

Westhampton Public Library Board of Trustees
Community Room Westhampton Public Library

December 9, 2021 7:00 P.M.

In attendance: Carol McMurrich (taking minutes) visitor Sue O'Rourke, Caralyn Whipple, Angela Griefen, Mikki Nevins, Anne Marie O'Reilly, Meaghan Schwelm.
Absent: Brian Mulvehill

1. **Call to Order** at 7:01 PM
2. **Guest:** *Sue O'Rourke*: First, wonders if she should come to meetings to represent the Friends, to keep communication channels open. Second, read minutes from October and felt concerned that the town does not want to support the library in terms of paying for its maintenance. This is what was discussed the last time Sue came—when Phil had suggested to Friends that they start an endowment to support maintenance of the library, and the Friends said no—the library should be maintained by the town. As far as the Friends are concerned, they have had more money these last few years, and more new Friends, and from what we hear the majority of the people support this library. Certainly 11 years ago some people did not support the library, but now some of them have come around. The issue seems to be that maintenance for the library has never been raised at the town meeting which is where it needs to be raised. Asks, where does the notion that the town would not support the library come from, because it's never been raised at the town meeting. We know that we need to be on the capital planning committee. Next Thursday there is a Capital Planning committee meeting and we need to get library maintenance on the schedule. It shouldn't be the library's job to raise money or start an endowment. We do everything we can but maintenance should belong to the town.
Schwelm: at November meeting they spoke to Phil, and to be on the Capital Planning budget we need to have a project that is \$10,000 or more. One plan is to ask for more money for our repair line and the maintenance line as the building gets over. Another plan is that we have learned that it's considered best practices for the town to take care of regular expenses but if there are special things there can be an endowment for that. Phil threw out idea of making library carbon neutral: this is down the road and would be a huge expensive project, and would be a special thing: he's thinking about fundraising for that. Under the MBLC it would be an appropriate thing to fundraise for.
O'Reilly: Phil said that if we had a project that was more than 1-2k that we should ask the town for the money and make a good case for it. If there was something we really needed and we made a case the finance committee would support it,

and the select board would support it. In terms of the painting that Phil did, we didn't go to the town for that because he stepped in and did it. (We paid half of the lift). Recalls that Phil toured us a number of years ago and pointed out the things that need to be maintained.

McMurrich: need to prioritize a few things each year and ask for funding. Even if Phil offers to do the projects for free we should ask for the money and hire someone (Phil if he wants to) so that we are setting a precedent of paying people to take care of the building.

Nevins: Phil has been leaning on the philosophy that the townspeople pulled together the town to build the library and people will be invested in maintaining it.

O'Rourke: suggests some library members attend the capital planning meeting to learn about the process so that when we have a big- ticket item, we can put in for it.

O'Reilly: It's long-term planning: submitting a project means we get on their list, and they don't entertain anything less than 10k.

Whipple: Do people hire someone to assess a building? How do you know when things need to be maintained/fixed?

Schwelm: Phil can do that. Two things he mentioned that would be big costs would be the roof and the heating system. His point about the heating system was this carbon neutral idea: would be bother replacing our current system if we were going to do carbon neutral it would be a much bigger thing. Roof should last 25-30 years but the solar panels might need to be replaced (and installed properly!) when the roof is replaced.

O'Rourke: There are people on the Friends' Board who want to step down. Keep eyes open for people who might want to sit on the Friend board. Needs to be a Friend. Meets first Tuesday (but not regularly). There are often email votes. Please pass along any names to Sue O'Rourke.

3. **Minutes from last meeting**: From 11/9: Motion made and seconded. Four approve, one abstention (McMurrich missed the last meeting).

3. **Treasurer's Report** Library Building Account: \$3,594.48; State Aid \$2,829.76; Deferred Town Monies: \$65,339.66; Library Gifts Account: \$21,224.02

4. **Director's Report** As written: And, our five hotspots have been popular: usually 3 checked out. They are grant funded, we should keep 3 T Mobiles for the year. Looking into AT&T hot spots for those that T-Mobile doesn't work for, it's 37.99 per month, but the hotspot only costs \$0.99. Goes over financial scenarios of different combinations of hotspots: and whatever we decide, we need to factor that into the budget. Nevins asks if there is an option for another grant—it's possible, but not promised. Either way we might try to get hotspots through another vendor, we would at least tack on to get

some AT&T ones. Whipple: Elementary school has a program that is offering free hotspots as well. She will look into that to see where that funding is coming from. Schwelm reports that all the people who are borrowing them are adults, not school aged kids.

