

**Hingham Public Library**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees**  
**March 16, 2011**

The meeting was called to order in the Trustees Conference Room at 8:00 p.m. by E. Siegfried, vice president for finance, in the absence of President C. Abbott.

Present: Trustees Barclay, Boylan, Carey, Garrity, Mahony, Mehegan, Mitchell, Murdy, S. Rabuffo, Ross, Siegfried, Selectman Bruce Rabuffo; Director Dennis Corcoran, Library Business Administrator Joan Allen, Secretarial Assistant Liz Welch, Reference Librarian Anne Dalton, Children's Librarian Anna Byrne; guests Louise Pagliccia, Grace Rizzotto-Griffiths, Suzanne Leavitt Harnden and Cheryl Cole Sherwin.

**Minutes of January Meeting; Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the board will be held on May 25, 2011. On motion made and seconded, the minutes of the January meeting were APPROVED unanimously, subject to corrections by trustees Mitchell and Murdy.

**Request for Use of Library**

Louise Pagliccia was recognized to speak for the Hingham High School Class of 1962 Reunion Committee. She introduced three other members of the Committee, then presented a request that the class of 1962 be permitted to hold its 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion in the Library on June 23, 2012. She said the class wishes to hold a "soiree," to include music and the serving of beer and wine, for attendees numbering approximately 150-175. About thirty members of the class live in Hingham. The class understands that it must obtain all permits and pay all fees, and proposes to make a contribution to the Library, though no amount has yet been determined.

In discussion, it was pointed out that such authorization would set a precedent, since such use of the Library had not been requested in the past. B. Rabuffo said he believed it to be Town policy not to allow alcohol use on town property, while S. Rabuffo said she thought it could be served, but not sold. After further discussion, E. Siegfried suggested, with the Board's approval, referral of the request to the Operations Committee, which would meet with the Reunion Committee, consider all implications, and make a policy recommendation for a decision at the May meeting.

## **Historical Collection Master Plan**

D. Corcoran reminded the Board that the Library had participated with the School Department, the Hingham Historical Society, and the Hingham Historical Commission in an ongoing project to develop a master plan for the preservation and maintenance of their respective historic holdings. A Request for Proposals was issued and Inlook Group of New Hampshire had been retained to conduct the study, working with all the participants to consider their respective needs. A preservation study for the Library had been completed, and Mr. Corcoran asked Reference Librarian Anne Dalton to outline its findings.

Ms. Dalton explained that preservation is different from conservation, in that its objective is to “prolong the existence of cultural property.” The Library has important materials that are in danger of deterioration. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance as the Library protects these materials and makes them more appropriately accessible to researchers and the public. As part of practical implementation of the plan, Inlook recommends that the Library’s 2008 Historical Room Mission and Collections Policy be reviewed, and the scope of the collections be reconsidered and discussed with the other participants. It is suggested that new donations of materials not be accepted, unless they fill an important gap in the holdings. Among the findings specific to the Library:

— The Loring and Wilder Rooms (i.e., the outer and inner of the historical rooms near the second-floor reference desk) are too small for the materials stored there. Some materials that are damaged or not in keeping with the Library’s mission should be de-accessioned. Climate control is inadequate in terms of humidity, vents are blocked, and the thermostat in the rooms is not working. Archival supplies should be purchased to protect and preserve historic documents and photographs. Archival shelving, and a steel map file, should replace those currently in use.

— The Library should consider hiring a part-time professional archivist for two years, since the reorganization of the collection, revision of the preservation process, and application of new materials and equipment requires specialized knowledge and training.

— Since the Library’s users have little awareness of the collection, occasional displays of materials from the collection should be set up and featured on the website. Also, finding aids should be prepared, and possibly added to the Library web-site, so that the content of the collection can be known in detail and clarified.

— Digitization of selected historical documents should be considered, to make available items too fragile or valuable to be directly accessible.

— A disaster plan should be developed, in case of fire, flood, or other threat to the collection. In the long-term, the Town should consider a central repository for all the historic holdings.

On the question of funding, it is expected that the initial outlay for the Library in the first year would be relatively low, as little as \$600, mainly for the acquisition of archival materials. Later stages of implementation would require more funds, and it is recommended that the Library seek support from the Community Preservation Committee, the Town, and from such other sources as the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as private foundations, business, and individuals.

D. Corcoran said the plan raises policy questions that will need to be brought to the Board, the first of which is to develop a collection policy; that is, determination of what the collection should appropriately contain. The Library will seek an NEH preservation grant, though it will not be available until 2012. B. Rabuffo said the sooner the Library gets its needs on the Community Preservation radar, the better. There was discussion of priorities, and D. Corcoran said the easiest and least expensive measure was repair of the vents in the Loring and Wilder rooms.

