

Thayer Memorial Library Trustees Meeting
September 13, 2023
Meeting held via Zoom videoconference



Roll Call

Present were:

Emily Rose, Chair
David Spanagel, Vice Chair
Frank Streeter, Secretary
Ann Frantz
Karen Silverthorn
Adam Zand
Joe Mulé, Director, Ex Officio

Melissa Carlson, President of the Friends of the Thayer Memorial Library

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Chair Rose called the roll of attendees and opened the meeting.

Past Minutes

None

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held October 11, 2023 at 6:30 PM. The Board's meetings will continue to be held over Zoom until further notice.

Appearances:

None

Chair's Report:

Director Mulé presented a budget worksheet for the upcoming fiscal year, FY25. This is a level services budget and he discussed the various drivers of increased costs, especially books and media. He is zeroing out the line items for repair and maintenance as they are being covered elsewhere.

Relating to the upcoming Special Town Meeting vote on the new high school, Chair Rose discussed her preconstruction visit to Nashoba High School and the current poor condition of the building. She said it was a very thorough tour and she really appreciates the gravity of the situation at the high school a lot better as a result.

The RFP for the work to be done at the Library needs to go out by the end of December and the contract has been signed to finish the RFP. Spencer Preservation Group will manage the entire RFP process, which Director Mulé says is hugely helpful. He is working with a Lancaster Finance Director Cheryl Gariepy to make sure the various monies allocated to the Library, both from the Community Preservation Act and from ARPA funds, are being appropriately applied and spent.

The Board discussed the issue of virtual versus in person meetings. The Board expressed mixed feelings on the topic. One of the main benefits would be more opportunity for the Trustees to meet and interact with the staff. Secretary Streeter suggested holding a staff appreciation event to meet everyone. Vice-Chair Spanagel proposed holding the October meeting as hybrid rather than entirely on Zoom. To do this the Trustees will need to meet in the Nashaway Room in the Prescott Building to use the Town's Owl as that is the only way to conduct hybrid meetings. A hybrid meeting also requires an in person quorum, which means at least four people. All members of the Board except Secretary Streeter were in favor of hybrid meetings

Building:

Chair Rose asked about the funding process for the work to be done on the building. Director Mulé explained that the process starts with the Select Board putting the financing on the warrant for the annual or special town meeting.

Advocacy and Fundraising:

Vice-Chair Spanagel gave a fundraising update. The subcommittee's next meeting will be on September 26. They continue not to be in active fundraising mode at this point.

Vice-Chair Spanagel is working on transitioning his roles on the subcommittee as he is moving out of town in 2024. He is trying to get new members for the subcommittee. Director Mulé asked about the time commitment. Vice-Chair Spanagel said that there was a one-hour meeting once a month that runs from 5 to 7 PM and some informal work beyond that. Trustee Franz asked if anyone else on the Board was interested in joining the subcommittee. Vice-Chair Spanagel will stay on the committee through the end of the year then hand off his role.

Memorial School Reuse Committee:

The work of the Town's study committee for reuse of the former Memorial school has concluded and the Committee has been disbanded. The legal opinion received by the Town about uses for the site stated that it is absolutely limited to recreational uses and no housing could be permitted. Town Administrator Kate Hodges will send out a RFP for an engineering study of the former school and the site. This must be approved by the Select Board, which is expected in October.

Director's Report:

Director Mulé discussed staff turnover and new hires. He wants to change his status and not be a contractual employee as per Town Administrator Hodges' suggestions. Some research needs to be done to see how that change in status would work with both the MBLC and the Library Trustees' bylaws. Town Counsel is reviewing the issue, but has not yet reported back.

Vice-Chair Spanagel asked about the quality of the applicants for openings for positions at the library. Director Mulé responded that the response to his postings was excellent, but out of 16 completed application, only six were interviewed and his review

of candidates was mixed. He noted that few applications have come in through MBLC, which is probably due to the huge number of open positions in Massachusetts libraries at the moment. Director Mulé has found this situation makes recruiting very difficult. He feels he has some good candidates now for open positions with offers out that he hopes will be accepted.

Friends of the Library:

Chair Rose asked if the Friends of the Library are fully staffed for their upcoming book sale. Friends President Melissa Carlson said that they still need more volunteers. The book sale will be held at the old Town Hall from Friday, September 29 to Sunday, October 1, and then on Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8. Leftover books will be distributed to the needy on Monday the 9th. The Board then discussed the arrangements for working on a membership drive for the Friends. Friends member Suzanne Turcotte is leading this effort. President Carlson offered to help with the Library's staff appreciation event. She also discussed options for a larger event for all library volunteers.

New Business:

Director Mulé asked for missing minutes and will send out a list of what he's looking for.

Adjournment:

There being no further business for the Board to consider,

Secretary Streeter moved to adjourn; Vice-Chair Spanagel seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary

List of Documents:

Agenda

Chair's Report

Director's Report

TML Fundraising and Advocacy Report