

PLAISTOW PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 12, 2015

The Plaistow Public Library Board of Trustees held a regular meeting at the Public Library on Tuesday, May 12, 2015.

Present: Catherine Willis, Chair
 James Peck, Treasurer
 Jennifer Kiarsis, Secretary
 Jane Query
 Luann Blair
 Rosemarie Bayek, Alternate

Others Present: Cab Vinton, Library Director
 Melissa Theberge, Minute Taker

Call to Order

Catherine Willis called the meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 10:30 am.

Secretary's Report

Motion to accept minutes of the non-public meeting on April 7, 2015 was made by James Peck, seconded by Jane Query. Motion carried: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Motion to accept minutes of the April 7, 2015 meeting was made by Jennifer Kiarsis, seconded by James Peck. Motion carried: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Motion to accept minutes of the April 14, 2015 special meeting about the building assessment was made by Jennifer Kiarsis, seconded by Jane Query. Motion carried: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Treasurer's Report

In order to reduce the amount of paper copies, Jim Peck will email the treasurer's report in advance next month and board members can bring an iPad, other digital device, or print their own copy to bring.

Explanation and details about a few key line items:

Facilities--Includes ice dam removal. Michael Castagna was paid for remaining part of the facilities assessment report. There was agreement that the report was incredibly helpful and worthwhile.

Salaries--With summer position filled, this is likely to stay right on budget as year progresses.

Dental Health Insurance--Reimbursement from health plan is reflected on report.

Public Activities--Running over budget but closely monitoring. The plan has been to take money from another fund but projecting out for the year puts this line much higher than anticipated.

Supplies--Much of this applies to programming in the Public Activities line item.

In summary, the library is just slightly over budget thanks to the health insurance rebate. Cathy asked about insurance adjustment from last meeting and even with that Jim projects ending the year nearly on budget. There are no particular changes to funds report. Regarding interest earnings on these funds, a

small savings might be earned by switching banks but Jim will look into this further to see if it is worthwhile.

Motion to accept Treasurer's Report was made by Jane Query, seconded by Jennifer Kiarsis. Motion carried: Ayes 4, Opposed 0, Abstentions 1 (Peck).

Correspondence and Communication

None.

Friends of the Library Report

Luann reported that the school vacation week raffle is ongoing but so far earnings are only at about half the cost of the donated items so the plan is to continue with the raffle a while longer.

The group is considering having a town puzzle made which would include highlighted items like the school, library, town hall and other notable landmarks. Luann has emailed a contact at Puzzle Box for additional information and cost details.

Antique Road Show update: The appraiser is coming for free. Brianna is looking for a food truck but this may require a guaranteed sales amount. Rick Blair and a friend will provide music. The exact date is to be decided but planning on the fall. Advertising will offer pre-paid 15 minute spots in the morning, probably at \$15 for one item and 3 for \$25. First come, first served in the afternoon.

Yard sale planned for next year. Luann is trying to get an American Girl doll donated from the company through an application process they offer.

Vendor Fair is still being planned. Cathy mentioned that Brianna had ideas for a new attractive event name. Cathy suggested giving free tickets at the door for door prizes and placing the drawing buckets inside the library to draw people in past the big meeting room. Placement of tables and traffic flow are important to vendors. Using more of the library space allows for more vendors and the Friends are then able to earn more from the event.

Southern New Hampshire Library Cooperative Report

Jenn and Cab attended this meeting. It was noted that both Atkinson and Sandown had full boards present. Jenn suggested that spending money on a minute taker for these meetings is not necessary and it was agreed last time that the hosting library should take minutes.

Jenn reported that the cooperative is still a financial sharing group and this is working great.

Regarding museum passes, Sandown is considering a different model with a reimbursement policy where patrons can go to many different museums and then be reimbursed up to a certain point to see if this is less expensive than owning the passes themselves. If it's a popular museum then passes are sensible but it may be more cost effective to pay for a few families to go to less popular museums. Regarding a question about how Sandown's implementation of this plan would impact Plaistow, Cab explained that it must be reciprocal somehow but he is not sure how that would work and Directors would need to talk this through. The current pass sharing between libraries is not being used much

perhaps because of the same-day pick-up policy. Directors agreed to allow pass pick-up on the day before to increase usage.