Sculpture was made by Wade Clements dad, Michelle and Wade would like to donate to the library. Emily did think of a spot, a little side table in the Judd room that doesn't get used for anything, and could accommodate that sculpture. McMurrich moves to accept donation, Nevins seconds, unanimously approved.

Schwelm would like to reduce work week to 35 hours when her contract is renewed: it would still be considered full time. It would obviously impact salary. There have been things going on with family and she needs to go to the cape, she doesn't have two consecutive days off when she works on Saturdays. Victoria's suggestion was to have a substitute librarian pool, which lots of libraries have. You can have it in an emergency so you can have coverage if someone is ill, etc. Schwelm thought start small but funding that, and maybe over time could fund a part time position. Many libraries have a minimum staffing policy for safety reasons, we do not. Years ago a person was working alone in Southampton and was injured, we should have two people. In the future we would hope to make that policy.

We received a grant from the Association from Small or Rural libraries (assume for \$3,000—that's what she asked for!) Check may be made to the Friends of the Library, and it's to continue the planting and the programming on pollinators at the library. There was a lot of interest in wetlands plants which would be no maintenance and also adding blueberries (had a vision of a row all along that side of the library). We would use a couple thousand for plans and a thousand for programs. Has reached out to Chris Wayne and Tom Martin. We also could get tools to check out and for use in the yard. Whipple shares that there is a nice blueberry farm just over the line in Chesterfield, maybe he could help/participate.

Suggests *tabling this item*: many libraries and towns are creating land acknowledgement statements, stating that the land that your building is sited on was once inhabited by indigenous peoples. If we want to consider this we should talk to the select board to see if they may be considering it. It's even more powerful if it's the whole town acknowledging that the land belonged to indigenous people. Schwelm will reach out to selectboard, has examples from other libraries and towns.

5. Friends Report- meeting will be next week.

6. Old Business: none

7. New Business

a. 2022 Initial budget planning—we need to submit January 15, and we meet on January 13th—so tonight we can review just a few things. Something else that relates to the substitute librarian/library staff safety is that it's important to be aware that there

have been people in the library who have mental health issues. We do have an emergency button, but it raises the issue of people being there alone. Meaghan will reach out to police to see what the back-up plan is. May look into de-escalation training. If we had someone who could cover up to 4 weeks – it's a pretty small ask money-wise (and it covers Meaghan's vacation) and also gives flexibility that if a volunteer cancels that we have a few people we could call on to make sure there are always 2 people in the library.

Whipple: it's very wrong to have only one person in the library. It should never happen. Schwelm: there is one consistent gap for two hours (Mondays from 4-6)

At first suggests 4 weeks substitute coverage (that is her two-week vacation plus two weeks coverage). McMurrich suggests asking for six weeks of coverage. Need to ask for enough. We can always explain that this is a reasonable expense because it is a safety issue.

Also asking for double repairs—from 1k to 2k.

Maintenance—doubled based on what we're spending and also putting the painting in.

Utilities are all over the place: have to make guesses assuming things are going to be higher.

Decreasing landscaping budget—we are getting the grant for this and we've never used 500. We can have a category where we're asking for less.

Equipment we need that budget line item to be higher—we know exactly what we need.

Mandatory purchasing is 20% of operating budget

Calculation of volunteer hours is 635 hours of volunteer hours x 13.50 = 8,572

Next time we will see the finished budget which will be set.

b. **2022 Strategic Action Plan:** Put out a plan every year to the MBLC- makes us eligible for LISTA funding. Good to have in place, updated based on things they hadn't been able to accomplish last year and wanted to carry over. One goal they didn't get to was to update work in the Children's room—wanted work by some illustrators of color and a more inclusive representation for kids in the library, even if Westhampton isn't diverse we need our books to be windows as well as mirrors. We will get new prints for the Children's room, and trustees and friends may want to weigh in on what goes up.

8. Any other business to come before the meeting not anticipated at time of posting.

Phone call from patron who had read October minutes and had concerns around the discussion about brainstorming members of the community who could be on the committee for the 2023-2027 strategic plan. We suggested some ideas for including the LGBTQ community and suggested an individual. Worried that we "outed" the person.

However, the person was not identified as a LGBTQ, it was following a sentence in which we stated we wished to include a man, a LGBTQ+ person, a teen, a young family, a new family. You would need to know who the person was in order to know which of those things it was referring to.

Next Meeting: 1/13/22 Thinking about meeting at an earlier time: will ask Brian if he can meet earlier at 5 or 6:00. O'Reilly will email Brian to ask.

Adjourn at 8:36