

Hingham Public Library
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
September 21, 2011

The meeting was called to order in the Trustees Conference Room at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Trustees Abbott, Boylan, Carey, Garrity, Mahony, Mehegan, Murdy, S. Rabuffo, Sherwood, Siegfried; Director D. Corcoran, Library Business Administrator J. Allen, Secretarial Assistant L. Welch; Selectman B. Rabuffo, guests Dr. Otto Harling and Brad Moyer.

Welcome to Trustee Tina Sherwood; schedule of next meeting; approval of minutes

C. Abbott introduced new trustee Tina Sherwood and welcomed her to the Board. Mr. Abbott said that, as president of the Plymouth River School PTO, with a strong background in fund-raising, she will be a fine addition to the Board. He also welcomed Trustee S. Rabuffo, who had been ill, and expressed the Board's good wishes for her continued recovery. Mr. Abbott noted that this is the first meeting to convene at the new, earlier time, and reminded members that the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held November 16. On motion made and seconded, the minutes of the May 25 meeting were APPROVED unanimously.

Energy conservation recommendations

C. Abbott welcomed to the meeting Dr. Otto Harling, professor of nuclear science and engineering emeritus at MIT, and Brad Moyer, senior legal counsel at Fidelity Investments, both members of the Town's Energy Action Committee, and called upon D. Corcoran. Mr. Corcoran said that Dr. Harling and Mr. Moyer had been enormously helpful in the study of the Library's and the Town Hall's energy uses, and that the committee's recommendations will have beneficial effects on the Library's costs.

Mr. Moyer told the Trustees that the Energy Action Committee meets monthly and sets goals, one of which is to find ways for town facilities to be "greener" and more cost-efficient. The committee had hired Echo Energy Group, a consulting firm, to audit the Library's and Town Hall's energy uses and, after consultation with Director Corcoran, has developed several recommendations which will be entered in the FY 2013 capital outlay plan.

Dr. Harling outlined the proposed improvements, which include changes in lighting and windows, replacement of boilers, installation of CO² sensors, modernization of the chillers, and cleaning of boiler exhaust-flues. These changes should yield annual savings of \$26,000. Payback for these investments, estimated to cost about \$100,432, would be, respectively, 2.6 years for the lighting and equipment (including more energy-efficient windows), 19.5 years for the boilers, 1.1 years for the CO² sensors, 1.9 years for the chillers, and 3.0 years for the flue-cleaning. Dr. Harling said that some of the less costly recommendations might be accommodated within the Library operating budget, and the sooner implemented, the better. He suggested that the Board support the recommendations and seek the necessary funding.

Mr. Corcoran outlined the benefits of the changes. The CO² sensors, for example, would accurately calibrate the amount of fresh air circulated in the building according to actual need. Many of the windows are single-glazed and should be replaced with more energy-efficient glass. Mr. Corcoran said he would work with the Finance Committee to bring a motion on energy conservation measures to a future meeting.

Treasurer's report

Turning to the FY 2011 balance sheet, E. Siegfried reported that the Library's endowment stood at \$1,367,371 as of June 30, up 40 percent from the year before, an increase of \$392,000 year over year. He reminded the Board that it had voted to transfer \$136,000 from the surplus operating cash accounts into the endowment managed by Middleton Investment Co., since the cash had been earning little or no interest. Adjusting for this transfer, the endowment increase was about 26 percent — still quite good. As of yesterday, September 20, the endowment stood at \$1,212,000, down \$156,000, or 11 percent, from the June 30 balance, which is consistent with the overall market's performance over the last three months. The endowment is currently producing interest and dividends of \$17,000 per year for a yield of 1.4 percent. Mr. Siegfried noted that the balance sheet shows cash as of June 30 at \$85,000, which should be sufficient for readily available funds.

Turning to the FY 2011 income statement, Mr. Siegfried reported that the New Century Fund drive had generated donations of \$55,690, which is \$10,690 above budget and \$4,400 ahead of last year's total. We have also received \$13,186 in "Other Restricted Contributions," of which — as previously noted — \$10,000 came from a bequest from the estate of Carol O'Donnell. Receipts from fines and lost materials charges totaled \$54,677 for the year ended June 30, which is \$7,300 below the amount budgeted, and \$5,400 below the amount collected in FY 2010. This is a significant drop, since fines historically have been an important revenue source. State aid in FY 2011 totaled \$25,280, which is \$4,200 below the \$29,500 budgeted. Revenue from the Library bookstore was \$12,478 for the year, \$4,300 more than last year and \$4,300 above budget. Mr. Siegfried expressed compliments and congratulations to the volunteers and staff members for this improvement.

