

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Nicholas Jakubowski, Thomas Jensen, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Barbara O'Neill, Kimberly Ploszaj (via Zoom), Pina Salvatore, and City Council Liaison Sebastian Panioto.

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

Absent: Eric Frenette

Item 1- Call to order

Chairperson Carpenter called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Item 2- Public Participation

Harley Graime, Emergency Management Director for the City of Bristol, spoke. Please see Item 4 and Old Business.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Kapchensky MOVED to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2024 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Salvatore. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Chairperson Carpenter welcomed new Library Board member Tom Jensen who briefly introduced himself. He's been in Bristol for 20 years, works at ESPN, and has two kids who go to St. Paul Catholic High School. He wants to get involved in the city.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo received an email from Harley Graime on February 20, 2024 requesting use of the library on the second and third Fridays of every month by the Insurance City Repeater Club/Bristol Radio Club (Amateur Ham Radio) for their license testing and meetings. Harley is a member of the club.

Harley explained that this non-profit emergency communications team previously met at City Hall, which now closes at 8:00 p.m. on Friday nights. They are looking for a long-term alternate downtown location with tables, chairs, and AV equipment that stays open until 8:30 p.m. or 8:45 p.m. They would need a room from 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. Generally, 12-20 people attend. Director Ploszaj suggested using Fire Station #4 instead. This is where CERT meets.

Several questions and concerns were discussed. The library closes to the public at 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. The custodial staff does not work past 5:00 p.m. on Fridays during the summer so overtime budgeting would be required. During summer reading, the library hosts after hours programs on Friday nights so the meeting rooms would be unavailable. Even with the gates down and use of the

side door, someone would need to monitor the building which adds another layer of responsibility. The custodians have cleaning duties to attend to on Friday nights.

Chairperson Carpenter suggested reviewing the policy and voting on this next month. It will be added to the April Agenda. In the meantime, Harley will ask to use the firehouse.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

No Report.

b. Property Committee

No Report.

c. Policy Committee

No Report.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director's Report

1) January statistics highlights:

- Overall circulation, including e-books and downloadables, is up by 2%. Libraries pay more than anyone else for e-books. They are very expensive. A few bills are currently being worked on in the state legislature. Director Kanachovski heard a television news report on this topic.
- The number of reference questions answered (job searching, technology, etc.) is up by 13%
- Database usage increased by 124% due largely to Scott's email about Universal Class. Good PR makes a difference.
- Interlibrary loans are down 17% with BPL as borrower and down 2% with BPL as lender.
- New library card registrations increased by 17%
- Patron visits increased by 11%
- The overall number of programs is up by 31%
- Overall program attendance is up by 32%
- Who-Fi sessions numbered 4,843 which represents only half the month since the wi-fi was down 1/18/24 - 1/31/24.

2) Year-to-Date Budget Report:

Library revenue is @ 127.5%. The biggest increase is from copier charges. We may reach \$15,000 if things continue to trend this way. The Princh app allows patrons to pay for printing using a credit card online which is convenient.

Main Library is @ 66.2% which is in line with the same levels of spending as last year. We are now heading toward the last quarter of the budget year.

Children's Library is @ 75.7% with the two line items holding pretty steady.

Manross Library is @ 67.4% spent, which is where we should be. Manross Miscellaneous, which is the Manross trust fund, has \$25,123 in it. Unused funds roll over. This money is used to benefit the whole community. For example, it's been used to pay for the popular Hoopla streaming service. The last invoice showed that 1,064 items circulated. The average monthly cost for Hoopla is well over \$2,000.

Library Trust Funds are @ 52.7% and are used to purchase nonfiction books, reference books, and databases.

I presented the Library Budget at a Budget Hearing before the Board of Finance on Wednesday, February 21, 2024. It went very well. I want to thank Chairperson Carpenter, Director Kapchensky, and Director Salvatore for attending along with Assistant Library Director Stanton and Beth Martin, Supervisor of Branch Services. Several Friends members were there as well. There weren't many questions about the budget, but there was a lot of discussion about the new Strategic Plan, which was part of the meeting packet for that night. Other departments are going through the process now. Budget Workshops will follow. We will hear something later in April. The mayor has directed no increase on the non-wages side. Director Kanachovski inquired about planning for decreases since the budget is going to be very tight for the next 2-3 years.