Jenn said there is a plan for collaborative training on customer service for the libraries. Cab explained the cost benefits of sharing the training with the other libraries. The group discussed closing the library for a full day versus a half-day for training. Luann asked if the state offers a customer service training program but Cab said they do not. Jenn added that the catalogers from the three libraries have had joint meetings on their own and have created a manual, and now duplications are being taken care of. Directors said they'd like to do something similar with programming and that there is potential for bigger collaborative projects.

Cab reported on the recent agreement with Atkinson, Plaistow and the Kimi Nichols Center, which will be doing the drop off between libraries. Joe Freeman at KNC says they are thrilled to have these activities to do with their people. Property Liability Trust gave approval and there is a signed agreement in place. Last week was the first week and if it works well Sandown could be added in the future.

Jenn explained that Hampstead was possibly interested in joining the cooperative and that Danville is either uninterested or unable to join. Cathy added that when the cooperative began there was advice given that such a collaboration could result in some towns closing their libraries and consolidating.

Cathy said that she noticed in meeting minutes that Atkinson and Sandown keep "Cooperative Update" as an agenda item each month and she would like to implement this as a way to stay informed about updates and changes as they are made. Cathy suggested that the cooperative meetings should include just a chair or a designee at the annual meetings versus sending the entire board. She suggested it be brought up at a future cooperative meeting.

Cab shared his statistics about library usage. He reported that the collections do not have a lot of overlap. One of seven patrons travels to other libraries. Collections are close in number. One-third of people are borrowing materials from other libraries. In the past year, only a few town residents have visited other town libraries exclusively instead of their home library. Most patrons still go to their home library but the cooperative is definitely being used.

Programming Report (Brianna and Jen)

Before their presentation, Luann mentioned a man from NH who has climbed mountains with his dog and gives presentations. She has information she will find and share as a possible presenter.

Brianna reported that many adult programs are in place and that she looks for inexpensive and free guest presenters and speakers when possible. Author Mary Kay Andrews will visit for a book release party May 31, 2015 at 4pm. She is looking for places to send/share the flyer and will provide copies to those who can post somewhere. She is working with Water Street Books for sales. The event hasn't been put on Facebook yet but will be. She has a backdrop for a fun photo op that people can share on social media to help with promotion. She is trying to make it fun and interactive to create a buzz because a good turnout means other publishers may send authors here as well.

In April, 207 people attended adult programs. Jim alone brought in 27 or so for the Plaistow history event. Ladies night is also a hit with 25 recent attendees of all ages. Brianna is working with Jen on Fit Families programming which is not always well attended. Beautiful weather may have been a factor in lower attendance for two particular events. She is working on a new website which is still a work in progress. Cathy asked about the money going into programs and Jim confirmed that adult programming for the year is over-budget but this was expected. Cathy would like an evaluation of the programs so that next year's budget can be adjusted accordingly. Luann added that a program can sometimes be small at first but can grow over time. Everyone agreed that the volume and quality of programming is outstanding.

Cathy asked a software question about a glitch in the system which allowed dual registration when someone accidentally signed up twice. Brianna has tried a new demo software for booking and scheduling and liked it a lot, called Evanced. Limits on what can be booked are part of the software making it possible for people to book their own rooms, pending library final approval. The software seems intuitive and aesthetically appealing. This product is frequently upgraded, well supported, and well-known.

Brianna explained that a license for a year is \$1200 but does so much more than current software. Purchasing it outright means waiting about 3 years to break even, but this may make more sense if upgrades are included with the nominal maintenance fee. Cathy asked if it could be purchased and ready for fall. There was discussion about signing up for the license soon to get going. Cab needs to call current company and see about cancelling. Jim indicated that the full purchase is beyond the current budget but the temporary license is feasible.