Overall, revenue for the year came to \$229,597, which is \$18,000 above budget. However, \$16,000 of this positive amount is due to the \$16,000 from the Rhode Island Foundation for the funding of Sunday openings, an amount included in the "Other Grants" line. The \$16,000 is nearly offset by the unbudgeted \$15,299 payroll charge in the operating expense section. In sum, revenue for the year was on budget, aside from the Rhode Island grant. Fortunately, the increase in the New Century receipts compensated for the shortfall in special events, other income, state aid, and fines revenue. Expenses for the year were \$231,000, which is \$2,000 below budget after deducting the \$15,000 for the Sunday openings payroll cost.

To sum up, the Trustee budget for FY2011 called for an operating cash loss of \$18,000 before depreciation. We ended up with a cash loss of \$16,784, about \$1,600 better than budget.

As in the past, the deficit is funded from the accumulated cash balance, which Mr. Siegfried noted is a reminder that we need to generate additional revenue in the future to balance our operating budget.

In a brief discussion of the materials budget, Director Corcoran said the Library would need to ask for another waiver of the Municipal Appropriations Requirement. Noting that many southeastern Massachusetts towns are in the same situation, he said that Cohasset and Duxbury also need waivers.

Regarding the problem of outstanding receivables — that is, unpaid fines — Mr. Siegfried said that Director Corcoran and Business Administrator Allen had reported to the Finance Committee. Mr. Corcoran had reported that the Old Colony Library Network had produced a report showing that the Library had a receivables total, counting all years, of \$110,084, owed by 8,000 people. Since he felt that reaching back ten or more years was not practical, he proposed to look at the last five years, from 2006 through June 30, 2011, for which the total is \$89,000. Counting only 2006-2010, the amount was \$59,000 from 5,000 persons.

To try to collect these amounts owed, he said, we plan to concentrate first on Hingham and Hull patrons with fines owed above \$50 in the 2006-2010 period. The amount owed by those 6,000-7,000 patrons is about \$41,767. His best guess is that we might succeed in recovering about 15 percent, which would total about \$9,000. Mr. Corcoran said that a one-page letter has been drafted to be sent to those owing more than \$50, and that we plan to mail 50-100 letters every two weeks until we complete the list. He thanked Ms. Allen and staff members Linda Harper and Jill Blair for their work on the letter.

There followed a discussion of privacy issues, particularly with young patrons, since state law confers a privacy shield on public library borrowers. One issue is, should we tell parents in a letter what books their children have borrowed? That could be very delicate and we must respect privacy as much as possible. T. Carey pointed out that the letters should be reviewed by legal counsel to be sure they are in conformity with the federal Fair Debt Collection Act. Mr. Corcoran agreed and said that requirements of all state and federal laws would be met.

FY 2013 budget preparation schedule

Director Corcoran said that work has begun on a level funded budget. Both the operating and capital budgets must be submitted at the same time, in November. We need to decide how many items will be in the new request for the operating budget, such as the energy improvements and repairs to the concrete steps near the children's entrance. The schedule for the capital outlay budget will probably need to change. One or two meetings of the Finance Committee will be necessary before the budgets can be brought to the Board for a vote.

Human Resources Committee

Chair E. Boylan reported that collective bargaining with the Library unit of SEIU is going well. All proposals have been submitted, the next meeting is scheduled for October 4 and it is hoped that an agreement can be brought to the Board at the November meeting.

With regard to the Christmas holiday, Mr. Boylan presented a motion for the Library to close at 1 p.m. on Saturday, the day before Christmas. After discussion, on motion made and seconded, it was unanimously VOTED:

To close the Library at 1 p.m. Saturday, December 24, 2011, the day before Christmas, and to pay a full day's pay to those employees scheduled to work a full day, consistent with past practice.

Development Committee

S. Murdy said the committee expects to meet in October, and new development ideas will be welcome. D. Mehegan reiterated an earlier suggestion that we encourage the establishment of an active "Friends of the Hingham Public Library," on the model of the Hingham Education Foundation and the Sports Partnership. Noting that the New Century Fund had succeeded this year beyond expectations, he also wondered if the outreach process for that drive could be enhanced beyond the "ask" letter. Mr. Murdy said that it will be necessary to broaden the base beyond the New Century Fund, and T. Sherwood suggested that we seek to target a new audience. She also said that she is excited to be on the Development Committee, that she has worked on many fund-raising drives, and would love to get the people she knows involved in a "Friends" organization. Mr. Siegfried agreed that attracting more people to supporting the Library is the key.

A. Garrity, who has worked on arranging a fund-raising appearance by furniture expert Leigh Keno, said the details of the event still have not been worked out, but hopes that it can happen sometime in November.

New Century Campaign

C. Abbott informed the Board that Trustee E. English had agreed to draft the New Century Fund letter again this year, and that Trustees' input into the letter is encouraged. He said the intention is to get the letter in the mail before Thanksgiving. Ms. Allen also said that ideas for a giveaway item for donors, such as the tote bag of the last several years, would also be welcome.

