

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PLAINFIELD TOWN LIBRARIES

June 2, 7 pm; Meriden Town Offices

Draft Minutes

Present: Mark Pensgen, Jean Strong, Nancy Liston, Emily Sands,  
Mary King – Director, Nancy Norwalk - Director  
Absent: Suzanne Spencer

7:01 Call to Order, Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve made by Pensgen, Seconded by Liston, all voted in favor to accept the agenda

7:05 Announce: Non-public session announcement (RSA 91-A:3) if necessary: (a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.  
(b) The hiring of any person as a public employee.  
(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting.

7:05-8:00 Listening session / Public Comment

Summary of Comments:

Dennis Girourd – Trustees should do the job they are supposed to do. Would like to see more time for the Director at PRML, keep Nancy N. as Director, questions the need for 2 libraries – what do citizens want and what are they willing to pay for? Trustees should give all facts to the voters without any special interests keeping issues in the dark, and Trustees should give respect and courtesy earned to those who have contributed.

Jane Whitzel – Keep both libraries. Has lived 39 years in Meriden and uses both libraries, would like ADA access and meeting room in Meriden. Would be devastated if we lost the Meriden library.

Virginia Drye – goes to PRML every day it's open, would like A/C (unbearable in summer), wants more books, especially series of books which are often not complete.

Grace Hardy – Runs museum, lives in Plainfield and has enjoyed both libraries. One librarian for two libraries is a concern. Great supporter of Nancy Norwalk – she is an encyclopedia of knowledge for the town's history.

Jeanne Thompson – would like to see both libraries used more – are a great resource and a community center, would like to see more programming – maker spaces, STEM programs, art/music, educational courses. They are jewels and could be more so.

Clint Swift – Thanks for having the session, would prefer to spend less time at Trustee meetings, number of non-public sessions should be few and far between – board needs to tighten it up. Hiring of employees is an exception. Projects – could be a meeting with members of the community to meet

halfway and lessen the burden on the Board. Examples – Library Survey (Bev), Basement (Cindy). There are opportunities for the community to help. Agrees with 2 strong libraries. Need to be sensitive to institutional knowledge. PRML tech volunteer was a supporter and has not been back in the library since – should not happen. More dialogue in Trustee meetings. Would be better if more time for public comment at the end. Buck stops with Trustees regarding the ADA situation at Meriden.

Dennis Girourd – Liked Select Board meeting last night, the process. People voted with an open mind.

Bev Widger – Supporter of PRML, as was her mother. Would like to see recognition of library as a community center – buy trash stickers, hold events, etc. It's different on Plainfield side of town because it is the place to go. Would like Trustees to recognize the efforts of all the people who give so much to make both libraries work and recognize how far it has come. More involvement of the Trustees to organize and attend programs and events.

Clint Swift – Concern about the financial picture, not everyone in town uses both libraries so it's easier if you can get private support for projects. Easier to sell to taxpayers.

Cindy Heath – Trustees should consider the survey and universal desire for more hours at both libraries – evaluate budget-wise. Restore 2 hours lost at PRML, and increase hours at Meriden to sustain parity. Thanks Trustees for having the listening session – keep having them.

Jane Whitzel – thanks for the session. Can't fathom where animosity is coming from and would like things settled more amicably.

Virginia Drye – Would like special collections cleaned up and organized, can't find things.

Cindy Heath – Cornish colony history is a unique resource, and how can we celebrate that.

Jeanne Thompson – How about including the town of Cornish in our libraries – collaborate or merge all three libraries. Cornish residents use Plainfield libraries and don't pay.

Brad Thompson – Good library has a good collection, staff is courteous to patrons, and is willing to explore technology. He is willing to pay for membership to Lebanon libraries due to depth of the collection. Volunteers in Meriden – difficult because of bus / pickup, would like to see a maker space, 3D printer and small CNC. New programs would bring out some new people and get kids making things. Takes money and a place to do it. Maybe a grant?

Virginia Drye – survey did not distinguish between teen and children, would like more differentiation between children and adults, and more programs for teens. Maybe a teen book club?

Bev Widger - We're different, don't need to be like Hanover. Libraries should reflect what the community wants.

Brad Thompson – More use of state resources.

Jeanne Thompson – Cornish Colony is unique, want it to be a more positive environment.

Susan Nugent – 30 year resident. Grew up in Hartford which tried to build one central library in Quechee. It didn't work because it was too difficult for many to get there. It is a luxury but also a

necessity to have two libraries in town. Serves as a community center and a center of knowledge. We have access to all books, even if they aren't in the library. Bring people in for joyful events. Noted Meriden does have an air exchange (not A/C) which does help to cool the building. Changes do need to be cost effective, but would like to see a review of the hours.

Jane Whitzel – Up to date technology is important but I would not want to lose the sense of community We have these 2 unique villages, Keep 2 libraries, Handicapped access and better meeting space Good programs for all spectrum of ages. Duckworth has been used for meetings.

Grace Hardy – more coordinating with town for programs with Duckworth. Duckworth accommodates 60 people. Not a good place in winter. Would like an active partnership with the library.

Virginia Drye – Library is often the only thing open in town in the evening – only place for people to go.

Cindy Heath – evidence based community planning. Librarian and staff make a library valuable. The book is still important. Maintain balance between book and technology.

Clint Swift – Bring young people in (grow or die). How to attract young people to libraries. Would like Brad Thompson to give a program for adults (tech for aging baby boomers).

Emily thanked everyone for their attendance and comments. Mentioned that the public is very welcome to contact her or all of the Trustees with any additional thoughts.

8:00                    Motion to adjourn made by Jean Strong, Seconded by Nancy Liston, all voted in favor