

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PLAINFIELD TOWN LIBRARIES

November 21, 2016; Meriden Town Hall

Present: Emily Sands, Jean Strong, Suzanne Spencer

Draft Minutes

8:31 Call to Order, Approval of Agenda. Suzanne made a motion to approve the agenda with public comments limited to the public comment section. Emily seconded. All voted in favor.

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.

Public Comment (only comments pertaining to the MOU with PRML and/or Meriden Friends)

Cindy Heath noted that she sent a timeline about the PRML efforts to the MOU. The trustees said that they received it so recently that they did not have a chance to read it.

Bonnie Swift read an email from Bev Widger that she said she received that morning. Bonnie said that in Bev's email, Bev said she was sorry if some felt that she held the draft hostage; that was not her intent. She said it is not her practice in dealing with other boards to provide a draft to a board in advance. She requested that the meeting with the Meriden Friends continue and that the policy committee discuss it afterwards.

Clint Swift read a statement that he hoped with the basement completion done, "The Philip Reed Memorial Library addition and all its "money,money,money" and what to build and when problems are now behind us. I think we all can breath a big sigh of relief on that one." He said he hoped that he hoped on going forward that the friends and the board could work together in a positive way.

Andrea Keen asked how long the discussion about the MOU had been happening. Emily said 18 or 19 months, and that there was a period that was open to comment. Suzanne added that the document was read out loud at three separate public meetings and requests for changes were made and granted.

Andrea said that library system didn't have great services when she first started looking for story hour times when her kids were little. She said that amazing work has been done to bring us to the point where we have a much better services. She asked for mutual respect moving forward.

Board discussion on MOU – Emily noted that the reason the meeting was called was because the conversation at the last meeting was cut short by interruptions.

Suzanne expressed concern that while Bev may be used to doing things a certain way which may be appropriate for the private sector, this is a public board. She noted that when NH State Librarian Michael York spoke at our meeting, he noted that library discussions are supposed to be transparent. She said she would like to see a copy of the PRML Friends draft changes. She said that she also still has not received a clean copy of the PRML Friends bylaws before and after the Friends made revisions.

Emily asked Cindy if the bylaws with highlighted changes were passed. Cindy said yes. Suzanne said she would like to see a clean copy of the PRML Friends bylaws before the changes were made so that she could see what was changed, not just he adopted changes.

Emily said that if there are minor changes that both friends groups can agree to for the MOU, this shouldn't be a burdensome process. Emily expressed concern that the process of the Meriden Friends having to meet with the PRML Friends to see the document and then have to meet again to discuss the changes and then have to meet with the policy committee has become too burdensome.

Emily noted that if there is a policy committee meeting it will be publically noticed, and anyone can come, including the trustees. Suzanne said that anything handed out at a working group meeting can be subject to the Right to Know law.

Emily said that when she has served on boards, she has seen proposals ahead of time. She said it puts the trustees on the spot to expect them to enter into discussion about a draft without seeing it in advance. She said that perhaps the PRML Friends proposed process is unfair to the Meriden Friends and the trustees.

Suzanne asked if the PRML friends would give written copies of the proposed changes to the Meriden Friends. Cindy said yes.

Suzanne asked what type of consultant the friends group has been working with in preparing their draft changes. Cindy said that Bev and Bonnie have a consultant they were working with. Suzanne asked again what type of consultant they had been working with. Bonnie said that the consultant they had been working with is based in Lebanon and has a legal background and works with corporations. Suzanne asked for clarification that their consultant was an attorney, not a library consultant. Bonnie repeated that their consultant has a legal background who works with corporations in developing policies.

Emily noted that this is an amendment to an existing policy, so it doesn't need to go through the policy committee. She said that that whole board may want to have input.

Emily said that the two friends groups could meet and we could skip the policy committee and bring it to the board on December 12. The issue deserves board level attention. Suzanne said that from her sense of the last meeting, the whole board and the director would like to have input.

Bonnie Swift raised her hand to make a comment. Emily said that at the last meeting when she called on someone outside of the public comment section things escalated and got out of hand, so she was sticking to the board discussion and not taking comments from the public outside the public comment period which had already occurred.

Emily moved that the PRML Friends and FOML Friends bring agreed changes to the MOU to the board five days in advance of the Dec. 12 meeting for board discussion. Jean seconded. All voted in favor.

8:56 Emily made a motion to adjourn. Suzanne seconded the motion. All voted in favor.