Library expansion tenth anniversary

Noting that the tenth anniversary of the Library expansion project is coming up, C. Abbott suggested that we give thought to some kind of fund-raising event in the spring.

Director's Report

Mr. Corcoran called attention to the excellent work by the staff of the children's department — Anna Byrne and her staff of Totsie McGonagle and Gail Mattern — in running the summer reading program. The "One World, Many Stories" program brought many children to the Library and encouraged them to keep reading throughout the summer.

Reference librarian Kathy Leahy's reading series on the life and times of Louisa May Alcott has been a huge success. The series runs through November and has more than seventy

participants — we have had to turn away applicants due to space limitations. In support of the series, the Library was one of thirty around the country to receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association Program Office.

Our fine evening custodian, Kevin Jenkins, has left us to take a full-time job with the Cohasset Public Schools. He is succeeded by Doug Giles of Cohasset. We are grateful to Herb Frager, our substitute custodian, for filling in between Kevin and Doug. As mentioned earlier, Joan Allen, Linda Harper, and Jill Blair did a fine job planning and organizing our campaign to collect overdue fines.

Carol Lipsett and Karen Hines, along with other staff members and friends, took over the Library lobby on June 25 for two minutes of dance “flash-mob” style to mark the beginning of beach-reading season. The video can be seen on the Library website or on YouTube. Crow Point Resident Irene Kane, and Dennis Corcoran, organized the Melville Gardens exhibition running currently in the Clemens Gallery. The display items came from Irene’s collection and the Library’s historical collection.

Joan Allen has done her usual fine job on the ARIS annual report on Library statistics, required by the state. She has moved on to preparation of documents to support our state aid application, and the request for a third consecutive waiver of the state’s MAR requirement. Mr. Corcoran said he expects there will be a fourth request for such waiver in FY2013.

The blue-stone bench by the children’s entrance, which was damaged by a Town DPW truck, has been repaired. The DPW will reimburse the Library for the cost of the repair. The concrete steps near the Children’s entrance are in bad shape and need to be repaired within the next year. The cost would be between \$5,000-6,000. A request for the funds will be included in the FY2013 budget request. Mr. Corcoran said he would be working with T. Carey, chair of the Operations Committee, to survey the building and grounds in order to prepare a full list of other necessary repair jobs.

A new, smaller water meter has been installed, as recommended by the Energy Action Committee, to reduce the surcharge from Aquarion, the water company, for the larger meter. The change should save the Library about \$800-1,000 a year. The cost of the new meter was paid by the Town and the Light Plant.

Mr. Corcoran expressed thanks to the Hingham Garden Club for all the fine work around the Library. He said he did not know what he would do without these fine volunteers.

He next reported the good news that the Library suffered no damage from Hurricane Irene. There was no water intrusion, despite the heavy rain, probably because the energy management system shuts down the HVAC system on Sunday afternoons and turns off the large fans.

Turning to technology, Director Corcoran told the Board that the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute has lent video-conferencing equipment to the Library to permit Hingham members to participate “live” in classes being held at UMass Boston. Two ongoing classes are “From the Great War to the Second World War” and “Food and Drink in Colonial Boston.” In its permanent technology, the Library is considering an on-line bill paying system, and may try to implement it. The new system might cause revenue from fines to increase.

Speaking next of events, he noted that the thirteenth season of the Library's classical guitar series is starting up in October, in association with the Boston Classical Guitar Society. The Booktique sale was a great success. Ms. Allen said the sale took in \$1,200 over three days. We have had some wonderful book donations for the sales. The four book sales in January, March, June, and September had earned \$4,000. The next sale will be held in December.

Future staff presentations

Mr. Corcoran said that reference librarian Anne Dalton will speak to the Board at the January meeting on the Town's Historic Archives Task Force, to which she has been appointed. In March, reference librarian Kathy Leahy will speak on the lifelong learning programs at the Library. A staff member to be named will speak to the Board at the May meeting on mobile technology, an increasingly popular offering.

Lincoln chair replica

C. Abbott told the Board that the Library had entered into an agreement with the Hingham Historical Commission under which the Commission is lending to the Library its replica of the so-called Lincoln Chair. Under the agreement, the replica will be on loan to the Library for a term of five years. After the replica arrives at the Library, it will initially be placed in the lobby near the clock, and while it is on public display at the Library it is the express wish of the Commission that patrons have access to the chair in order to touch and sit upon it if they wish. The original Lincoln Chair was displayed for many years in the Old Ship Church and is now on loan to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Conflict of interest training

C. Abbott reminded Trustees that they are covered by the state conflict of interest law and must take the on-line training course and turn in the printed receipt to Joan Allen. If anyone is in doubt about how to do this, they should contact Joan.

There being no further business to come before the Trustees, on motion made and seconded, it was VOTED to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David J. Mehegan
Secretary