

Minutes of the Westhampton Public Library Board of Trustees  
October 14, 2021, at 7:00 PM  
Community Room, Westhampton Public Library

In attendance: Anne Marie O'Reilly, Brian Mulvehill, Meaghan Schwelm, Angela Griefen, Carol McMurrich, Mikki Nevins (left at item 7d), Caralyn Whipple

1. **Call to Order** at 7:12 pm
2. **Minutes from the last meeting:** July 8, 2021 moved, seconded, and approved unanimously with one abstention (Mulvehill was absent). September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Library Building Account: \$3594.48; State Aid: \$277.47. Deferred Town Monies: \$82,729.50; Library Gift Account: \$21,014.02.
4. **Director's Report:** As written, and: Schwelm is very pleased with Andy Gould playgroup. Expects that it will become more popular.
  - a. Necessary repairs: motion sensor needs to be replaced on the men's room faucet for \$700.
  - b. Phil Dowling is doing a huge amount of work on the exterior while he has this lift available: we have rotting around the cupola. The windows are wood frames as are the 4 posts. Phil purchased new vinyl windows to replace the wooden windows for \$640. Schwelm suggests that we use the \$1000 from our repair line, which combined with the \$700 for the faucet puts us over. We can use our repair line to cover these costs for now, but because we have extra state aid money we should just use it. Trustees agree.
  - c. Mulvehill shares idea of endowment and the gift account: that almost is an endowment. Schwelm chimes in that legally, endowments are not allowed to be used for maintenance—it's to enhance the library. So it would technically be illegal if we used these funds for maintenance. The town is supposed to be paying for the maintenance. We need to talk to a real finance person to get some perspective on this. (conversation continues under new business).
  - d. Basement storage: there is a lot of stuff in the basement and we are never allowed to store things in the basement because there are no sprinklers. Schwelm would like to investigate this with the fire department and gain clarity on what is/is not allowed. In the meantime, we will reach out to the people who we know have stuff in the basement and require them to move their things elsewhere.
    - i. Nevins will ask Morley Cleary to look at the fall festival
    - ii. Mulvehill suggests if there is no possibility for storage in the basement perhaps some kind of a shed could be built.
  - e. New request for use of the yard: High school wants to create a fire and a film. Friday night – John Letendre will have a key to the storage downstairs so they can access the electric.

- f. We are not getting a laptop anytime soon because of the chip shortage. We do have an account through Staples technology so Cheryl Provost will look into what they might be able to get on our behalf but it may be a while.
- 5. Friend's Report: Friends co-sponsored the lift that Dowling is using for painting. Dowling had visited the last Friends meeting to explain his position in terms of the history of the library and what to expect in terms of the town, and to share that we should seriously consider fundraising for building maintenance. The Friends do a lot for us, and at least certain members feel that they're not in a place in their lives where they want to take on fundraising. If we do tackle long term fundraising, we may not be able to rely on the Friends, we may need to look elsewhere.
  - a. Will also sponsor the "Book or Treat" where kids will get treats when they check out a book.
- 6. Old Business
  - a. Schwelm's evaluation will be discussed next time
- 7. New Business
  - a. Christmas and New Year's Closing Dates: first, confirming that we will have a half day on the day before Thanksgiving. Second, Christmas and New Year's are on Saturdays. We are closed usually the eves. So we would be closed Thursdays the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and Saturdays the 25<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - b. Westhampton Connects Loom Follow up: they undressed the loom and it will be removed from the library this weekend.
  - c. Planning for the 2023-2027 strategic plan. Schwelm will share the link with trustees that goes through the key parts of a strategic plan: mission and vision statement, a user needs assessment (survey and focus groups) developing goals, and a brief description of the planning methodology: What we do, who participated and to what extent, how the information was gathered, etc. They suggest a 3 meeting model: meeting 1 is 2 hours: orientation and SOAR exercise (strengths, opportunity, aspirations and results) Great starting point is coming up with a group of people who are willing to come to these meetings: trustees, friends, and community members. Questionnaires can be given to community partners and patrons and also children in the community.
    - i. We do need to brainstorm members of the community who could be on the committee: could put on What's Up Westhampton, and could post in the school newsletter, reach out to Andrea Belanger to see if there is a high school student. Make sure we have male participants, LGBTQ+ participants, a teen, maybe a young family, a new family, etc. Possibly Ruth Tracy could be considered. Will continue to discuss early in the New Year.
  - d. Discuss long-term planning for building maintenance including the possibility of creating an endowment fund: We want to make a list of things that might come up and what we may need money for. Some things are already taken care of like furnace maintenance etc. So, we need to think about when we'll need to replace things: such as painting, the roof, deck railings, etc. There is interior painting that

needs to be done. One of the things that it's OK to spend an endowment on is renovations: but painting touch ups don't count as maintenance. We need to talk to Phil, and talk to the Planning committee, and reach out to the MBLC to make sure we're understanding this correctly. Is there leeway if you're in a municipality where the town is refusing to maintain the building?

A resident had brought up is there a mechanism to save some money each year to use for maintenance – e.g. we ask for 3k to be put into our Building Account that is outside of our operating budget. BUT that would be money that would not be put back into the town at year's end.

Anne Marie asks about the solar income: this goes to the town, could we access that? Over time it has been over \$35,775 we have given to the town. It's about 5k per year. Question: what does the town use that for?

We should talk to Phil, or others on the Capital Planning committee to try to figure this out. Knows that there is a lot of love for the library and believes we can tap into that – this is true- but looks like there may be legal issues to fundraising for building maintenance. We do have sympathetic folks on the Selectboard right now. Schwelm will check with MBLC to confirm whether its illegal to fundraise for maintenance. Also to ask whether other libraries have had the ability to save for maintenance.

Mulvehill points out that we have been forgotten partly because we chose to fly under the radar. It's time to change that narrative.

Other issue is that town is always trying to do things cheaply—this is such a beautiful building and we don't want it to be cheaply fixed.

Table idea of the endowment: we still have the gift account, which contains a portion of the Friends' Fundraising and any direct checks that come into the library.

Schwelm will also ask MBLC about fundraising for maintenance AND whether there is the possibility of saving money.

e. Consider budgeting for a substitute librarian: tabled until next month.

8. Any other business- none
9. Date for next meeting: 11/11 is Veterans Day so trustees agree to move meeting to 11/18 in November.
10. Adjourned 8:30 PM moved, seconded, and approved unanimously.