

Westbrook Public Library
Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2023

Mission: *“The Westbrook Public Library is dedicated to supporting our community’s intellectual, cultural, and social needs. We offer a balanced collection of materials, information services, and programs for lifelong learners.” (rvsd & aprvd 2/19)*

Call to order at 7:00 pm by Katie Richard, Vice Chairperson

In Attendance: Kathie Cietanno, Amy Heilmann, Jodie Oshana, Katie Richard, Megan Ruppenicker, Nilani Shankar, Lynda Tragakes, Melinda Xenelis (Zoom), and Michelle Centore, Library Director

Absent: MaryJo Noonan

Secretary’s Report:

- Motion made by Cietanno to accept the December 13, 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented. 2nd by Heilmann; all in favor.
- Motion made by Ruppenicker to accept the December 13, 2022 Monthly Meeting Minutes as presented. 2nd by Oshana; all in favor.
- Motion made by Ruppenicker to accept the January 3, 2023 Monthly Meeting Minutes as presented. 2nd by Cietanno; all in favor.
- Motion made by Ruppenicker to accept the January 5, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. 2nd by Heilmann; all in favor.

Financial Report:

- Motion made by Ruppenicker to accept the January 3, 2023 Financial Report as presented. 2nd by Heilmann; all in favor.
- Centore presented Financial Report for January and provided a brief recap:
 - Operating budget has approximately 54% remaining. January payroll numbers will be updated as soon as available. Payroll numbers are reflective through December.
 - Spending is on track and book ordering is starting to level out after underspending from July - September and then catching up over the past few months.
 - The 2022-2023 fiscal year Vanguard appropriation was transferred to the Library Gift Fund and a request will be made next month for the FY 2023-2024 appropriation.
 - The year-end Vanguard statement was circulated for review.
- Motion made by Xenelis to accept the Financial Report as presented. 2nd by Ruppenicker; all in favor.

Library Director’s Report:

- Collections and Services:
 - 1068 patrons used the Library in January. Circulation and patron usage have almost doubled over the past year. Meeting room usage has also increased and is being tracked with more detail. There is a continued high demand that is exceeding pre-COVID use.
 - Changes have been implemented with regard to how Interlibrary Loans are processed which has increased the number of requests – utilizing both the State system as well as an email system between libraries.
 - Periodicals are being reviewed and underutilized subscriptions cancelled.

- Building and Grounds:
 - The roof replacement project is complete and there have been spot checks to see if additional sealing is needed which it is not. Lower level parking is back in use.
 - Jill Brainard and Centore have met with representatives from B&T Tile and will be replacing the carpeting/flooring in the Community Room, the hallway outside the Community Room, and the “walk off” (lower level entryway). The supplier, J&J Flooring will provide some sample mock-ups that Centore will share by email with the Board so suggestions/feedback can be provided.
- Staffing and Planning:
 - The staff has experienced several absences due to COVID which have been manageable but does put a strain on staffing. This reiterates the need to consider a substitute position in the future.
 - The staff is finding that there is a great need for assistance for job seekers. There has been an increase in individuals looking for assistance related to job seeking – resume building, cover letter editing, and basic tech components of applying for jobs online. Although the staff wants to assist, the extra needs are often very time consuming. Discussion of other resources that may be available to provide assistance in this area through volunteers and/or other agencies. Centore will look into the suggestions with Ariel.
- Community Engagement:
 - A new initiative has been started in conjunction with the efforts of a local volunteer (Jeffrey Clark) who collects, returns, and redeems bottles and cans. The Library is serving as a collection site. Mr. Clark uses the proceeds to purchase grocery store gift cards which are then raffled off. Patrons can enter to win the gift cards at the Library. To date, four families have received gift cards as part of this initiative.
- Programming:
 - Tricia has continued the Homeschool Story Time which is becoming more of a draw for local homeschooling families – typically have 12 people attending.
 - Toddler Time is brand new and showing signs of growth. This is for the 2-3-year-old group. It is anticipated that this program will continue to grow over time.
 - Ariel held a very popular Lotus Flower Lantern program conducted by a group that uses food and crafting to promote awareness and understanding of Korean culture. Interest was high but ended with some no-shows on the event day. Ariel plans to utilize the unused kits at a high school program for interested students.
 - Attendance doubled at the January Book Club meeting – the chosen book (The Maid by Nita Prose) was very popular and received an excellent response.
 - Centore spoke briefly about the “Take Your Children to the Library” event last weekend which was well attended. She will provide more details at next month’s meeting.

Committee Reports: None

Correspondence: None

Old Business:

- Centore shared the updated 2023 Action Plan which included suggestions from the January meeting as well as specifying the purpose of the plan - *The Action Plan is intended to guide the Library Staff and the Board in ensuring that efforts in Collections and Services, Building and Grounds, and Staffing and Planning are consistent with the Mission of the Library, and to be a helpful evaluation tool for the Library staff.*
- Motion made by Oshana to approve the 2023 Westbrook Public Library Action Plan as presented. 2nd by Cietanno; all in favor.
- There has been no interest from the public with regard to the old card catalogues. Centore will work with Jill and Donna at Town Hall as to next steps.

New Business:

- Richard introduced Dr. Nilani Shankar as the newest member of the Board of Trustees. Shankar and Trustees shared brief information about themselves as an introduction.
- Centore provided an update on the Traveling Toy Library which is one of the most popular and highly circulated collections at the Library. The staff has been very happy with the numbers to date. An email communication appeared to indicate that the Traveling Toys organization may be seeking increased publicity for the program. It was agreed to table additional discussion until the March meeting so as to better understand the request.
- Cietanno noted the consolidation of the Westbrook History collection to one area which Centore explained was a temporary solution as they continue to shift spaces and consolidate.
- There is a Board of Selectman Meeting to review the proposed Library budget at 5:30 pm tomorrow (2/8/23) at Town Hall. Richard and Tragakes indicated they planned to attend.
- The Town is offering a Freedom of Information Workshop (Information Rights and Wrongs) on March 2, 2023 with two informational sessions being held. A flyer was provided for any Trustees interested in attending. (if attending, need to rsvp to Joan Angelini, Town Clerk).

As there was no further business, motion made by Richard to adjourn. 2nd by Oshana; all in favor.
Adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by L. Tragakes