3) Highlights of library activities:

- Sundays have been going very well with lots of foot traffic. The Children's Department has had programs every week and the Adult Department offered two programs in February. The Friends ended their Book Sale with a Bag Sale this past Sunday, which was well attended.
- The Seed Library will reopen for the season on Monday, March 11th at 5:30 p.m. followed by a seed starting program at 6:30 p.m. MaryLynne from the Circulation Department has been sorting over 1,800 seed packets. Bristol patrons can check out up to 5 packets with a Bristol Public Library card.

4) Staff News: Zach Hebert has joined the staff in the Reference Department so we are currently fully staffed.

f. City Council Liaison Report

Council Liaison Panioto reported on long-term planning and spending, specifically the five-to-ten-year capital improvement projects around the city. The grand list did not rise as much as they anticipated this year so they may need to put the brakes on

until there are more taxable items (Kind Care, Bristol Events Center, etc.) down the road. Surrounding towns are in a similar situation. There's a need to budget responsibly so the city isn't put in a bad spot.

g. Friends of the Library

Director Salvatore shared exciting news: The Friends' Used Book Sale was record-breaking! They made over \$4,000 the first day which is the most they've ever collected on the first day. In total, they made over \$10,000 which is the most they've ever made at the winter sale. This success has given the Friends motivation to continue with their efforts. Director Salvatore thanked all the Friends and volunteers who helped all week long, especially Rose Ann and Sheila for their care, coordination, and hard work. She also thanked Debbie Prozzo and her staff who play a vital role in the sale's success. *The Bristol Edition* came and took photos and Joshua Spiro posted photos on the library's website which helped with advertising. Now that the sale is over, time will be spent restocking the Friends' Café and the bookstore.

The Friends are now looking forward to National Library Week in April when they will do something to honor the staff at both libraries.

h. Community Outreach Committee Report

Director Kanachovski reported that with only one month left before the Newberry award-winning Children's Author Event, we need to get the word out and encourage youth to register. This is the first time we're doing this type of program. It will take place on Thursday, April 11th during National Library Week which begins on April 7th. She personally thanked the library staff for their help with this exciting program to reach young readers.

Item 6- Old Business

- a. Harley Graime thanked the Library Board for use of the meeting rooms for 4 nights from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to shelter 41 homeless individuals (10-12 per night) during the Governor's Cold Weather Protocol. Harley also thanked the custodians for working overtime and moving cots in and out of the rooms alongside the mayor, although they were not asked to do anything other than their jobs. He stated that 4-5 CERT and BBHD (nurses and social workers) volunteers stayed all night long (175 hours over 4 days) and provided snacks (not meals). St. Vincent DePaul was full and could not take in 10% more. They no longer have use of the Congregational Church for overflow (16 beds) because the Parish House does not have fire sprinklers. The number of homeless is skyrocketing and they need a central place downtown. Harley works closely with the mayor on this and has inquired at various alternate locations including Bridge Community Church (chairs but no beds), the American Legion (just for veterans), former Brewery across from City Hall (\$18,000

per month to rent), the old *Bristol Press* building, and the former NAPA building, but they are unavailable.

Chairperson Carpenter said that the city needs to have a plan in place to avoid last-minute scrambling. Director O'Neill stated that the library was "blindsided." Director Jakubowski pointed out the need for input from the Library Board and staff to better coordinate these efforts in the future. Director Kanachovski suggested that there be a designated place with more volunteers and stressed that certain criteria must be met. Although it's now March and getting warmer, this will happen again. Council Liaison Panioto mentioned concerns about staffing. It's one thing to be a warming center during the daytime, but overnight coverage requires more planning and preparation. Library Director Prozzo noted that the library has been used as an overnight homeless shelter only once before and that was for just one night during Ken Cockayne's administration.

Christine Thebarger's Winter Agency Committee will meet tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. in City Hall Chambers. Director Kanachovski offered to attend in person. Library Director Prozzo will attend via Zoom.

Item 7- New Business

None.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Kanachovski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m. Seconded by Director Salvatore. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.