

Farmington Libraries since 1901
Library Board Minutes
November 18, 2020

Attendees: Jorie Andrews, Chris Lindquist, Lori Yu, Andy Baron, JoAnn Cephas, Caroline Ford, Jadwiga Gocłowski, Matthew Sweeney, Lisa Warner, Gary Palumbo, Alex Thomas, Maureen Bittner, John Teahan, Andy Verzosa, Robin Barrett

Quorum: A quorum was determined. The ZOOM meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of September 16, 2020 and October 21, 2020 were reviewed and approved. Andy moved and Matt Sweeney seconded the motion to approve the minutes.

Chair's Report:

Jorie stated that the committees are starting to convene. Alex Thomas as head of the Personnel committee has started to draft policies. Matt Sweeney is heading the Capital Planning committee and is working closely with Chris and Greg. There is a need for a Vice President of the FVGLA. Also, the Library Board will need another member since Ram Gopalan has resigned. Jorie also made an appeal for a Library Board member to head the Tech committee.

Director's Report:

Chris provided an update on the phased-in reopening plan. We are in phase 3 of a 4-phase approach. We continue to work to be in alignment with the governor. We are providing grab and go and limited access to the library. The children's room has recently opened to 1 family at a time and that has been successful. We continue to offer limited access to study rooms.

Chris reported that several libraries in the state have already closed due to spikes in COVID-19. He recognizes that we need to be prepared to go back to curbside exclusively if necessary. He and the staff continue to plan for both a greater phased-in reopening and for closing. Chris will be meeting with staff next week to make a decision about scaling back or closing.

Chris provided an update on the facilities projects. There are 5 condensing units at the main library that will need to be replaced. Chris has one quote and is planning to get 2 more quotes and will bring that to the Capital Planning Committee. The Library has monies set aside from the FVGLA endowment allotment. If we sign the contract in January, the contractor could order the equipment with the hope that it could be installed in March or April, weather permitting.

The new carpeting has been installed at the Barney Library and looks wonderful.

Monthly usage reports show that the reference transactions have increased significantly as staff assists patrons with e-resources. E-books usage continues to grow and that is expected to continue.

The annual report to the CT State Library was completed and submitted to the state. Chris thanked Caroline, Monique and the Department Heads for their hard work in gathering all of the statistical information requested. This report provides an opportunity to compare ourselves with neighboring libraries. Jorie noted that it appeared the annual questions were updated to reflect the current situation with COVID-19.

Chris stated that they will be touring the Nutmeg TV studios to explore opportunities to promote the Library.

Shana Shea has been at the Library about a month. She and Chris will be looking at Communications in a more global way and the website will be part of that planning. The website is functioning fine but is in need of a redesign.

The Executive Director's Approved Closed Dates 2021 was included in the packet since there was a revision. May 29 was inadvertently left off the exhibit provided in the September packet.

Budget:

Chris reported that the budget reflects spending as expected with the exception of pensions. The pension amount is over budget due to some retirements. We will likely need to move some surplus funds from other line items toward the end of the 3rd quarter in order to address the deficit in the pension line so that we can balance that account by the end of the fiscal year.

Special Committees:

Personnel Committee – Alex Thomas reported that she and Lori and JoAnn have been very active. They have worked with outside employment counsel and commented and approved a letter to go out to current remote employees. The nature of the letter was to request medical documentation for the need to work remotely.

They are working on a memorandum that will go to current staff regarding COVID-19 procedures. The focus is on the order of communication. They are also working with outside employment counsel, Chris and Caroline on a list of frequently asked questions regarding COVID-19 such as quarantine, isolation and how much leave can be taken. A slide based on COVID-19 protocols that was distributed at Town Hall customized for our use will also be included.

Also under discussion is a remote working policy which they hope to complete in January.

Chris thanked Alex, Lori and JoAnn for their insight and guidance with these HR issues.

Capital Planning Committee – Matt Sweeney thanked Gary for his “trailblazing” and his help with the building maintenance and improvement projects throughout the years. Matt reported that the committee is working hard to be certain that we need what we are asking for. They have created a framework for evaluating projects that includes considering three main factors: safety (people and assets), driving traffic into the library and being socially responsible (community and environment). Matt discussed how the current projects and the proposal for the Children's Department re-design all fit within this framework.

Chris thanked Matt for keeping the projects on track. Greg has done an amazing job getting up to speed on preventative issues. The committee's future efforts will include planning for a new roof, developing a 5-year capital plan and working with the town on the possibility of setting aside funds outside of the operating budget for necessary facility improvements.

Technology Committee – Jorie stated that we do not have a Board chair for this committee. Jorie asked the Board to submit recommendations of friends or spouses that might be willing to head up this committee. Chris has a functioning committee comprised of the department heads, the town's IT manager and his assistant, and Harry Trider. They are working on an inventory of hardware and software assets. They will develop a replacement schedule in the new year. Harry is researching upgrading the email server to Outlook 365. They are looking at the internet capabilities and evaluating if upgrades are necessary.

Farmington Room - Andy Baron reported that the committee has prioritized our initiatives. We will join the CT Digital Archive and upload some of the material from our archive. Andy will stay connected with the Farmington Heritage Alliance. Jorie acknowledged that the access to the Farmington Room is limited currently but hope that can change.

Art Committee – Jorie stated that we need a Board chair for this committee. In the past, we have completed an inventory, hung some additional paintings and had some of the paintings at the Barney library cleaned. This committee will need to look at funding the cleaning/repair of paintings as one of their initiatives.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Friends: No update today.

Public comment: None

Adjournment:

The ZOOM meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm. Jadwiga moved and Alex seconded the adjournment.

Next meeting = December 16, 2020 at 7 PM via Zoom

Respectfully Submitted by Lisa Warner, Secretary