



Wethersfield Library

Wethersfield Library Board Meeting

VIRTUAL

January 25, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

Meeting Began at 7:06 p.m.

Present: Martha Conneely, Chair, Peter DeNegre, Diane McAdams, Kristen Michaels, Laurie Wrona

Also Present: Brook Berry, Library Director and Kevin Hill, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Hannah Granfield, Michelle DiPaola, Terry Santapaola

Public Comment

None

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

None

Nomination and Election of Secretary

Laurie Wrona nominated Kristen Michaels to serve as Board Secretary, seconded by Diane McAdams. After no further discussion, Laurie motioned to close the nominations, seconded by Peter DeNegre. The nomination was unanimously approved and Kristen Michaels was elected Secretary.

Approval of Minutes: Library Board – December 7, 2021

Diane McAdams voted to approve as presented, seconded by Peter DeNegre

Ayes: Martha Conneely, Kristen Michaels, Laurie Wrona

Abstain: Diane McAdams, Peter DeNegre

Motion carries.

Town Council Liaison Report

Kevin Hill reported that the final installment of the DOT Putnam Bridge project was approved earlier this week, which will create a parking lot and walking trail to connect Wethersfield and Glastonbury. It will be a great development for our community.

The Town Council voted to have a public hearing in February regarding cannabis in Wethersfield and what is best suited for our town (i.e. cultivation, transportation, retail, etc.)

The town is reviewing project recommendations for the funding that we will receive from the American Rescue Plan Act. If there is a library project that would be suitable for these funds, the Library Board should bring it to the Town Manager's attention.

Chairman's Report

Martha Conneely echoed Kevin's suggestion to identify a project for the ARPA funding. Although some of the funding is dedicated to COVID response, there will also be funds that can be used in other ways to serve the community. The Capital Improvements Advisory Committee is also reviewing proposed projects, the Board will need to consider the library's various funding needs and how they are best divided and prioritized such as the RFID system and the library refresh. Martha and Kevin both agreed that it is probably best to focus on something more tangible and distinct for the ARPA funding, such as the library refresh, and use Capital Improvements funding for infrastructure projects.

The Finance Committee will meet on either February 7th or 8th with a follow-up meeting on Feb 24th or 28th to review the budget. The dates will be finalized and announced as soon as possible. The regular February Board meeting will be cancelled. The Board will meet on March 1 to vote on the proposed budget. Brook said that the numbers will change a few times during the process, Martha encouraged all Board members to participate and ask questions. The public hearing on the budget will be April 18th.

Although the Board voted at the December meeting to resume in-person meetings in March, the situation has changed since then and the Town of Wethersfield has reinstated virtual meeting mandate. If this changes before the March meeting, the Board will re-asses.

Library Director's Report

Brook reported that the Friends of the Library have started accepting donations again. So far staff has just been telling people who call in to ask and it has been going well. Once it is promoted, which will be soon, it will definitely get busier. The Friends are not meeting in January, they might in February. They have still not decided about an in-person book sale in April.

There have been three in-person programs so far in January, two for adults and one for teens. They all had the maximum registrants. Parents were very happy with the teen program, and it was a great opportunity for the teen librarian to start to meet teens since there haven't been many opportunities during the pandemic. There are more teen and adult in-person programs coming up, the hope is to resume in-person programs for children in March. The kids' winter reading program, Book Scouts, is going well.

Brook is working on a collaboration with the schools and the Wethersfield Historical Society on a town-wide program based on the play *Our Town*. She is working on getting copies of the play, other ideas include showing the Hal Holbrook film and an in-school instruction component.

The delivery system for our library consortium has been experiencing delays lately due to weather and Covid. Hopefully that will get better in the near future.

The Town Labor Attorney is working on finalizing the union labor contracts, the cost will be split between the town and library.

The new Chief of Police toured the library with Brook, it was a good opportunity to get to know him and explain some of the library's typical support needs from the PD like welfare checks. Brook might look into also utilizing 211 for some of these needs in the future.

The library recently received a donation of four pieces of artwork from Ron Abbe, it is a generous contribution and a nice opportunity to update the art displays.

Brook suggested that the Outreach Committee meet with the Director of Parks & Rec regarding the story walk at Wintergreen Woods to learn about any upcoming maintenance plans and/or use of ARPA funds that might be mutually beneficial. We will look to schedule this in February.

The Town Council approved a new custodial vendor contract which will increase our expenses by about \$10,000 annually, a significant increase. Brook toured the library with the supervisors and is hopeful that we will receive much better service moving forward.

Adjournment

Kristen Michaels motioned to adjourn, seconded by Peter DeNegre. In a roll call vote, all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Michaels

Secretary