

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PLAINFIELD TOWN LIBRARIES

November 14, 2016, Meriden Library

Draft Minutes

Present: Emily Sands, Mark Pensgen, Nancy Liston (arrived after the start), Jean Strong, Suzanne Spencer, Mary King (director)

7:05 pm

Roll call

Announce: Non-public session announcement RSA 91-A:3, II, 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.

Approval of agenda –Suzanne made a motion to approve the agenda with public comment to the public comment. Emily seconded. All voted in favor.

Public Comment: Clint Swift said the basement at PRML is done, and that we are all advocates of libraries. He said that 161 people came to the PRML celebration and that he hopes we can all move forward in a positive way.

Administration

Approval of October Minutes (10/17) – Emily made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/17. Mark seconded. All voted in favor.

Correspondence – letters from Cindy Heath, Clint Swift. RTK requests from Clint Swift and Diane Rogers. Suzanne suggested that we list all RTK requests with correspondence, as this data is important and asked that if any individual trustees receive RTK requests and respond to them, to forward them to her. She said that the library board has received 6 quorum RTK requests this year. In contrast, the school board has not received any.

Donations - PRML received \$1150 for the Anita Barrett Memorial Fund in honor of the former PRML trustee. Emily sent a condolence card to Anita's children noting that we had received many donations in Anita's memory.

Budget Discussion

Presentation of Budget (Pensgen) – most of the budget is flat except an increase in labor costs due to the phase in of the full year of two staffers at each library when they are open. The director's hours were increased to 34 a week, which created an increase in benefits costs.

Jean Strong asked what the board's plans were for Air conditioning at PRML. The board responded that they would ask town facilities manager Brad Atwater to look at different systems in 2017 and make a recommendation. Brad is looking at the system in its entirety. Any recommendation that the board sponsors would be a warrant article for the following town meeting.

Public questions - town administrator Steve Halleran noted that for the past two years, the library budget increases have been twice the percentage of the towns' and asked when they would level out. Mark said that barring the unforeseen, he expected it to level out the following year.

Public comment – Cindy Heath thanked the board for adding boosting staffing so that two employees would be in the building during the hours they are open.

Nancy Liston made a motion to approve the budget as presented with the caveat that the salary increase line item will change based on whatever percentage the town uses. Emily Seconded. All voted in favor.

Reports

Director's Report (King)

Mary noted that the statistics reports show different information between ML and PRML, and she is working towards having them show the same information in the future.

Basement completion – Nancy Liston thanked Mary King and Mark Pensgen for their extra efforts towards the basement completion since they were not personally recognized during the basement grand opening.

Update on digitization of Special Collections – Nancy Norwalk is looking at software. The board discussed looking at what other communities are doing for special collections. Mary noted the difference between “cataloguing” and “digitization”. Digitization would enable users to actually pull up the content or a picture of special collections items online. The first step is to catalog the existing items, and digitization would come much later. Nancy Liston and Mary both noted that it makes sense to look at software options with the future and the possibility of digitization in mind.

Finance Report (Pensgen)

Working Groups

Policies

Public and non-public meetings policy (Emily) – starting January 1, the trustees can go into nonpublic session to discuss legal advice. Emily will make the motion to add that provision to the meeting policy at the end of the year.

MOU update (Jean Strong, Nancy Liston) –Emily raised concerns about the secrecy and lack of transparency of the PRML friends regarding their proposed MOU. She said that Mary had asked for a copy of the draft and the friends had refused to share it.

Suzanne asked Cindy Heath why the friends were unwilling to share the draft of the MOU with the trustees and the director. Cindy said that while there were only minor proposed changes, Bev Widger, who did the bulk of the work on the draft, “preferred” to share the draft when she could present it and explain the proposed changes.

Suzanne reminded the group that when NH State librarian Michael York came to the September meeting, he said that outside of HR issues, all aspects of the library should be public. Suzanne said that there should be nothing controversial in the proposed MOU, and if there isn't then the friends should have no problem sharing it. She reminded the group that at the October meeting, she requested a copy twice and was refused twice by Bev Widger.

Nancy Liston said that the secretive behavior by the friends towards the director and trustees is not helping build trust and not in keeping with how library groups are supposed to function. The trustees generally agreed that this proposal process should be transparent.

Suzanne asked if the PRML Friends board had shared their proposed MOU to the general membership. Mary said that at the last PRML Friends meeting, portions of it were read out loud, but the document wasn't provided to the members.

The board asked about the status with the PRML Friends' meeting with the Meriden Friends.

Amy Lappin, president of the Meriden Friends, said that while the Meriden Friends had requested a copy of the PRML Friends proposed MOU in advance of discussing it with the PRML Friends and would have preferred receiving it in advance, they had agreed just before the meeting to meet with the PRML friends and receive it then. The Meriden Friends would then meet on their own to decide if they were willing to make any of the PRML Friends' proposed changes.

Emily Sands called on Clint Swift who was raising his hand. He said that the PRML friends came up with their draft because the MOU that the trustees passed was "boilerplate" and didn't meet the PRML Friends' needs. Amy Lappin said that the Meriden Friends requested and received changes to the original proposed MOU during the period where the trustees invited input before approving the final version. She said the Meriden Friends were very happy with the MOU that they signed and were only willing to make minor changes.

Nancy Liston said that the discussions about the MOU started almost 18 months ago, and that the trustees' patience was frayed over the lack of the PRML Friends' action and secretive behavior. A member of the public spoke without being called on and told Nancy Liston to "pipe down."

Emily said that she had been willing to wait on the MOU with the expectation that we'd have something to discuss at this meeting. The same member of the public spoke again without being called on and told Emily to "cool your jets." Emily suspended the discussion because it went out of control.

HR (Spencer/Sands) – Suzanne said that she would be meeting with Mary to look at the personnel manual. That meeting will be publically warned.

Suzanne asked that the policy committee make a review of the bylaws their main upcoming priority. She also asked the PRML Friends for a copy of their bylaws before and after their changes made this summer and fall. She had asked for a copy of both in September and had not received them.

Friends updates

Friends of ML Update (Susan Nugent) – The group has a new logo designed by Sara Lappin. They hope to start discussions with the PRML Friends in January for another One Town/One Book project.

Friends of PRML Update (Cindy Heath) – Cindy Heath said her group is working on collaborate on joint friends programs and little free library. They recently elected new officers. Cindy said that Mary and the Trustees were thanked "globally" during their meeting.

Emily expressed concern about Friends raising funds for scholarship money versus the library and wondered whether funds raised were being accounted for separately and if donors understood which cause they were giving to. Nancy Liston questioned whether or not the PRML friends' mission was becoming too broad for a library friends group. Suzanne noted that when Michael York came to the Sept

meeting, he said that Friends groups should have a narrow focus. Cindy Heath said that she felt the PRML Friends projects were narrow in focus.

Public comment – Cindy recommended a consulting company from Lebanon that could be used for the ethernet connection at PRML.

8:57 Mark made a motion to adjourn. Emily seconded. All voted in favor.