Brianna sees this software as a real advantage for the library. There are add-on components that work specifically for museum passes, summer reading program, scheduling, and calendar, allowing for customization. Cab indicated there would be a software transition time due to the excessive number of groups and calendar requests and the unfortunate lack of an import feature in the new Evanced software. Jen added that she read reviews that indicate the summer reading program feature does not get positive feedback from families but it was discussed that she could continue using her current method since the summer reading component is an optional add-on. In answer to Jim's question, Jen explained that texting is available from Evanced. Cab also has a quote to integrate texting into the online catalog to send info about books, overdue, holds, etc.

Cathy suggested voting on the meeting room policy first and then Cab said he will look at making the transition to this software soon.

Jim asked Brianna to discuss avenues she uses for publicity. She responded by pointing out that both she and Jen use various methods: Posting a flyer at the library, posting on Facebook, creating an event on Facebook (and sometimes pinning it to the top of the page for visibility), posting on Friends of Plaistow Facebook page, Plaistow moms & dads page, the library website home page, an email newsletter with what's coming up, Carriage Towne News and Eagle Tribune, including using some of the 12-16 ad spaces available in Carriage Towne. She added that people who are already coming to things have buy-in but when looking for new people, it may be that an ad would draw them in. She has also put out press releases and put information into the Union Leader calendar. Cab added that special events may include a special flyer mailing. Experience has shown that it is not cost effective to use Facebook

promotional ads. Luann suggested using the WMUR Community Happenings listings. Jen said she does slides for the Plaistow cable channel. Jen added that she connects with Pollard School about info and flyers. She will be going over to the school to promote the summer reading program and some students will even come to the library. The middle school gets flyers and also kids can take a bus to the library directly. The high school posts information and she shares emails the schools about programming that may be relevant.

Jim suggested informal research about how people find about events in order to build upon that method. Jen said maybe she could use registration emails to solicit for feedback. Cathy suggested placing flyers at the town hall for new people and there was discussion about putting together a packet for people who are new to town. Cathy said the Plaistow website also has a "new to town" area on the site that may be helpful to use for publicity.

Jen would like to see an updated roadside sign that could be used for advertising. Jennifer Kiarsis does not prefer electric signs but understands the reasoning. Cathy suggested renting a sign at the very least because winter makes the current sign impossible to access. Additionally, the current sign is quickly out of date and it's physically very difficult to change the wording. Cathy said that the town has an ordinance about no electronic signs so it would need approval, and she suggested starting the conversation with the town planning board. The location of a new sign would likely be the same as it is currently. Cathy will put it on the agenda next month and meanwhile Cab will send links to Jennifer Kiarsis about the sign companies he has researched so far.

Jennifer suggested that Cab and others should decide which ones they like and bring to the next meeting. Cathy asked for general approval and what the objections are. Jim's concerns were keeping with the character of the village and keeping it tasteful. Jane's main concern was cost. Cathy suggested everyone email concerns, suggestions, and thoughts about signs to Brianna. She also said an appointment should be made with the planning board.

Jen shared that the Children's Area is wonderful and thriving. She has increased attendance in all programs and has extended toddler time, added a wiggly walkers group (age 1-2), has seen increased teen attendance in knitting group, and the "Make a Difference" volunteer group has made no-sew blankets. She is seeing parents connect and become friends outside of the library. Many grandparents are often attending too. Successful winter programs included a snowshoe program, puppets, an Audubon program, and yoga led by a volunteer. Currently there are butterflies growing in the library and a related guest speaker in the coming weekend, a cartooning program with someone from the Loeb School is also well-registered. Vacation programs included well-attended robotics and computer coding programs and a gardening group which continues. Both Jen and Brianna are interested in doing a community garden project. Jen also has done publicity through homeschoolers. She participated in the Literacy Festival event at PAC, including having a visiting author coming to the library for a story time. Bubble program in April had 83 people attend. Cathy would like the owl program to happen again. Jen said that donations are coming in for the summer reading program--including money and gift cards, Lazer Craze tickets, tickets to a go-cart place in Haverhill, and more. For Old Home Day, a children's author is coming to share her book with book signing too.

