

Thayer Memorial Library Trustees Meeting

November 8, 2023

Meeting held via Zoom videoconference



Roll Call

Present were:

Emily Rose, Chair
David Spanagel, Vice Chair
Frank Streeter, Secretary
Ann Frantz, Trustee
Karen Silverthorn, Trustee
Adam Zand, Trustee
Joe Mulé, Director, Ex Officio

Melissa Carlson, President of the Friends of the Thayer Memorial Library
Amie Sund

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Chair Rose called the roll of attendees and opened the meeting.

Past Minutes

After reviewing the minutes from the October meeting,

Vice-Chair Spanagel moved to accept the minutes; Trustee Zand seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held December 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM. The Board's meetings will continue to be held over Zoom until further notice.

Chair's Report:

Chair Rose thanked the Trustees for all the work that they did for the staff appreciation event that she hosted and noted that a good time was had by all. Youth Librarian Maren Caulfield's last day will be on Monday, November 6, and Chair Rose encouraged all of the Trustees to stop by the library and wish her well. Chair Rose was pleased to note that Lancaster Town Administrator Kate Hodges has money for digitization and an additional staff member in the Town's proposed FY25 budget. This will address an issue that has long been a priority for the Library.

Chair Rose discussed a process for reviewing and possibly updating the Library Trustees bylaws. She would like to add language about complying with Town regulations. Director Mulé commented on how Board policy interacts with state law. Chair Rose asked questions about the Town's Code of Conduct, and how purchasing and procurement work in conjunction with the Commonwealth's and the Town's regulations. Trustee Zand noted that the bylaw has a severability clause so that any part of it that does not pass legal muster will not affect the document as a whole. In reference to the Town's

Code of Conduct, Secretary Streeter referred to a recent SJC decision allowing members of the public to say whatever they want at public meetings. Chair Rose noted that while that was the case, she was pleased that much of what could be described as “bad conduct” is already illegal. Chair Rose urged the board to review the bylaws and comment on them. Vice-Chair Spanagel advocated for a Board policy of a full review of the bylaws every five years and noted that it had been three years since that was last done.

Chair Rose and Trustee Silverthorn are working on updating the display case on the main floor of the Library with an exhibit featuring local Indian tribes. Director Mulé reported that the RFP for the windows has been delayed due to issues with subcontractors.

Trustee Zand noted that the existing bylaws contain some gendered language, for instance “Chairman” instead of the more widely accepted “Chair”. After a brief discussion,

Secretary Streeter moved to revise the bylaws with gender neutral language; Trustee Zand seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

Trustee Zand will do the initial review and will follow up with Secretary Streeter to have potential changes available for the Board’s review at its December meeting.

Building:

Director Mulé reported that Lancaster Town Administrator Kate Hodges had signed off on the draft of the RFP for the building project. Spencer Group will manage the procurement process and funds are already in place to begin. Chair Rose asked about improved security cameras in the Library and adding them to places in the Library that presently have no coverage. Director Mulé will follow up on this issue. He is going to try to get the same system the Town has in place in the Prescott Building. At present the Library just has some indoor security cameras although some exterior cameras were recently installed. Director Mulé is investigating various options for updating the interior cameras, especially as the current computer software for managing them is very difficult to use.

Advocacy and Fundraising:

The Fundraising and Advocacy Subcommittee met the day before the meeting and six people attended. Vice-Chair Spanagel discussed transition issues as he will be moving out of town in January. Trustee Franz is on the subcommittee already and is willing to be responsible for convening their meetings as needed. The subcommittee is set up for dedicated project fundraising, such as for the windows project. The current members of the subcommittee would like it to go dormant until a similar project arises rather than being responsible for general fundraising. The subcommittee would wind down in Q1 or Q2 of 2024 as the funds raised are applied to the windows project.

The Board accepted with regret the news that Vice-Chair Spanagel will move out of Lancaster on January 14 and discussed transition issues. At present he is the Vice-Chair of the Board as well as the liaison to the Friends of the Library. Trustee Frantz will take

over as the liaison to the Friends. The Board discussed how and when to apply the money the Friends had raised to the project. Director Mulé recommended holding the funds and transferring them only as needed. The Friends will follow that advice. Vice-Chair Spanagel recommended that the subcommittee not be formally disbanded until after the windows project is complete.

Director's Report:

Director Mulé was pleased to report that the Library's budget is relatively on schedule and that a new position has been added to the proposed FY25 Town budget. The position will be titled Special Collections and Archives Librarian and will also be responsible for outreach programs and exhibitions, as well as oversight of the Library's special collections and archives. Vice-Chair Spanagel asked how the position could support other town departments and Director Mulé commented on some of the possibilities.

The Board discussed how best to develop a catalog or listing of the contents of all the special collections such that it could be easily reviewed online. Special Collections Librarian Marsha Jacobowitz has an excellent listing of what is in the collection in reasonable detail, but it is still in a card file and needs to be put into Excel or some other form of database before it can be useful online.

New Business:

Friends of the Library President Melissa Karlson gave an update on the Friends' activities. She was pleased to announce that the Friends annual book sale had raised about \$12,000, and the confusion as to the exact number is due to uncertainty as to how much of this was from memberships rather than book sales. She regretfully informed the board that Susan Munyon is going to be stepping down as Chair of the book sale after some years running it. Susan did an excellent job and the Friends are discussing who her successor might be. Currently there are 88 friends, which yields \$5287 in membership income. The Friends need a treasurer, but at least have a job description for the position.

Action Items:

Trustee Zand will update the bylaws as discussed. Director Mulé reminded the Board of the upcoming joint meeting with the Select Board and the Finance Committee about the FY25 budget to be held on November 18. He will confirm the timing.

For upcoming holidays, Veterans Day is on a Saturday this year so the Library will also be closed on November 10 along with other Town offices. For Thanksgiving week the Library will be closed from Wednesday through Friday but will be open on Saturday.

Adjournment:

There being no further business for the Board to consider,

Secretary Streeter moved to adjourn; Vice-Chair Spanagel seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

The Board adjourned at 7:33

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Streeter, Secretary

List of Documents:

Agenda

Chair's Report

Director's Report

TML Fundraising and Advocacy Report