MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2024

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Nicholas Jakubowski, Thomas Jensen, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Barbara O'Neill, Pina Salvatore, and Council Liaison Sebastian Panioto.
Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.

Absent: Eric Frenette and Kimberly Ploszaj

Item 1- Call to Order

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

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Salvatore MOVED to approve the minutes from the November 4, 2024 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director O'Neill. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo was cc'd on a letter from Main Street Community Foundation to Diane Waldron, the Comptroller for the City of Bristol. A check in the amount of $54,500 from the Frederick T. Manross Trust, which represents the 2024 qualifying distribution amount to support the Manross Memorial Library, was sent directly to the Comptroller's Department and will be held in the Frederick Manross trust account with the city.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

Library Director Prozzo stated that the "Donate" page on the library website is on hold pending the hiring of a new library tech person from the IT Department. Interviews were held in the HR Department last week. The candidate who was offered the position turned it down. We will conduct interviews again on Wednesday. We don't have confirmation from the Treasurer's office yet about using PayPal once the button is in place. Patrons can still make donations to any of the trust funds through Main Street Community Foundation's website. Donations made to the Bristol Public Library go into the special gifts and donations account.

b. Property Committee

Director Kapchensky reported that she and Beth Martin met with Claudia Dinep, a landscape architect, on November 22nd. We showed her the area we had chosen for the Cawley memorial at Manross. She took a soil sample, measured the area, and will draw up plans. The grass in the planned space will need to be dug up in the spring as the area is bumpy. We discussed putting in paths throughout the garden that will be ADA-compliant. She has a crew able to do that. We told her we are limited to spending between $13,000.00 and $15,000.00. Beth contacted Mr. Cawley to update him on the process. He will be able to donate funds to the Friends, but the entire bill cannot be paid before December 31st.

c. Policy Committee

Director Salvatore did not have any updates with regard to the Social Media Policy. Assistant Library Director Stanton stated that the Social Media Policy was submitted to corporation counsel after corrections were made to it following the last meeting. He is waiting for them to get back to him.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director's Report

Library Director Prozzo has been busy getting the budget draft ready. The October statistics and year-to-date budget report do not contain anything out of the ordinary. She will call the Comptroller's office because there's been no Centennial Fund interest recorded since August.

Library Director Prozzo put in a request with the mayor and HR to have a temporary custodian for 3 months while the Senior Maintenance Technician is out on leave. It would be a part-time evening position for the winter months of January, February, and March. We have overtime money in the budget to pay the salary.

f. City Council Liaison Report

No Report.

City Council Liaison Sebastian Panioto thanked everyone for volunteering and for their hard work.

g. Friends of the Library

(1) Director Salvatore reported that the winter sale will be held from February 26, 2025 to March 2, 2025. In preparation, the Friends will not accept any book donations from October 15, 2024 through March 17, 2025. If donors are unable to hold onto their items until after March 17th, they

can check in with the circulation desk to find out if there are any other locations to donate their items.

(2) A mini holiday book sale is being held in the lobbies of both the Main and Manross libraries during the month of December. It's cash only. They're open whenever the libraries are open. They have a great variety of nearly new gift quality books for readers of all ages, a large selection for children, movies, music, and holiday-themed items. New items will be added frequently throughout the run of the sale. Director Kapchensky noted that there was a story about this in *The Bristol Press* today.

h. Community Outreach Committee Report

No Report.

Item 6- Old Business

a. Use of the library as an emergency overnight shelter during cold weather protocol declarations.

Director Salvatore, Chair of the Policy Committee, stated that the Library Board Policy Committee held an informal meeting on October 24, 2024 to review the overnight shelter policy provided by Harley Graime. Barbara, Valina, Debbie, and Scott were in attendance. Andrea and Tom provided comments via email. The comments and questions gathered were summarized in a document that I emailed to the Board on October 28, 2024. The areas of concern centered around safety issues, liability coverage for injuries and damage, and custodial staffing and compensation. Harley Graime attended our last Board meeting on November 4th. We went over our concerns with him and he addressed our questions. He told us at that meeting that he was going to revise the guidelines which he did submit to Deb and which Deb circulated to the Board. Chairperson Carpenter noted that they do seem to be more in line with the actual format that they're supposed to be in. Director Kapchensky didn't see any connection between what he sent and what we're supposed to be doing as a library. She stated that we still don't know what we're required to do and the two documents he sent don't mesh. Director O'Neill feels that Harley took the Board's concerns and put them into guidelines. Director Salvatore does not think that what Harley sent the second time is as specific as the first document. Chairperson Carpenter noted that the mayor would be the one to give us specific directives. Director Kanachovski learned that there is federal and state funding available to create housing for the homeless and feels that a city our size should have more housing available to the homeless. Director Jakubowski stated that direct communication or something in writing from the mayor expressing his support would put us at ease and be a fair way to move forward. We need to know that the mayor's comfortable with what’s being proposed. The Library Director reports to the mayor. That’s the chain of command. When Library Director Prozzo received a follow-up call from Harley saying that the mayor was okay with it, she did tell him that we’d like to see a directive in writing. City Council Liaison Panioto is not sure if Harley spoke with corporation counsel or if he had that chat with the mayor. He stated that they probably don’t want to put something concrete in writing. At the end of the day, it’s an executive order scenario passed down from the Governor. It’s not perfect, but that’s what we have in place right now. Sebastian will talk to the mayor and get back to the Board about the security and overtime pay. Chairperson Carpenter reminded everyone that it’s an emergency situation with variables and unknowns which make it difficult to plan. Discussion followed regarding affordable housing percentages, police resource officers tasked with developing a relationship with the homeless population, possible worst-case scenarios, and different types of insurance coverage for library buildings versus emergency shelters.

