

**Board of Trustees Meeting
November 9, 2021**

The Plaistow Public Library Board of Trustees held a regular meeting at the Library on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at 10:30am.

Present: James Peck, Chair
Megan Lee, Vice-Chair
Rosemarie Bayek, Treasurer
Michelle Sykes
Mary Gori, Alternate

Not Present, Excused: Jennifer Kiarsis, Secretary
Max Dobson, Alternate

Others Present: Cab Vinton, Library Director

Call to Order

Jim called the meeting to order at 10:30 am, seating Alternate Mary Gori to vote in place of Jenn Kiarsis.

Secretary's Report

Motion to accept the minutes from the meeting on October 13, 2021, was made by Rosemarie Bayek, seconded by Megan Lee. Motion approved: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Motion to approve the minutes from the October 25, 2021 special meeting to discuss Board transition matters was made by Michelle Sykes, seconded by Mary Gori. Motion approved: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Treasurer's Report

Cab reviewed the most recent financial reports. The Library remains under budget for reasons discussed at previous meetings – principally good luck with the building, delayed performance reviews and corresponding wage adjustments, 0.5 fewer FTE's until the staff restructuring is completed, favorable outcome from partial self-insurance for medical coverage, and relatively good weather in 2021 (utilities). The surplus will narrow once performance reviews and the staff reorganization are complete. The bottom line will be also \$11,700 less favorable once the bookkeeper assigns the building insurance and janitor expenses for the final quarter. Cab will be working on the 2020 encumbrances and 2021 reimbursables line to ensure that both are cleared by year-end.

Funds Report – The Cullen Memorial Fund is showing \$1,002 in interest, which is incorrect; Jim will follow up with the bookkeeper. Otherwise, there was approximately \$1,400 in income reported and the total funds balance remains almost exactly in the middle of the Board's target zone (39% of the library's annual operating budget). The library has received a check from NH Humanities for \$13,000 (SHARP grant to pay for the Meeting Owl and 40 new Story Walk stanchions being shared with the Pollard School). Installation is planned for early December.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Megan Lee, seconded by Michelle Sykes. Motion approved: Ayes 5, Opposed 0, Abstentions 0.

Correspondence and Communication

The Library received two emails in the past week requesting that it cancel the November 3 “Ask a Drag Queen Anything” event with Michael McMahon. One of the writers also wrote a separate email to the Board with the same request. Cab and Jim on behalf of the Board responded in both cases, declining to cancel and stressing that the Library serves a very diverse community and accordingly must present a wide variety of programs. This does not mean that the Library endorses or supports the views of any particular presenter. Patrons are free to attend or not as they see fit and to make up their own minds about the accuracy and value of any particular presenter’s ideas. Most community feedback was on Facebook and the majority of this was supportive of the program. In the end, the event was very successful, with the Nelson Room at capacity (30 people) and the presenter answering questions for over an hour.

One of the patrons also reached out to a national organization based in California that is “pro-family” or “anti-gay”, depending on one’s viewpoint. The leader wrote the Board of Selectmen, but to the best of our knowledge, they did not engage with him. The Board of Selectmen has not been in touch with the Library about the program.

Friends of the Library

Michelle reported that revenue from yoga continues to be on the low side. The Friends offered at their most recent meeting to donate \$500 towards the cost of the recent landscaping project. With reduced revenues and a relatively healthy library budget, the Friends will revisit and discuss whether the funds should be reserved for a higher priority project.

Southern NH Library Cooperative

The rollout of the new Aspen catalog has proceeded very smoothly, although the developers are still working on a few bugs. There have been relatively few comments from patrons, either for or against. Megan reported that her experience with the new system has been very positive.

The catalogers from the three Coop libraries are planning to meet in early December to review and update the shared Cataloging Guidelines document. The document provides best practices and ensures that the libraries share a consistent approach to adding and editing records in the catalog.

Cab will be proposing a joint staff development program for Coop staff focused on intellectual freedom. With more and more school libraries experiencing challenges over materials, he feels it’s only a matter of time before the same trend comes to public libraries. It’s important for staff to put out a consistent message – that libraries are for everyone, they serve diverse communities, and patrons should not dictate to others what materials and programs are acceptable. Cab will also review the Library’s Collection Development and Program policies and bring any suggested revisions to the Board for approval.

Director’s Report

- Ridgely Fanara from Integrity Gardens returned to the library to inspect the new plantings and put them to bed for the winter. She will return in the spring to confirm that everything is on track. She will also provide some ideas this winter for the field in front of the library. Jim likes the idea of a path with benches.
- A display screen will be installed soon over the main circulation desk. A sconce that’s currently producing very little light will be removed to make room for the display. This will provide a more

visible and hopefully effective means of promoting the library's new materials, programs, and services in the building compared with the various flyers and posters that staff have been relying on until now.

- The Timberlane Performing Arts Center is hosting a library program on November 10. The program will feature Jonn Savannah, a long-time musician and band member from Squeeze, one of the great British New Wave groups from the late 1970's and early 1980's. Staff are experimenting with paid ads on a variety of streaming services (Pandora, iHeart Radio, and TuneIn Radio). So far, the 30 second ad has played 12,000 times, reaching over 5,000 individuals within a 15 mile radius of Plaistow. Staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the ads after the program.

New Business

Jim and Cab attended the November 1 meeting with the Board of Selectmen to correct the record during Public Comment. Selectman Taillon had made a number of misstatements at their October 18 meeting. Specifically, he claimed that two years ago the Library had been unresponsive to a Right-to-Know request made by Julian Kiszka, a Selectman at the time, and that the Library had paid for the new Main Street sign with savings from the 2018 LED upgrade project. The Selectmen listened respectfully as Jim explained the truth of the matter in each instance. Unfortunately, the Selectmen did not have a chance to see the 2019 correspondence between the Library and Mr. Kiszka that Jim had sent in advance to the Chair. Jim subsequently sent this to the BOS and further asked that they consider censuring Mr. Taillon.

With Jim's impending resignation and move to California, the Board discussed the allocation of several financial tasks: online access to the checking account (bookkeeper); online access to library funds (inter-fund transfers only, Cab); financial reports (Cab); and, letter to the Town with the disbursement schedule for appropriated funds (Chair and Cab). The Board agreed that the proposed plan should be implemented and that appropriate financial controls were in place. The Board has the option to revise in the future as needed.

Once Jim resigns, the Board will need to elect a new Chair. Megan is willing to serve. The Board will discuss further and vote at the next Board meeting. It will be a busy election season, with four of the five Trustee positions on the ballot in 2022 (Jim and Rosemarie, whose terms are up, and two Alternates appointed this year to replace two Trustees who resigned, Cathy Willis and Jane Query). The Board and staff are in recruitment mode and are confident that the Library will have a strong slate of candidates.

It is looking likely that the Library will be under budget this year. Cab is working on an end-of-year projection. The Board's plan for spending, encumbrances, and returning funds to the Town may depend in part on its plans for placing a Capital Reserve Fund warrant article before the voters. The Library last did this in 2019. Jim strongly recommended that the Board advocate for a warrant article in 2022.

The Library will be combining its annual holiday luncheon with a goodbye party for Jim Peck and Jane Query on November 18. The function room at the 110 Grill has room for 40-45 and the consensus was that COVID concerns would not require the Library to restrict attendance. Library staff, Trustees, and the Friends will be invited.

Adjournment 11:43 am

Next meeting: December 14, 2021, 10:30am

Respectfully submitted,

Cab Vinton
Library Director

DRAFT