

BRAINERD MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

November 17, 2020

PRESENT: Elizabeth Anderson, Myra Aronow, Carl Conrad, Marijean Conrad, Lynne Cooper, Cheryl Czuba, Kent Jarrell, Lorraine Riess, Alma Zyko, Henry Holtzman, Elizabeth Adams, Donna Brinkerhoff, Emily Smith, Terry Twigg, Tom Piezzo.
(includes members who attended via Zoom)

ABSENT: Pam Crum.

Meeting called to order at 7 P.M. by President Marijean Conrad.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Minutes of the October 27, 2020 meeting were approved as read. Henry/Donna.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: **1.** Marijean congratulated Haddam's new poet laureate, Lorraine Riess, and thanked the Laureate committee for its work. **2.** Marijean will meet with the First Selectman after Thanksgiving.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: **1.** The State Annual Report showed some impressive statistics in spite of the library closing on March 13: in-person Teen program attendance was 98 vs. 115 for FY19; in-person Children's program attendance was 2,242 vs. 3,208 for FY19; overall circulation of physical items was 42,140 vs. 42,677 for FY19; total electronic circulation was 9,217 vs. 7,207 for FY19; and circulation in all formats was 51,357 vs. 49,884 for FY19. **2.** The Construction Grant approval announcements will be made next Monday at the CSL board meeting at which Tom will present for CLA. **3.** The Board will give the staff holiday gifts but no party this year. **4.** BML is compliant with the CT Paid Leave requirement for all libraries, coordinating with Paychex and PFMLA departments. **5.** Numerous libraries have closed to the public in the past week owing to increased COVID rates. **6.** The new AWE station is on order and coming soon. This is a \$3,000 machine paid for with a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. **7.** The annual appeal is up to \$7,140 and there will be a follow-up letter in December to those who have not yet donated.

FRIENDS: **1.** The Friends are holding an inspirational or thankful Bookmark design Challenge. There are 3 categories (children teens and adults) and entries are due on December 15 with a prize of a \$25 Amazon gift certificate in each category. **2.** The next meeting will be in 2021.

PERSONNEL & POLICY: 1. A motion was made and passed to accept the committee's proposed salaries and wages for staff, an upgrade for one staff member to Assistant Director as a full-time, salaried position and the creation of a new position of Cataloging/Circulation Assistant. The changes in wages will be paid retroactive to July 1, 2020. Carl/Henry. This will further the committee's goal of paying staff the recommended CLA wages for their positions. **2.** Tom gave the committee his proposals for creating a safe work environment at BML in view of the pandemic, particularly with regard to travel, safe return to work, and quarantine and testing and their impact on paid leave and library service to the public. These proposals will be finalized and brought to the Board.

COMMUNICATIONS: 1. The committee is pleased to announce that one of our very own Board Members, Lorraine Reiss, has been selected as Poet Laureate of Haddam. Many thanks to the Laureate Committee, which served as a subcommittee to the Board's Communications Committee. The announcement, which is on our website and in various media follows:

The Brainerd Memorial Library announced that Lorraine Riess has been selected for a two-year appointment as the Poet Laureate of Haddam. Lorraine, a published poet, and a Haddam resident will serve in the honorary position as the ambassador of the community's literary life on January 1, 2021. The selection was made by a committee of community representatives that considered applicants' breadth of experience in poetry, comfort level in public speaking, and achievements of distinction. After Lorraine's retirement from a career in architecture, she said she had time to do more thinking and began to further explore poetry as a member of the Connecticut River Poets, a group dedicated to encouraging and critiquing poets. "The idea of expressing a particular idea or emotion, or leaving the reader with an indelible image is exciting for me," she said. "I think Japanese Haiku is the most elegant expression of this, but longer forms and sonnets allow us to expand on ideas as well. I strive for what one poet described as 'the best words in the best order.' I hope that I can have an enriching presence in the community and encourage a wider awareness of all that poetry can do for us. To make us more complete human beings, to meet our creative side with joy and surprise is a wonderful thing." Although the position is unpaid, the Haddam Poet Laureate position is endorsed by the Town of Haddam and will be assisted by the Brainerd Memorial Library in the coordination of scheduling of events. "Brainerd Memorial Library is delighted to announce the selection of Lorraine Riess as Haddam's first Poet Laureate," said Marijean Conrad, President of the Library Board of Trustees. "Lorraine is an accomplished poet who will give us a unique appreciation of life in Haddam. Our congratulations and best wishes go to Lorraine on this honor." Margaret Gibson, Connecticut's State Poet Laureate, welcomed Lorraine to the ranks of Poet Laureates serving in more than thirty cities and towns across the state and said, "Ms. Riess is not only an accomplished poet, but she is also a generous and a compassionate listener, able to offer her insights and experience to others. Part of my focus as the State of Connecticut Poet Laureate is to offer the Town Poet Laureates opportunities to work together as we all bring poetry into the lives of our communities, whether in readings, workshops, community discussions. Poems give voice to our essential

humanity, using language with imagination to engage our attention and reach out to each other. What good news that Haddam will be joining a state-wide expansion of language arts and imagination into the community!"

