleman ___A___; Clare Coppock ___X___; Allyn Kahle ___X___; Sarah Marcus ___X___; Carolyn Meub ___X___; Matt Olewnik ___A___; Joanne Pencak ___A___; Jonathan Reynolds ___X___; John Skinner ___X___; Ken Watson ___A___; Randal Smathers ___X___; Amy Williams ___X___ (X is present, A is absent)

Presiding: Barry Cohen Secretary: Clare Coppock

Guests: Amanda Begin

Barry began the meeting looking ahead to June's meeting which is scheduled to be June 19th "Juneteenth", with the library being closed, the meeting is moved to June 26th.

A big thank you to all who helped get the budgets passed in the towns, which allows for revenue to keep the library functioning with its current staff. All budgets passed with a 60-65% margin. Jonathan requested the need to be more pro-active when presenting library budget information at town meetings. We need to stay on top of this each year.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: Carolyn moved and Matt B seconded the approval of the 2/21/24 minutes which were approved unanimously.

Director & Assistant Director Updates:

Amy: Act 220 is still alive in the legislature with amendments being added. Major pieces include protection for public school libraries and defining trustee responsibilities. Amy invited all to participate on April 9th when both the Vermont Library Association and School Library Associations will be going to the statehouse.

Randal: Thank you to town members for budget approval, especially recognizing Allyn who had to get signatures for the item to be on the ballot

Thank you to all who helped get the grant application in. It is an excellent application.

Starting outreach to Peter Welch's office for a congressional budget appropriation for the library project.

May 4th is scheduled for a Drag Story hour. It is recognized that we need to provide this event safely to the community with extra planning. Randal has started a conversation with Matt Prouty. Amanda is meeting with the National Organization of Drag Hour for ideas.

We are just starting to go through the data received on community outreach. Acknowledged that the first staff comment is the need for more room for circulation items. Randal shared data on our actual physical circulation data noting the big dip in 2020 due to being closed from Covid, and a prediction as to what the forecast is for the future. Randal believes his graph is showing a reasonably good prediction of actual circulation numbers +/- 20,000. Currently our collection is 80,000 books with 160,000 circs (2:1). Randal does not believe we need physical circ numbers to be as high as it currently is. Amanda responded that currently both top and bottom shelves are being used, which is not considered best practice, and that shelves should not be more than ¾ full (to make it easier to remove books). Due to lack of shelving space now, librarians are currently weeding items that they normally wouldn't. And, with the new YA librarian, new collections are to be expected.

Joe agrees that hard circ numbers could be reduced, which doesn't mean we couldn't rebuild the numbers if needed. Amy suggested do we need a strategic plan for collections? Randal acknowledged that there is potential to work with libraries throughout the state to focus on who carries certain collections which can be shared through the consortium. Carolyn asked what is the trend? Most libraries are moving away from solid collections. Amy has been searching for metrics to address this relating population size to circ size. Randal acknowledged that by keeping the ability to accommodate 80,000 books, we will need to hugely increase the size of the renovation/expansion project.

Along with this issue is the fact of the cost of e-books. Publishers are charging a huge amount to libraries for access to e-books. Just another challenge to be aware of.

Financials (report and committee):

Barry reported with 66% of the year passed, we have 67% of income and 66% of expenses...exactly where we want to be with the staff now up to par and the increased programming. Matt B moved to approve the financials, Allyn seconded, and all approved unanimously.

Committee Reports and Actions:

Executive: commitment has been made to get Randal's evaluation finalized in 60 days.

Personnel: Allyn reported the need to discuss in executive session.

Development: did not meet. Matt B reported the April event will not be happening. The committee needs help with more members

Renovation and Expansion: Clare reported we are moving forward nicely, the grant has been submitted, we've received over 360 surveys and are starting to evaluate them. The meeting with the staff was very productive with lots of great input. The Building/Design committee is scheduled to meet on April 10th.

Policy & Planning: Did not meet. Allyn reported they have several policies that need to be looked at on the 3 year rotation. They are still waiting for the "Investment Policy" which the finance committee has committed to address and complete at the April meeting for approval at the full board April meeting. The committee has been assigned the task of addressing the vision statement, which has not been updated since 2015.

New Business: none

Carolyn moved/ Jonathan seconded moving into executive session with Randal and Amy to address personnel issue and a building issue at 6:17PM

Jonathan moved/Carolyn seconded moving out of executive session at 6:27PM

Adjournment: 6:27PM

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday April 17th, 2024 @ 5:15 pm