



Wethersfield Library

Wethersfield Library Board Meeting

June 28, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

Meeting Began at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Martha Conneely, Chair, Michelle DiPaola, Kristen Michaels, Terry Santapaola, Laurie Wrona

Also Present: Brook Berry, Library Director, Fred Presley, Town Manager, Kevin Hill, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Peter DeNegre, Hannah Granfield, Diane McAdams

Public Comment

None

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

None

Approval of Minutes: Library Board – April 26, 2022

Terry Santapaola moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Lori Wrona.

Ayes: Martha Conneely, Kristen Michaels

Abstain: Michelle DiPaola

Motion carries.

Friends of the Library Report

Brook Berry reported on behalf of the Friends that the Book Sale went very well, about \$7,800 was raised. Wethersfield teachers were invited to purchase books with school funds before the sale was open to the public which was a great opportunity.

Town Council Liaison Report

Kevin Hill reported that the Town's 2022-2023 budget was passed at the May Town Council meeting. The library received the full amount of funding put forth by the board. There is an overall 1% increase to the Town budget, but residents should still see a decrease in taxes because of the State cap on the motor vehicle mill rate.

There will be a referendum in November for the proposed plan to renovate Town elementary schools, it's currently budgeted at \$270M with half being subsidized by the State.

Councilor Mary Pelletier is moving and as such will be replaced by Shelley Carbone.

Brook requested that Kevin continue to advocate for the library to receive some of the ARPA funds which would be used on the RFID system, HVAC and generators.

Chairman's Report

Martha Conneely welcomed the new Town Manager, Fred Presley and shared the library's strategic plan. Fred has toured the library and met with Brook and is looking forward to learning more about the Town and the library.

The Town Council approved accepting \$4.0M (\$1.7M of this is for library renovation) in funding from DECD. The remainder of the necessary funding to bring the library's portion to \$1.9M will come from the Library Capital Reserve account. Michelle DiPaola motioned to request that the Town Manager authorize the transfer of \$200,000.00 from the Library's Capital Reserve account to the following: Improvements to Town-Wide Public Infrastructure and the Library project. It was seconded by Terry Santapaola. All voted in favor and the motion was passed.

It would be ideal to move the next Library Board meeting to August 2nd to be able to vote on the year-end transfer of funds. Terry Santapaola motioned to move the meeting, seconded by Lauri Wrona. The motion carries, the next meeting will be 8/2/22.

Two Library Board members will be stepping down, Peter DeNegre and Diane McAdams. Martha thanked both of them for their service.

Library Director's Report

Brook reported that programs have been very busy, over the past 3 months there have been 48 children's programs serving about 600 kids. There was also a great Holocaust remembrance program, teen poetry and art slam, and many 7th grade visits. Now the focus will be summer reading.

New library pages are being hired soon.

The grant report has been completed for the state library ARPA funds that were received. Funds were used on various items such as a bubbler, charging devices, new tables.

Brook has been very busy this past month representing the Library at many community events, such as the Pride ceremony.

Concerning COVID modifications, all computers have returned and seating continues to be increased on each floor. Soon groups may be able to hold meetings in the building again. There is also a plan to start to bring back toys in the Children's Department, as many parents have been asking for this. Staff will clean them on a regular basis, as they always have. COVID remains a challenge though as a recent exposure among staff almost required closing the library for 5 days.

The library celebrated Pride month in June with programming, book displays, and a special redesigned logo that was featured on the website and the entryway.

Brook notified the Board about a complaint that was emailed to her and the mayor regarding the graphic novel *Gender Queer*. The individual felt that this book was not appropriate for the library collection. Brook read the book and wrote a letter to the mayor detailing the reasons why it is included in our adult collection, citing the Library's Freedom of Use Policy and Collection Development and Maintenance Policy. She also tried calling the individual but did not receive a return call. She pointed out that this is currently the most banned book in the country, so there is bound to be some opposition. Martha also read the book and felt that it meets a need in the subject area and that there is a community need for the book as a resource. Michelle

stated that any topic could be found offensive, and it is bad practice to restrict anything on the basis of offense. Laurie pointed out that this is the reason we have policies to address controversial situations like this. The general consensus was that the policies should be the guiding principal and the book in question does not violate a policy. Martha encouraged all Board members to read the book and for Brook to share her letter to the mayor with the Board.

Brook asked the Board for permission to request \$500 from the Friends of the Wethersfield Library to help defray the costs of dumpster rental for books that need to be disposed. There are lots of books leftover from the book sale, many which are in poor condition and cannot be sold. Terri Santapaola motioned to approve the request of funds, seconded by Kristen Michaels. All voted in favor.

Finance Report

Brook presented the FY22 financial report. As of this meeting 94% of budgeted funds were spent. The remainder will mostly be spent on payroll. Brook expects that there will not be any funds left over, if there are the Board will vote on carrying over the funds at the next meeting.

The Schwab accounts are not currently performing well, hopefully there will be a rebound. If accounts are below \$300K as of June 30 we will not make a withdrawal. The Finance Committee will review this.

Executive Session – Topic: Benefits for Library Director

Terri Santapaola motioned to move to Executive Session, seconded by Michelle DiPaola. All voted in favor.

Benefits for Library Director

Upon returning from Executive Session, Laurie Wrona motioned to approve benefits changes for the Library Director to reflect the packages approved by the Town Council for the Town admin group. The motion was seconded by Terry Santapaola. All voted in favor.

Adjournment

Michelle DiPaola motioned to adjourn, seconded by Terry Santapaola. All voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Michaels

Secretary