2. Donna continues to write articles for our local media. Donna and Henry made sure that The Bulletin had the right copy and layout for our fundraising advertisement. **3.** The committee will work on creating an informational brochure with inserts on COVID restrictions and on improvements from the renovations.

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING: 1. The Development Committee met on Thursday, November 5, 2020 and reports that the spring fundraiser, Taste of Haddam, will not be held in 2021. Donna proposed the idea of an on-line auction to replace that fundraiser with another that can hopefully raise a similar amount (budgeted \$4,000). A sub-group of 4 committee members (auction committee) met to work out some of the details. Before committing to the auction, Donna brought several concerns to the Board: getting enough items; making enough money; and getting enough help. It was decided to go ahead with the first step which is getting enough items for the auction and making the final decision in January. The proposed date for the auction would be March 5-15. **2.** Cherry updated the Development Committee on the activities of the Friends. The scheduled April book sale is up in the air due to Covid-19. The October book sale is still on the calendar and a decision about whether to hold the book sale will be made closer to the date. The Friends have scheduled five plant sales to be held at the library on the 3rd Saturday of each month beginning in May. Besides plants, books related to gardening and the environmental impacts of gardening will be offered and possibly baked goods.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: No report.

BUDGET/FINANCE: 1. Carl will present a 6th month review in January and work on the 2021 fiscal year plan in February asking the town for the same amount of money. **2.** The investment funds are performing well. **3.** The money spent on the exterior project is \$160,000 and the interior project is \$8,000.

BUILDING & GROUNDS: 1. A small working group has been meeting with Simmons once a month to walk around the various work areas outside and inside the building to review ongoing activities. The latest meeting was on 11/12 with Maribeth, Whitney, Tom, Carl and Lorraine attending. **2.** Eversource has approved the easement for service from the new utilities pole and final documentation is with the lawyers for signing. The next step will be the switchover of the 4 utility services, Eversource, Frontier, Comcast and High-Speed Fiber Optic Cable, from the existing pole to the new pole and subsequent connection to the building via the previously laid underground conduit. Then Marijean will contact Frontier to have the old pole removed. Finally, work will be able to begin on the new 916 driveway and the new parking lot. **3.** Simmons has cleaned the interior of the well and replaced the pump.

Next steps will entail replacing the inside holding pressure tank and evaluating the filtration system. Tests have been conducted throughout the process to monitor the quality of the water. **4.** The pedestal meter in the landscaping on the north side of the new parking lot will be modified so that it can support 2 electrical charging stations via an underground conduit (a future grant possibility). The pedestal meter has a separate underground conduit running to a nearby stub position that can support a generator in the future. **5.** Wooden ceiling tiles (blondish) for the lobby and hallway milled by Simmons (for cost savings) have been approved for installation. Tile baseboard for the lobby and hallway matching the flooring instead of the wooden baseboard has been approved. A high-quality plexiglass type covering will be placed over the mural in the lobby to prevent damage from strollers etc.

INTERIOR RENOVATION: **1.** The progress and status meeting with Maribeth of Simmons Construction on November 12 is partly covered in Carl's Building and Grounds report. **2.** The bathroom plumbing fixtures have arrived and will be installed soon. Doors are still on back order which is holding up the completion of tile and trim installation. **3.** The two lighting fixtures for the lower lobby will be ordered by Whitney. **4.** The size of the recessed wood panels in the lower lobby was increased for better proportions and ease of lighting placement. **5.** Lorraine is coordinating with Marissa about fun-size hooks for children's coats near the mural. **6.** Tom is arranging a meeting with the installers to discuss a lexan covering for the mural. **7.** The kitchenette area in the Community Room is completed and met with general approval. **8.** There will need to be an area in the lobby for a poetry board, to be discussed with the committee at a later date.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: **1.** Twenty-nine bricks have been sold (2 large and 19 small) netting \$4,300. **2.** There are plans to go public in the spring.

STRATEGIC PLAN: No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: **1.** Lynne asked about the Little Free Libraries and Tom replied that staff members are taking care of them with plans to have teen volunteers help. **2.** Plans were made to send handwritten New Years cards to library donors in January. **3.** There will be no donor reception this year but perhaps an open house next year with the completion of the exterior project.

NEW BUSINESS:

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 P.M.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Alma Zyko, secretary

(approved)