S. Murdy spoke to the matter of de-accessioning extraneous materials that had been given to the Library over the years, particularly some of the philatelic items of minimal value, and asked about the current policy for new acquisitions. D. Corcoran noted that the study called for an updated policy, and T. Carey said we should consider revising it and limiting materials to those connected to the Library, placing one-of-a-kind items in more appropriate hands. He questioned whether the Library ought to be in the business of holding historic town materials. He also observed, apropos location of historic items in the Loring and Wilder rooms, that in addition to questions of ventilation, temperature, and humidity, one of the Library's electric circuit panels is located in one of the rooms.

### **New Library Web-site Demonstration**

D. Corcoran asked children's librarian Anna Byrne, who has been working on the Library's new web-site, to give a quick demonstration of some of its features. Ms. Byrne projected the home page on a screen, and called attention to several changes suggested by the Board at an earlier meeting. She said the objective of the revision was to make the site more visual, active, and content-rich. Mr. Corcoran thanked Ms. Byrne and reference librarian Peter Thornell for their work on this project.

### **Roof Snow-Loading Policy**

D. Corcoran noted that it had been a tough winter at the Library, as everywhere else. There had been heavy snow-loads on public and private buildings and reports of collapses had focused everyone's attention on that hazard. His concern over the Library's new and old roofs had prompted him to get an assessment from a structural engineer to develop benchmarks as to when and under what circumstances measures would be taken to clear snow. He noted that it would take 32 man hours, between \$2,400-5,000, to clear all the snow off the roofs — depending on whether just the 1965 roof or the newer roof is included.

The draft plan, which was distributed, notes that the maximum snow-load for the roof is 31.5 pounds per square foot, which means that it would take five feet of snow to place the roof in danger of collapse. However, rain-saturated snow can weigh as much as 13-15 pounds per square foot, so that 2 to 2 ½ feet of such snow could cause a collapse. Therefore, the draft plan — which would require a Board vote but is not yet ready for adoption — envisions action to remove snow when 75 percent of the maximum load is reached. That load will be calculated depending on the composition of the snow, which will be monitored along with weather forecasts. The roof over the original 1965 Library would have priority, because of its long-span structural beams. Mr. Corcoran noted that since the need for roof-clearing is unpredictable, there would be no provision for it in the Library operating budget and that, in the event, expenses would be submitted via a reserve fund transfer. Since the snow season is over and there is no emergency need for action, the Board agreed to refer the proposed policy to the Operations Committee, with the intention to have it under adoption before next winter.

### **New Century Fund Update**

J. Allen, Library Business Administrator, informed the Board that as of March 26, the New Century Fund drive had received \$48,291, which is within \$150 of last's year's total at the same time. We had budgeted for \$45,000. The average donation had risen from \$90 to \$95, and the second "ask" letter had brought in \$5,850 from 97 donors. Ms. Allen said she hoped for another \$3,000, to match last year's total. She was thanked for her efforts in administering the drive.

### **Development Committee**

S. Murdy, chair of the Committee, had no formal report, but reminded Trustees that he and D. Mehegan hope to meet with the Scituate Library Foundation to learn more about its successful fund-raising events.

## **Treasurer's Report**

E. Siegfried reported that the endowment totaled \$1,224,000 on February 28, an increase of \$211,000, or 21 percent, from February 2010. The endowment is producing interest and dividends of \$16,000 a year, a yield of 1.3 percent. He noted that the endowment's market value was down \$37,000 since the end of February, or about 3 percent, consistent with the overall market. As of March 15, the total was \$1,186,000. He also noted that the endowment had risen by 58 percent, about \$437,000, since its low of \$749,000 in February 2009.

Turning to the income statement, Mr. Siegfried reported that through February 28, the New Century Fund had generated donations of \$46,966, \$1,300 more than had been collected through February of the year before. Other unrestricted contributions totaled \$11,949, including a \$10,000 bequest from the estate of Carol O'Donnell. Fines were running \$5,500 below budget through February. Fine income had totaled about \$60,000 in FY 2010, and we had budgeted \$62,000 for this year. The Library will be about \$4,220 short in the state aid category. We had budgeted for \$29,500 in state aid; however, it will total \$25,280 for the year.

The full-year FY 2011 revenue budget was \$211,500. Mr. Siegfried said that barring something unforeseen, revenue for the year will total about \$195,000, leaving a shortfall of about \$17,000, mainly attributable to: a \$13,000 shortfall in special events, since we have no special fund-raiser planned; \$4,000 less in state aid; and a \$9,000 decrease in fines and lost materials revenue. These three items, which total \$26,000, are partially offset by the Carol O'Donnell bequest.

