

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

July 19, 2021

### NORTH KINGSTOWN FREE LIBRARY MINUTES

**PRESENT WERE:** Varuna Abeywardane, Rini Georgekutty, Liz Suvari, Dan Humbyrd, Martha Parks, Dianne Izzo, Susan Straub, and Maggie Browne

**GUESTS:** Kathy McGregor, Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library, Tom Sgouros, member of the North Kingstown Free Library Corporation Board

- 1. Call to Order-** The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the North Kingstown Free Library held on Monday, July 19, 2021, via Zoom was called to order by Liz Suvari at 7:04 p.m.
- 2. Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-6 (c)** Notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's website.
- 3. Minutes of the June 2021 meeting** -VOTED to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2021 meeting on a motion made by Martha and seconded by Lori. The motion carries.
- 4. Director's Report**
  - a. 96.7% of the budget has been spent. This number is not completely accurate because the town is still figuring out end-of-the-year numbers for FY21.
  - b. Interiors committee have all agreed on a carpet. Sue has concerns about installing carpet before the membrane roof is replaced. If we don't have materials by August (the membrane roof bid is going to the town council 6/14/21) then Adam White says the project will need to be pushed off until the spring. All materials take a long time to come in right now due to the pandemic. We'll need to talk to Ralph, then Carina and then Champlin.
  - c. Roof update: only in certain weather will the water get into the soffit near the youth services computers. Dante is looking into this.
  - d. Library card signups have been increasing now that COVID restrictions are easing up.
  - e. When the EPA/USGS came through to install the groundwater wells for their study, we barely noticed they were there.
  - f. The library is in the process of applying for a grant via OLIS for \$10k. This is a non-competitive technology grant through funding received via ARPA, the American Rescue Plan Act.
- 5. Friends of the Library Report**
  - a. Salem Witch Museum passes will resume in 2022. Once the museums have opened up more fully, we'll be able to look at the circulation of passes to make decisions about which passes to keep and which to discontinue. The numbers for each month for the Book Nook continue to increase. A cart for the Book Nook came in damaged so the library sent it back and Maggie will be communicating with Amazon for a replacement.

- b. Recommendation for the rain gardens and Academy Cove: one of the rain gardens has very few living plants and no protective barrier left. It's an example of a failed rain garden. Their recommendation is that it should be buried and flattened. The town's equipment and labor could be used for this task. The few remaining plants could be transplanted to rain garden two. Rain garden two is flourishing but it also is rampant with poison ivy and needs a new berm. The Friends think the plantings could be refurbished. Their recommendation would be to consult master gardeners. Rain gardens should have more greens than flowering plants. Whether one of the rain gardens could be retired depends on what the town's grant that was used to install the rain garden said. The two signs are very informative and removal of them could be very complicated as they look very official and embedded in cement. Discussion ensued by the Board saying that the documents given by the town to Sue do not explicitly say that there is an end date for the rain garden project.
- c. The Friends are currently working on plans for the front of the library.

## 6. Old Business

- a. Meeting schedule: should be vague enough so that we have flexibility to have meetings on any evenings as needed. 10 meetings per year should be required. It's all right to be vague in the bylaws if we're specific with the secretary of state when posting each meeting. We should specify regular meetings, once a month. Lori will check in with the SOS regarding what is required. There was consensus for moving the meetings to the first Monday of the month during our last meeting and also to amend the bylaws at an upcoming meeting so that we can make that happen.

## 7. New Business

- a. Discussion of the Board of Trustees Bylaws
  - i. Meetings: minimum of 10 meetings per year. Liz will be in touch with Susan and will bring that language to the Board 7 days ahead of time for the next meeting.
  - ii. Treasurer role: Rini thinks the Board should not have a Treasurer at all because there's no money to deal with anyway, and if there were, it would be unwise to have just one person having the eye on the budget. We have a department (the town's finance department) that already handles this. All Board members should be responsible for looking at the budget. Liz will also provide the language for removing the Treasurer role from the Bylaws for the next meeting as well (7 days in advance).
- b. Discussion of the budget and other fiscal questions for upcoming meeting with town manager & town finance department
  - i. Sue spoke with Karen Mellor, head of the state library offices (OLIS). Other towns do have allocated expenses, it's not a conflict with maintenance of effort. What could be an issue is if the expenses are too high, aren't fully explained, or are unreasonable (e.g. paying the full salary for an employee of another town department.). We went from having \$477k to having a structural deficit per the finance manager. Tom said that in order to be maintenance of effort, there has to be an effort to hold the library harmless when there's a transition in accounting, otherwise it's a

change in actual money. So the town should show the library some maintenance of continuity. Saying that something was done incorrectly in the past is just another accountant's opinion. If they're saying that the accounting process went wrong in the past, can we ask for a record of that? Be very direct and specific with all questions. It would be good to have the meeting take place instead of our regular August meeting or the September meeting if they say they need more time. Sue's draft of questions went out on 6/3.

- ii. Strategic plan implementation: Dan Humbyrd will be looking into a couple of actionable items that the Trustees can take and complete. Dan may reach out to other Board members if he needs some refreshers since it seems so long ago.
  - c. Soon we will get an opinion from the town manager and town solicitor regarding when we can go back to in-person meetings.
  - d. Public comment: John McDermott gave the Board advice on how to ask questions of the town regarding the budget, line item by line item. What did you do, why did you do it, and why is it better than before?
- 8. Adjournment** - the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m. on a motion made by Lori, seconded by Rini Georgekutty. The motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maggie Browne