Future programs will address local drug abuse issues. She is also working on STEM programs and would like to be able to have robotics at the library herself with Legos, as well as having small laptops available

for coding programming, etc. She may be making “baby bags” to welcome newborns in town. Luann is available to talk with Jen about this program since she has done this in the past.

Jim asked Jen to clarify a couple budget items to confirm that his line item matches her program presenter. He suggested having an objective measure of success to assess and compare programs. \$500 for 83 attendees versus \$500 for 5 kids is a way to assess programming. A cost per attendee would be ideal.

Cab said that Red Cross is coming June 19 for a blood drive. Brianna thinks some volunteers are still needed, mostly for registration and refreshment.

Luann mentioned doing a parent program to coincide with a program for kids and both Jen and Brianna have discussed doing that and will revisit it again. Luann said Haverhill does not welcome guests to most programs while Plaistow does allow this. Jen thinks Haverhill does allow out of town guests for story hours and will confirm. For certain events, Brianna says she does set limits and allow residents only.

Director’s Report

Cab presented a demonstration of how all of the library’s downloadable content is now integrated with regular collection on catalog website. Availability of material is also shown on the main catalog screen without logging into Overdrive website separately. Placing a hold takes you to Overdrive and the process is completed from there as usual. This creates more of a one-stop-shopping experience for both print and digital format, including audio downloads. The Overdrive app for electronic devices works the same as it has so that digital content is available for use on ipad, iphone, e-readers and such. It also helps librarians help patrons to find all library materials from one platform.

Cab said that regarding performance reviews he is in favor of bonuses. He likes to look at the whole package of compensation for a person and assess if they are compensated appropriately but conducting a full study of this takes time. Annual reviews are overdue or upcoming for a few staff members.

For wireless internet, Cab has a preferred solution but he is trying to balance getting the expense down while still keeping the desired features intact. Cab says it’s not urgent in the sense that the current state is non-functional but rather that it is sub-optimal. He said that hardware is \$3-4000 plus annual licensing for upgrades, statistics, and management. There was discussion about working on a technology plan as a capital expenditure versus viewing it as an annual expenditure. Cab would rather not wait another several months. Currently the modems need to be reset every day or so to address problems that come up. Cathy pointed out that Cab sees this as an immediate need and Jim would like more time to make a complete improvement plan. Jenn suggested making this wireless upgrade now and then include it in a future long-term improvement plan that gets written next. Jim suggested meeting with Cab to look at proposals and they both agreed to do so.

Cab said that the Health Insurance Upgrade is now in effect. For accounting purposes, having Raven and Jen move to 85/15 split on insurance changed their deductions. Cab set it up so that by the end of November they will be caught up with payments.

Maryan Sullivan was hired as “temporary” at 14 hrs/wk and he would like her to be hired as a “permanent” employment for 15 hrs so she can get her earned time.

Motion to make Maryan Sullivan a regular part-time employee and increase her hours from 14 to 15 a week was made by Jenn Kiarsis, seconded by Jim Peck. Motion carried: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Cab suggested that for Brianna’s author visit it would help if the library had a system for accepting credit cards. A service such as this can be used with an iPad and has nominal transaction costs. Cab and Brianna will work to get this set up before the event in a few weeks. The board reached general consensus that credit card use at the library is a good idea.

Cathy explained that landscaping work is going to be put out to bid. She has talked with Sean at the town about how they do it and they send initial bid requests and post on the website. Before the library pursues the bidding, Cab should call the current landscaper, Lavalee, and let him know what the library is doing and that he is welcome to bid too.

Jim asked about about tree watering methods, especially for the newly donated trees from the Conservation Commission. Cab has asked Rich to water them.

Old Business

1. HVAC Plan & Utility Update

Cab is not yet ready to present HVAC information. Cathy suggested having a separate meeting for handling the building assessment report. Jim would like to see the plan go to the town Capital Improvement Plan soon.

Cathy asked for action to move forward with HVAC to get someone hired and get the work done in order to spend the encumbered money. Jim suggested having a sub-group meet and Jim, Cathy, and Cab agreed to get together.