The Trustee budget for FY 2011, ending June 30, allows for a cash operating deficit of about \$18,000, primarily attributable to the loss of \$17,000 in net lending revenue from the regional library system. Mr. Siegfried said he now anticipates a deficit closer to \$35,000, which will be, as in the past, funded from the endowment. He said this is another reminder that we need to find ways to generate additional revenue in order to balance our operating budgets in the future.

M. Barclay observed that the overall numbers on the endowment are positive; however, he wondered at the advisability of holding 10 percent in cash. To have that large a percentage not earning anything seemed high to him, and he suggested a discussion with the Middleton Company to review the strategy. Mr. Siegfried agreed and said Middleton representatives would be invited to meet with the Finance Committee.

A question was raised as to the reason for the drop in revenue from fines. D. Corcoran said partly it was a function of more downloadable items being used by patrons, which are automatically returned and therefore generate no fines. He noted that Hingham has the highest fines in the Old Colony Library Network. It

was also noted that the Library's efficiency with telephone reminders has had a significant effect.

### **Operating and Capital Budgets, FY 2012**

D. Corcoran told the Board that development of the operating budget is proceeding in line with his January report with no major changes. There are a few changes in the capital budget: the boiler project has been pushed off by the Capital Budget Committee until FY2013, since there are three major boiler projects seeking funding (Library, South Fire Station, and Thaxter Park). The hope is that by consolidating the three projects, some savings can be achieved through coordinated bidding. He expressed concern that compression of capital projects in a given year might also necessitate delay on the lobby re-tiling project or phase two of the Library roof replacement, since doing both at once might be too burdensome administratively.

### **Volunteer Luncheon**

E. Siegfried told the Trustees that E. English had agreed to handle the Library's annual Volunteer Luncheon. J. Allen said the luncheon would be held on May 13, and D. Corcoran added that the speaker would be Ted Clarke, chairman of the Weymouth Historical Commission and the author of several books on the South Shore, including one in progress on Hingham.

### **Human Resources Committee**

E. Boylan told the Board that the committee had met March 9 with Director Corcoran to discuss collective bargaining items with the Library staff association. It was a productive meeting. He invited Trustees to email him or Mr. Corcoran if they are aware of any collective bargaining issues that ought to be raised. The next meeting, he said, will be with the Personnel Board.

### **Proposed Change of Meeting Time and Mode of Notification**

D. Corcoran suggested that the Board consider moving the start-time of Trustee meetings from 8 to 7 p.m. He noted that most meetings of public boards begin at 7 p.m. or even 6:30. He said he had had a conversation with President Abbott, who pointed out that an earlier start would not necessarily mean an earlier ending. In discussion, it was observed that the earlier start time might be a deterrent to younger people serving on the board, who might find it difficult, with children or

commuting from work, to arrive at the earlier time. T. Carey observed that the 8 p.m. start often means that members of the Library staff are kept late. A suggestion related to the length of meetings was to have a budgeted amount of time for each agenda item and to try to stick to it. E. Siegfried concluded the discussion with the suggestion, which was accepted, to put the matter on the agenda for the May meeting for a possible vote.

D. Corcoran then proposed that the Library dispense with the postal card notice of regular meetings, and instead use email. This would save supplies, postage, and staff time. It was also suggested that the mailing of documents in advance of meetings be eliminated in favor of email, with attachments. It was agreed to eliminate the card notice, except for the annual meeting, and refer the question of documents to the May meeting for further discussion.

### **Director's Report**

D. Corcoran added a few points to his printed report, which was distributed. He thanked Town Administrator Ted Alexiades, Selectman B. Rabuffo, and Trustee E. English for attending the March Old Colony Library Network Legislative Breakfast, which he had found to be informative. The document of agreement for display of the Lincoln Chair replica at the Library has been drafted and the process is moving forward. The Library's waiver of the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) had been approved, as expected.

Mr. Corcoran said that Rob Thornton of the All Hingham High School Reunion Committee will be at the Library soon to scan yearbooks. He also noted with sadness the recent passing of David Lubrano, a great friend to and benefactor of the Library.

On Sunday openings, Mr. Corcoran reported that Sunday circulation was down 13.5 percent in all transactions, and down 12.5 percent in foot traffic, from the same period last year. However, he has noticed that when he is at the Library on Sunday, the parking lot is always full. He added that the Library could use more parking on Sunday.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, on motion made and seconded, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Mehegan  
Secretary