

Farmington Libraries since 1901

Library Board Minutes

December 20, 2023

Attendees: Dana Pescatello, Alan Sherman, Henry Gu, Gary Ontko, Lyman Louis, Rich Olivastro, Celia Bouza, Linda Chapron, Maureen Bittner, Ida Franklin, Norma Hartley, Jocelyn Kennedy

Board Members Not Present: Kate Martorelli, Trish Garcia, Vanitha Patil, Keith Vibert

Quorum: A quorum was determined. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comment: There were no members of the public present, and consequently, no public comments were made.

Approval of the Minutes: Lyman moved, and Maureen seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Board Chair Report:

Committee Report/Update Submission Deadline: Dana requested that the committee reports be submitted before the end of the Thursdays preceding the board meetings. Also, the vote request should be notified to the chair before the meeting for planning purposes.

Dana gave a shout-out to the team for the facility report and highlighted the art installment from Farmington High School in the lobby as well as the successful Barney Gala. Furthermore, Dana reminded the board about contributing to the staff's New Year celebration as a token of the board's appreciation for the staff's hard work and dedication.

January 2024 board meeting is scheduled to be held online via Zoom. Concerns were raised about potential information security risk with using the Zoom for the meeting. However, it has been determined that the potential risk is minimized and acceptable due to the open nature of the meeting and the uses of enterprise version, which offers higher security and guarantees.

Executive Director Report:

Recent Activities Update:

Jocelyn updated the board of recent happenings at the library. Besides the Farmington High School students' art installation is up and the new mural in the Children's room, the library held a successful gratitude event for staff right before Thanksgiving with great feedback from the staff.

Jocelyn informed the board that the library is going to celebrate the holidays with a series of events that include New year's celebration for the littles and new year lunch for the staff.

Jocelyn reminded the board that the library is scheduled to close on December 23 and the new library hours will be in effect starting from January 2.

Jocelyn also expressed gratitude to the friends of the library who approved the spring program funding request of \$3,750 at their meeting on December 7.

Carpet Replacement:

The library has received a third bid for the replacement of the carpet in the children's room, which was damaged due to water leaks in September. The contract has been awarded to Surroundings Custom Interiors, who also replaced the Barney Library's carpet. Rich moved, Gary seconded, the board approved for Jocelyn to sign the contract. The estimated cost of the project is \$6853.52. It is worth noting that this cost could potentially be offset partially by an insurance claim, which the library plans to submit as the next step.

Financial Report:

Jocelyn updated the board that the library's finances are progressing as planned. She clarified that the library's budget includes the FVGLA's board liability insurance, as well as the insurance for the cemetery and village green. However, Stanley Whitman reimburses their portion to the library. This reimbursement is the reason for the negative balance observed under the 'General Insurance' item on the expenditure report.

Budget:

Jocelyn discussed the preliminary budget for 2024-2025, which will be presented at the first preliminary budget meeting on January 18th. The budget includes a projected funding of \$3,016,790 from the town, reflecting a 3% increase confirmed by Kathy during last week's meeting. The budget also assumes a 5% increase in funding from the FVGLA endowment, bringing the total non-municipal funding to approximately \$270,000. The overall preliminary budget totals about \$3.2 million, marking a 3% increase from the previous year's budget.

In terms of personnel expenses, in addition to a targeted 3% increase from the previous year, an extra 1.5% has been budgeted for an equity increase for 20 library staff members who are paid just above the minimum wage and professional staff who are paid significantly below their peers with similar experience and roles.

Jocelyn elaborated on the pay equity situation at the library, expressing her intention to establish a pay grade or salary band for the library. She also plans to gradually increase salaries towards a 100% equity level for staff currently paid below that level.

To partially cover the increased cost of personnel compensation (about \$72,000) for pay equity, the library will significantly reduce the collections budget. Jocelyn explained that due to the library's recent affiliation with the Library Consortium Incorporated (LCI), the library now has access to greatly increased resources and information. With a heightened focus on collection development, this reduction in the collection budget can be effectively compensated. In addition to the reduction in the collection budget, current expenses (including staff professional development, professional memberships, and conferences, etc.) and special programs will also see a 50% reduction.

Lastly, Jocelyn discussed that the utility budget is projected to increase by 30% to \$185,000 due to anticipated significant increases in electricity rates.

Committee reports:

Friends: Linda reported that the Friends raised over \$11,000 in the October 28 Novel Tasting event through sponsors, auctions, ticket sales and wine sales. The Friends also receive \$700~900 through book nook sale each month. The funds raised enabled the Friends to donate over \$10,000 in the past 2 months for the Maker Fair and the winter programming and museum passes, as well as the staff holiday luncheon.

Besides supporting the library financially, the Friends also continue to donate books to various charities and organizations and swap books with the small outdoor neighborhoods' standalone libraries.

There is an upcoming children's book sale scheduled for Jan 20 and 22 at the library.

Facilities Report: Gary reported that the 'ad hoc' committee has had two meetings to address the most urgent infrastructure issues and potential improvements around the libraries. This committee plans to collaborate closely with FVGLA's infrastructure committee in the future.

A long-term capital spending plan is currently under development to address these needs. This plan will be shared with the board, the town and the FVGLA for discussion in early 2024. The committee has identified several urgent needs, including sealing the main library roof joints in 2024, replacing the roof within five years, replacing the HVAC air handler units over the next four years, and improving the main library entryway, sidewalk, and curb cuts in 2024.

Additionally, the committee is reviewing potential improvements to the Barney library's HVAC system and entryway. A separate capital plan for other contemplated improvements will also be developed in early 2024.

The library is seeking inclusion in the town's facility review project, which could provide a solid foundation for the long-term capital spending plan. The town has been very cooperative in assisting us with the water infiltration problem and in efforts to divert water away from the library building.

Art: Norma reported that the art committee has been temporarily paused due to a limited number of outstanding tasks. The art exhibitions for the current year have already been scheduled and responsibilities have been delegated to the library staff. The upcoming exhibition, featuring textile art from the renowned artist Phyllis Small, is set to commence on January 20 at the Barney Library

Tech Committee: Henry submitted the tech committee's December 12th meeting report. The report highlighted the following points:

- Two self-checkout stations have been installed and are now fully operational.
- The committee is currently evaluating options to enhance security at the main library, including the potential addition of video surveillance at the main entrance.
- Regarding multimedia upgrades at various locations, the committee has determined that the current budget allows for the upgrade of the multimedia system in the two boardrooms. This will include the installation of wall-mounted large screen TVs and mini-computers. The implementation of this project will be spread across the fiscal year to distribute the cost.
- The subscription for our public computer utility, Deepfreeze, will be extended for an additional year. This will provide us with ample time to evaluate its usage.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm. Lnida moved to adjourn, seconded by Gary.

Next Board Meeting: Jan 17th at 7:00pm via Zoom.