Regarding utility usage, Cab said Unitil wants to verify the usage meter, so Castagna recommended a specific electrician to do a separate verification. To be safe, they both will be verifying each other to move this forward accurately and fairly. Unitil does a bi-annual rate adjustment which means the rate goes down for the summer. Jim budgeted for higher rates so there will be a savings. Cathy asked about pursuing gas during the lower months due to auction rates being lower during summer. Jim mentioned that the town did form a committee about alternate energy but despite being interested, Cab’s plate seems too full to participate.

2. Meeting Room Policy

Motion to approve the Meeting Room Policy was made by Jim Peck, seconded by Jane Query. Motion carried: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

3. Code of Conduct Policy

Motion to approve the Code of Conduct Policy was made by Jane Query, seconded by Jim Peck. Motion carried: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0. Jane would like to see it posted on a bulletin board.

4. Weapons in the Workplace Policy

Police chief has reviewed this and it has been approved already.

New Business

1. Limited Edition Prints

Cathy reported that Jane & Laurie have found that things are missing from upstairs, including certain books. Cab acquired an extra copy of the landscaping report after it went missing too. Still missing are 3-7 books that Goodspeeds had looked at many years ago. At that time he had said to notify him if the library ever wished to sell them, but now these are missing after having been in a certain file cabinet. Jane said they have looked everywhere possible. What they did find was a Jim Collins painting he had gifted, perhaps of a partridge. It is a numbered, limited edition print. Cathy suggested taking money from special projects to frame it and display it. It was suggested to have Framing Expressions take care of this.

2. Town Reports

Some, but not all town reports, are in archival boxes. Raven would like to order more boxes if possible and Cathy asked if the funds could come out of special projects. Cathy said some reports are missing and asked Jim to look at getting copies from the town if possible. Jim said that if Raven provides him with a list he can do this. Laurie found all town reports on microfiche some time ago and perhaps these need to be put into a more user-friendly format. Jim would like to work with UNH to digitize old town reports. Microfiche may make it easier to digitize and Jim is willing to look into getting this done. He would like them to be in a searchable format and thinks this is a great project for the library and historical society to pursue together.

3. Appraisal of Whittier Birthplace Painting

Cathy and Laurie had the painting appraised some time ago. The artist is George Higgins and it seems like it's time to have it re-appraised.

4. Donation Thank You Notes

Cathy would like to know what the system is for getting notes written in a proper and timely manner. Jenn said she is willing to take it over as secretary, beginning with a note to the Conservation Commission for the trees. Jenn has stationery on hand and Cab said there are also notecards he can give to Jenn. Going forward, when a donation needs acknowledgement, Cab will let Jenn know and she will write them.

5. Director Performance Review and Contract Obligations

Cathy indicated that the contract doesn't need to be written every year unless there are changes. Any changes must be made by August 1 and the performance evaluation must be done a month before that. This means a performance evaluation should be completed in time for a meeting in early July. Cathy will send everyone a copy of the contract and the last performance evaluation. Jenn will look to see if she has a blank template she can share with the group. Cathy would like Cab to complete a self evaluation by August 1 and then the board can do a formal review at the August meeting and finalize it at the September meeting.

Other Business

Jim presented the art exhibit and contest that will be a joint project with the library and the historical society. This is a new event as part of Old Home Day festivities. Art will be exhibited Saturday, June 20 and the following week. Art will be displayed at the town hall, the historical society, and the library. Submissions can be existing or new paintings and drawings of current or historical buildings or people of Plaistow. There will be age and skill categories as well as prizes. Judges will include the high school art dean, a middle school art teacher, Pollard's art teacher, Brianna, as well as a professional artist and a town selectman. Judging will be in advance of Old Home Day and the deadline for submission will be soon.

Jane mentioned that there are many books that need discarding and Luann will provide a contact for a group of veterans that removes these kinds of books that have no ongoing value.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jim Peck. Meeting adjourned at 1:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Theberge
Minute Taker