

BRAINERD MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

May 28, 2024
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDING: Terry Twigg, Lynne Cooper, Andrew Maloney, Terry Smith, Marijean Conrad, Margaret Adams, David Neal, Pam Crum, Lorraine Riess, Mary Karkutt-Kulak, Susan Thompson, KayCee Blamcaflor

The meeting was called to order by Terry Twigg at 6:58 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

The agenda was accepted as proposed, following a clarification of capital request submissions.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:

President's report:

- Terry T. commented on several issues:
 - Terry proposed adoption of a resolution to empower Andrew Maloney to apply for a State Public Library Construction Grant and to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the Brainerd Memorial Library Association, Inc., a certain contract with the Connecticut State Library, State of Connecticut, for a State Public Library Construction Grant. The resolution was unanimously approved. Margaret will prepare the resolution for signature.
 - There will be an Annual Meeting at Terry's home June 25. The social gathering will begin at 5:30 P.M. and the meeting at 7:00 P.M. The meeting agenda includes election of the 2024-2025 slate of Trustees; a vote to extend three Trustees (Terry Twigg, David Neal, and Mary Karkutt-Kulak) to a second three-year term; and a vote to approve Deb Rutter as a trustee. As a newly appointed trustee Deb has agreed to Chair the Personnel and Policy Committee.
 - Terry noted a special thank you to Deb Rutter for her five months of leadership running the library. She requested feedback from Trustees

on a special thank you for Deb. Terry also noted that bonuses were distributed to library employees as a thank you for their efforts preparing for the start of interior renovations.

- Terry tabled a proposal by Mary Karkutt-Kulak to consider everyone involved in Interior Renovation contract preparations for recognition.
- Terry applauded Andrew for his quick study of the library staff and programs.
- Moving forward, Terry summarized three key focus areas for the library. Additional effort/ funding will be required to address these three areas in advance of the next budget negotiations with the town.
 - Staff salaries
 - Adult programming
 - Website refresh
- There was a discussion about how to best present information to the town Board of Finance to support funding requests.
 - Lynne summarized key points on how to communicate budget requests. She and Terry S. have met with the Board of Finance and are in sync with a best approach for future submissions.

Secretary's report:

- Trustees voted to accept minutes from our April 24, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting. There was discussion about the timing of requests for various capital requests to the town.

Director's report:

- In his first few weeks as Library Director, Andrew reviewed programs, library services and staff profiles. His observations resulted in the top three priorities as summarized by Terry Twigg.
- Andrew provided updates on several activities:
 - The renovation has begun, and Andrew is working with the staff on the best layout for the first floor.
 - There are three scheduled summer programs.
 - Summer reading from June 24- August 23
 - 1000 Books Before Kindergarten
 - Ag Day
 - Planning has begun to strengthen adult programming.

- An Eversource Energy audit was discussed. David Neal suggested a “before” and “after” audit. Andrew and David will work together on timing of the audits.
- There will be an ice-cream social at the end of the Summer Reading Program. Board Trustees “scoop” the ice cream!

NOMINATING:

- Marijean updated the Board on Nominating activities.
 - In June Lynne Cooper and Lorraine Riess are dropping off the Board as they have served their maximum terms. New Board members with their expertise in Finance and Construction management are desired.
 - After June committee chairs will be established. Marijean reminded trustees that although committee chairs must be trustees, members need not be trustees.

FINANCE:

- Lynne commented on the strong fundraising year of 2023-2024 when total funds raised were \$30k. She commented that we typically budget lower fundraising amounts. By properly budgeting fundraising targets we will be able to adjust operating expenses upward.
- There was discussion about the advantage of developing signature annual fundraisers with higher dollar targets.
- Terry Smith updated the group on a proposed method of tracking Interior Renovation outflows and inflows. A June Finance Committee meeting will review and confirm this method of tracking and reporting.
- Lynne will obtain a schedule of renovation costs from Kronenberger. We received their first Bill in May.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Mary Karkutt-Kulak commented on the upcoming priorities of this committee. Lynne And Terry T. met with Mary in May to discuss key areas of focus including strong, repeatable annual fundraisers.
- There was a consensus recommendation to ask Bill Tait of Essex Capital to offer an adult library program on bequests and RMD's.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Related to planning and development the next Strategic Plan update will include:
 - Emphasis on financial management
 - Fundraising as a key component of operating revenue
 - Staff pay and program development as a driver of future library relevance.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS:

- Lingering requests originally submitted for AARPA funding in 2021 will be resubmitted in May. Per David Neal these requests include parking lot repaving, parking lot lighting and a generator. Total costs for all three are estimated between \$200k and \$300k. An estimate for window restoration of \$88k has also been received and will be included in the multi-year capital request submitted later in the year with the 2025-2026 proposed operating budget. It was noted that the town recently spent \$77k restoring ground floor windows of the historic old town hall in Field Park.
- Mary K. suggested that we apply to Preservation Connecticut for any energy saving capital needs. Andrew took the assignment to follow-up on this.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN:

- Now that the Interior Renovation has final contracts and a budget is in place, donor materials are "fixed", and packets can be used by anyone soliciting donations. Donor packets are available in Robbie's office. Lynne is the keeper

of donor lists to ensure that individuals are not approached by more than one solicitor. Lynne will continue on the committee after June. (Thank you, Lynne!)

- Leadership donor lists are in place with committee members. We expect these to be expanded as we work our way through meetings and gain referrals from donors.
- A second phase broader appeal to the thousands of library card holders will be planned later in the year.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY:

- Kaycee referenced her written report and commented on the importance of trustees attending Ag Day on June 1.

PERSONNEL AND POLICY:

- As noted, Deb Rutter has agreed to chair this committee after she is voted in as Trustee.

INTERIOR RENOVATION:

- The interior renovation is well under way and Lorraine reported on several accomplishments.
- The roof leak was repaired without charge due to a twenty-year warrantee surfaced by Deb Rutter.
- The refinishing of the front door frame has been completed. Terry T. will send a note along with documentation of a door and frame maintenance plan to Lindamae Peck to thank her for her generous donation.
- Lorraine took the lead on some cost reduction efforts, including streamlining of the main circulation desk. Cost reductions will help to offset the increase in costs from some change controls including restoration of the entryway wood floor.
- S/PA is putting together a spec list for the furniture bid. David is writing the RFQ for publication.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Marijean raised several issues for discussion.
- “Shopping” the electric bill and potential savings were discussed. Andrew mentioned the work of Deb Rutter on this topic. So far, a more economical alternate to Eversource has not been found.
- Andrew will take the lead on helping to host a November election debate. He is working with Anne Thompson in Essex.
- Thursday evening May 30, at 6:30 P.M. Betty and Phil Devlin’s daughter Katie Tietjen is holding a reading of her first published book Death in the Details. Everyone is encouraged to attend.
- \$250 bricks are being donated by the Haddam Garden Club and the Democratic Town Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

The next meeting date is June 25, 2024, at 29 Russel Road, Terry Twigg’s home.

Respectfully submitted:

Margaret Adams, Secretary