

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024

Bristol Public Library, 5 High Street, Bristol, CT 06010

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Eric Frenette, Nicholas Jakubowski, Elizabeth Kanachowski, Andrea Kapchensky, Barbara O'Neill, and Pina Salvatore.

Library Director Deborah Prozzo, Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton, and Recording Secretary Ruth Vontell.

Absent: Kimberly Ploszaj and City Council Liaison Sebastian Panioto

Item 1- Call to order

Chairperson Carpenter called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Item 2- Public Participation

Eleanor Wilson of the Bristol Historical Society thanked Assistant Library Director Stanton and the library for co-sponsoring the special program on Saturday, February 3rd in observance of Black History Month. Attendees watched and discussed the movie: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Kapchensky MOVED to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2024 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Salvatore. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo received a \$250 donation from Anne Czuchta of the Bristol Lions Club for the purchase of large print materials: \$200.00 for the Main Adult Department and \$50.00 for the Children's Department. **Director Kanachowski MOVED to approve the request to the Board of Finance (meeting on 2/27/24) for a \$250 appropriation from the two Library Donations-Revenue accounts to the Library Donations-Program Supplies-Expenditure account. Seconded by Director Frenette. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.**

Library Director Prozzo received communication from the Main Street Community Foundation with the un-audited 2023 fund statements for the trusts. The beginning and ending balances are noted for the calendar year ending December 31, 2023 along with a list of approved grants (quarterly distributions). The Samuel Goodsell Library Fund ending balance was \$904,119.36 and we received \$31,060.00. The Manross Memorial Library Fund ending balance was \$2,918,802.22 and we received \$53,195.00. The Bristol Libraries Fund ending balance was \$134,788.99 and we received \$4,630.00.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

No Report.

b. Property Committee

Director Kapchensky met with Library Director Prozzo and Senior Maintenance Technician Mark Bolduc to arrange and hang the pictures we accepted from the Bristol Historical Society. You are welcome to view them in the downstairs room at Manross.

c. Policy Committee

No Report.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director's Report

1) December 2023 statistics highlights:

- Overall circulation is up by 5% with e-books up by 45%, downloadables up by 27%, and Hoopla up by 31%
- Internet usage increased by 13%
- Number of programs is up by 5% and attendance increased 22%
- Young adult numbers continue to decrease, but we hope to turn this around in the spring quarter
- Patron visits increased by 9%
- Meeting Room bookings more than doubled from last year
- The Computer Lab showed a 14% decrease
- WiFi sessions were down 18% due in part to some outages, down time, and connection problems after the new wi-fi boxes were installed throughout the library. Seth Ramos and Chris Soper from IT are working to resolve the issues to ensure the sessions are counted.

2) Monthly Budget Report: Spending in all departments is on track.

As of 1/30/2024:

- 107.9% - Library Revenue
- 60.0% - Main Library
- 78.7% - Children's Library
- 63.1% - Manross Library
- 41.4% - Library Trust Funds

Library Revenue is very healthy at 107.9% especially since we still have the months of February to June left in fiscal year

2024. This extremely high number is mainly driven by copier charges. At the Budget Review meeting at City Hall, the Board of Finance Chair asked about raising the price of copies. Library Director Prozzo reminded him that the Library Board voted against that. She costed out for both color and black and white copies at both libraries for fiscal year 2023 and determined that we are doing better than breaking even. The library does not get this revenue; it goes to the city. With copy costs very high at places like UPS and Staples, the library provides an economical alternative for the community. While we don't collect fines for overdue materials, we do collect fees for lost and damaged items.

The Main Library Year-to-Date Budget is within 1% of last year at this time. We've seen great savings in the public utilities line item due to the amazing solar program. There are no concerns.

The Children's Library Year-to-Date Budget is still holding at 78.7%. Valerie Toner, Supervisor of Children's Services, is using School Readiness money to cover professional fees. These funds are not part of the library budget; they are in addition to it.

The Manross Year-to-Date Budget is on track at 63.1%. Library Director Prozzo is tracking public utilities and natural gas expenses. We are in good shape since we've only had one cold snap.

The Library Trusts are at 41.4%. Goodsell Funds are used for online databases, reference materials, and nonfiction books. We're hoping to add to the Bristol Libraries Trust Fund money so we can proceed with our plans to use it for A/V upgrades to Meeting Rooms 2 & 3.