Item 7- New Business

a. FY26 Budget Draft

Library Director Prozzo will attend a budget training session tomorrow.

If the Library Board approves the FY26 Budget draft, she will enter it into ClearGov, which is the software we use, and she will notify the Comptroller’s office. Then she will meet with the Board of Finance members and the Comptroller’s office to review the budget and get in the queue for our budget presentation. That’s the timeframe.

Main Library

There are 2 components: wages and non-wages.

There are a couple missing pieces. First, we did not receive the economic forecast yet, so some things are based on the past few years. Second, both unions represented in the library will be in contract negotiations so there’s no update on salaries yet. Adjustments to wages will be made when the contracts are settled. Part-time wages for our 4 library pages will increase because minimum wage is going up in January. The increase in other wages is the anticipated vacation sell-backs. It does not yet include the 6% shift differential that the evening custodians get.

We received instructions not to have any increases.

Library Director Prozzo thinks that we’ll be able to keep at the current level of funding for professional fees and services. Our membership in LCI had a slight increase, but not a significant amount. We’ve got a cap at 1.9% consortium-wide. We have a new security company for the rest of the fiscal year. Arrow Security took over the Westech accounts. Our rep is originally from Bristol so he knows the community very well. A new security guard started with us on Saturday and Kofi resumed his post at Manross. The hourly rate is significantly higher so we cut back on hours to 4-hour shifts 5 days a week. At the end of the fiscal year, I will meet with Roger Rousseau, the Purchasing Agent, to review the contract and see if we're going to sign on with Arrow for another year. Since the Friends supplement the adult programming, we should be able to keep professional fees at $87,000.

The decrease in public utilities is based on the CT Solar program. We see substantial savings versus our Eversource bills. Although there was a slight increase, I feel comfortable taking $10,000 off of that. We will need that money in other areas of the budget. Based on the past 3 years, there's going to be a 14% increase in our water and sewer charges which is about $500.00.

We've been able to keep refuse at $200 for the past few years. Repairs and maintenance, along with motor vehicle service and repair, are being kept at the same levels as this year.

Our post office box rental goes up a little over 6% each year.

The phone bill has been creeping up since February. After seeing a significant increase this month, we reduced the lines to 3 trunk lines. Next month's bill should show a decrease.

We'll hold the line on postage at $3,000 and travel reimbursement at $400.

We took in so much revenue on the Princh app that it paid for the year. There's no need to increase the price of printing.

We may need to do a slight increase on our maintenance supplies due to rate increases.

Program supplies can stay at $135,000 since we supplement with trust fund money.

We might have to increase the natural gas number.

Motor fuels should be okay at $1,200 since the new truck gets better gas mileage. Motor vehicle parts can stay at $500. Office supplies are fine at $2,000. Our conferences, schooling, and education line is the same as it's been for many years.

There's nothing for capital outlay this year.

The Main Library budget as it stands now has no increase, but we know that will change because of the wages.

<u>Children's Department</u>

We are keeping the budget the same. We found that $50,000 covers all of their expenses. We increased the professional fees and services for their programs and decreased the amount in program supplies.

Manross Library

There is an overall increase of 2.8%. Based just on the salary increase for the pages, there's a 6.8% increase in wages. We've been using Manross trust funds to pay for programming which has helped to keep the professional fees and services line stable, but it will go up by 26.19% if we decide on using security. Public utilities will increase by 8% based on the trends. We've seen a steady increase in water and sewer averaging close to or over 20%. Repairs and maintenance will stay at $7,000. The Main Library covers Manross maintenance supplies over $1,500 because it's sometimes cheaper to buy in bulk and split it. Program supplies will hold steady at $50,000. There's been a little bit of a decrease on natural gas, but we're leaving it at $13,000.

Trust Funds

Susan Sadecki from Main Street Community Foundation will give us the anticipated quarterly distributions in January. She will give a presentation at the February 3rd meeting.

Revenue

I've made projections, but it's hard to predict what the library fees, copier charges, and library rentals will be.

Discussion followed with comments and questions.

Director Jakubowski MOVED to approve the FY26 Budget Draft. Seconded by Director Salvatore. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Kapchensky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Seconded by Director Jakubowski. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.