



# Wethersfield Library

Wethersfield Library Board Meeting

April 26, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

**Meeting Began at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Martha Conneely, Chair, Hannah Granfield, Kristen Michaels, Terry Santapaola, Laurie Wrona

Also Present: Brook Berry, Library Director, Carolyn Vallieres, Friends of the Wethersfield Library

Absent: Peter DeNegre, Michelle DiPaola, Diane McAdams, Kevin Hill, Town Council Liaison

**Public Comment**

None

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda**

None

**Approval of Minutes: Library Board – March 1, 2022**

Laurie Wrona moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Hannah Granfield.

Ayes: Martha Conneely, Kristen Michaels

Abstain: Terry Santapaola

Motion carries.

**Friends of the Library Report**

The Friends are busy preparing for the upcoming book sale May 20-22. They have received many donations! They will make some modifications to the usual set up to allow crowds to be more spread out. They are recruiting volunteers, most help is needed for set-up on the 18<sup>th</sup>. There will also be an opportunity for just Wethersfield teachers will be invited to shop on the 19<sup>th</sup> and they will be given funds to spend.

They are working with Dollars for Scholars to hopefully amend their policies restricting funds to only Wethersfield residents, and include Wethersfield students who reside in Hartford. Martha pointed out that those students also cannot receive funds in Hartford since they don't go to school there.

The Friends received a generous \$5,000 grant from a retired teacher in Wethersfield, which is to be used for the children's department but not for books or programs. The staff will be asked to identify some needs for this funding.

**Town Council Liaison Report**

None.

### **Vice Chairman's Report**

Martha Connelly, Library Chair, notified Hannah Granfield that she has recently been elected Chair of the Wethersfield Democratic Town Committee. Martha would like to confirm that the Library Board does not find this a conflict of interest. Martha expressed her confidence that she is able to serve both respective groups without any conflict of interest, as she has for many years in various roles. Brook will examine the Town Charter and Library Board By-Laws, and will reach out to the Town Manager and Town Attorney for their feedback. She will report back at a future meeting. No decisions will be made until then.

### **Chairman's Report**

Martha Conneely announced that the Library has received a \$1.7M bond from the State Department of Economic and Community Development for the library refresh project. This is a great achievement for a much-needed project that has been in the works for many years. The staff submitted an excellent proposal which was supported by representatives Amy Morrin Bello and Kerry Wood and Senators John Fonfara and Matthew Lesser. The total cost for the project is \$1.98M, we have some additional funding saved for the difference and may also use some ARPA funds.

Martha asked the Board if there was any follow-up discussion regarding the Town Council budget session last week. The general consensus was that the Town Manager's \$100,000 cut to the bottom line of the budget seemed very arbitrary and unprecedented. Martha has asked the manager how that number was determined and received no explanation. There was also a consensus that it would have been preferred to have the budget session in-person rather than virtually. Much of the conversation during Town Council's budget workshop was overshadowed by political discussion. Martha felt that the Board should have every opportunity to defend the budget that they have approved. Hannah Granfield thanked Laurie Wrona for speaking up in support of Brook's hard work on the budget, Martha thanked all Board members and public for their support throughout the process. The Town Council is scheduled to vote on the final budget May 13.

### **Library Director's Report**

Brook reported that there was an unfortunate accident in the display case and a couple of the Ukrainian eggs were broken. She is going to work on getting a legal review of our policies and liability for these installations moving forward.

The State Library ARPA funds have been fully spent as of 3/31 on various needs such as air purifiers and filters.

Brook is working with Miranda Creative who originally designed our branding to create a unique branding for various initiatives such as Wethersfield Reads, Pride Month, and Earth Day. It is anticipated that the Pride design will be featured on temporary wallpaper in the front vestibule during the month of June.

The Town Read of *Our Town* was a success, there was a good turnout for the book discussion, author talk, and movie screenings and it also included classes at the high school.

Brook attended the State of the Town breakfast, and will be participating in the high school career fair, as well as helping with drafting resident surveys with a sub-committee of the Wethersfield Social Justice Coalition.

The CT Passport to Libraries program started up again, we have been giving out seed packets from Hart Seed Co. to participants that visit our library.

Planning has begun for the Summer Reading Program, the theme is "Oceans of Possibilities". Brook requested permission to request \$10,500 from the Friends of the Wethersfield Library to cover expenses such as incentive rewards, promotional materials, etc. Hannah Granfield motioned to request the funding, Laurie Wrona seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. The Friends will vote on it at their next Board meeting.

### **Finance Report**

As of this meeting current year expenses are currently at 79% spent out. Other spending will be wrapped up in the coming weeks.

Library Assistant Monica Breuer will be retiring on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Library Board wishes her all the best and extends their thanks for her years of service. Brook indicated that succession planning continues and is beginning to investigate whether or not to upgrade that position or not, potentially providing staff with either a promotional opportunity or providing part time union staff with the opportunity to become full time. It is hoped that this would create more efficiencies and flexibility for the Library as a whole moving forward, however due to ever rising health insurance costs it may end up also phasing out a position.

The Sjoman account is currently down, hopefully it will bounce back soon.

### **Adjournment**

Kristen Michaels motioned to adjourn, seconded by Hannah Granfield. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Michaels

Secretary