Director Kanachovski inquired about the status of moving the Centennial Funds to Main Street Community Foundation. The Comptroller and Marie O'Brien, our Board of Finance liaison, were looking into putting a donate button on our website. It would be logical to put that money into the Centennial Fund. Library Director Prozzo suggested that the Finance Committee start looking into this and any related legal paperwork.

At the Budget Review meeting, there were no suggestions for cuts, however, the mayor has made it very clear that department heads are going to hear a lot of "no"s. Our Budget Hearing before the Board of Finance will be held in City Hall Council Chambers on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. The library will present first. You are welcome to attend.

3) Highlights of library activities:

- Valerie Toner, Supervisor of Children's Services, and Dawn Leger, the Grants Administrator for the City of Bristol, wrote a Dollar General grant for \$3,000 to support the Children's Summer Reading Program. It will go to the City Council on February 13, 2024 for approval and the mayor's signature.
- As part of Governor Lamont's Severe Cold Weather Protocol last month, the Main Library was designated as an overflow homeless shelter for four nights (January 18th - 21st) from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. for 9-10 people and a dog. Our custodians, Mark Bolduc and Steve Kozikowski, were exceptional. They worked 12-hour shifts setting up, dismantling, and rearranging furniture for meetings and programs including a concert on Saturday, cleaning carpets, sanitizing bathrooms, etc. but this was a strain on our resources. CERT was running the program and had some volunteers who came and went. The mayor set up cots and stacked chairs. We did this at the request of the mayor and for our community, but this is not a permanent solution. This happened one other time for one night during Ken Cockayne's administration. We did run into some problems, including staff being asked for food and pot, accidents on the carpet and lobby furniture, intoxicated individuals, the need to find space to store cots, etc. Out of respect, the Library Board should have been consulted. Being a warming center during the day is different from being a shelter at night. Some folks came by bus from out of town and others had mobility issues. Discussion followed regarding the use of alternate locations around the downtown area (gyms/armory), approaching the churches, the need for better security, establishing a policy with specific procedures and strict guidelines, as well as the role and definition of a library. Tomorrow, Library Director Prozzo will attend a combined meeting of the Homeless Task Force and Cold Weather Protocol Task Force.

- 4) Staff News: Luviss Ortiz has been hired as our new full-time permanent custodian. He was our temporary custodian last fall. It's possible that the open Reference Assistant position will be filled soon. We have a candidate and just need to hear from Human Resources regarding a start date.

Chairperson Carpenter received a question from a resident regarding the process or procedure to have a book published by a local author added to the library collection. Library Director Prozzo stated that Valerie Toner, Supervisor of Children's Services, should be consulted if it's a children's book. On the adult side, we would make every effort to add the book to the local author area. Director Kapchensky followed up with Assistant Library Director Stanton on her request to have the children's book written by a local author about our police

officers added to the collection. Library Director Prozzo thinks the book is *True Blue Heroes* and that it's in the collection.

f. City Council Liaison Report

None.

g. Friends of the Library Report

Director Salvatore reported that the main focus for the Friends right now is preparing for the annual Winter Used Book Sale which will be held from February 28th to March 3rd at the Main Library. The press release has details about the hours, items for sale, prices, etc. This sale is the Friends' primary fundraising event. Proceeds help provide items and services not included in the library's annual budget. The Friends appreciate the generosity of the community members who donated items for the sale.

h. Community Outreach Committee Report

Director Kanachovski provided an update on the Children's Author Program scheduled for April 11th. Patrons will need to register for the event which will include free lunch and a talk by Newbery Honor Award winner Rajani LaRocca. At "Take Your Child to the Library Day," Valerie Toner handed out 31 copies of LaRocca's book *The Secret Code Inside You: All About Your DNA*. The children can have them signed on April 11th. The books were purchased with Manross Trust Funds. The next program leading up to the big event will be held at Manross. It's for upper elementary/middle school youth. Library Board members are welcome to attend. The total cost of the Author Program will be approximately \$5,000 - \$7,000.

The library's community outreach vehicle will be at BAIMS on Memorial Boulevard and the Duck Race in Forestville in early May.

Item 7- Old Business

None.

Item 8- New Business

Assistant Library Director Stanton requested that the Policy Committee look into the development of a Social Media Policy as we expand into using more interactive apps like Instagram.

Item 9- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Frenette made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Seconded by Director Jakubowski. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.