

**NORTH KINGSTOWN FREE LIBRARY
MINUTES**

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

GUESTS: Kathy McGregor of the Friends of the North Kingstown Free Library

1. **Call to Order-** The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the North Kingstown Free Library held on Monday, May 10, 2021, via Zoom was called to order by Liz Suvari at 7:02 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 March 2021 meeting** - VOTED to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2021 meeting on a motion made by Martha Parks and seconded by Rini Georgekutty. The motion carries.
4. **Director's Report**
 - a. We're at 79.3% of the budget spent. Doesn't take into account the shortfall. So the 79% is what we were initially budgeted to have for this last fiscal year (July 2020-June 2021).
 - b. Patron who wanted to donate a bench didn't like the options we provided for the location so he's not going to donate. Sue will talk to Ron about re-staining the older-looking bench.
 - c. NEMD is giving us sample boards and this should be happening soon. Sue will follow up in a few days if she hasn't heard from them.
 - d. The installation of the asphalt shingle roof is starting on Wednesday. The dumpster at the back of the building is already in place. They will start at the back and move to the front. There will be pedestrian protection at the front. We know it'll be noisy, but we plan to stay open unless it gets too disruptive. We will close parts of the library if need be.
 - e. Discussion occurred about when to get the work done from the Champlin Foundation grant. Sue will touch base with Dante Marinaro of Facilities regarding whether work can begin before the membrane roof is fixed.
 - f. The Town Council voted to increase the library's tax-based municipal appropriation by 2.4%, which is the same appropriation increase that was made to the town's budget as a whole. There is still a shortfall, which Sue is meeting with Jim Lathrop and Deb Bridgham of the Finance Department. The shortfall is \$280k for FY22. For previous budget years, a prior year surplus was used to make up the difference. According to the Finance Department, the prior year surplus funds have been used up so there is now a structural deficit. Sue has made the case that the library is a town department so allocated expenses should not apply. The allocated expenses are also very high and have increased every year without clear reasoning as to how the percentages were calculated. At this point, the Finance Department has stopped referring to us as an

enterprise fund, but the allocated expenses portion of the budget narrative does not make that clear. Jim Lathrop said that a memorandum of understanding could be drafted to say that the allocated expenses would not rise by more than a certain percentage from year to year. This has not been offered before. Discussion ensued regarding what policy states that town expenses should be allocated to the library. The question was asked whether this meets the maintenance of effort standard. Sue will contact Karen Mellor about that. Trustees are hesitant to meet with Jim unless he provides a written explanation of his plan well before the meeting so that they have an opportunity to review it. We had no understanding of where this year's allocated expense figures were coming from, especially since the numbers were provided to Sue the day before the Town Council budget hearings. Lori proposed having a meeting with the council, town manager and Jim to hear a full explanation and give the Board the opportunity to ask questions. Sue will tell Ralph and Jim that board members want to meet with them to hear their explanation and will prepare a document that shows the increase in allocated expenses from year to year.

- g. We're following the state guidelines from the Office of Library and Information services regarding relaxing coronavirus-related restrictions. We will be reinstating more public computer workstations in the near future due to indoor spacing recommendations being lowered from 6 feet to 3 feet. We've drafted reasonable accommodations for patrons who refuse to wear a mask in the library.
- h. Donations:
 - i. \$200 on 3/20/21 from Anne & Robert Rothenberg
 - ii. \$500 on 5/3/21 from the Benevity Community Impact Fund

The board VOTED to accept these donations with gratitude with a motion made by Dan Humbyrd and seconded by Lori Vernon. The motion carries.

- i. Sue provided an explanation of the new YTD budget reports that she brought to the meeting and will be providing to the Board at regular meetings going forward. Generating the reports using MUNIS, the town's accounting software, makes it so that more information about spending in particular categories will be available to the Board.

5. Friends of the Library Report

- a. At the April meeting, the Friends elected a new slate of officers. This was the 65th annual April meeting for the Friends!
- b. The Friends have gone from 11 to 9 board members. They are not replacing two board members who recently retired. Discussion ensued amongst the Board and Kathy McGregor about getting the word out more about the museum passes.
- c. The town continues to work on adding a sign that will indicate where the walking path to the library and Academy Cove begins.
- d. As of March, membership has reached \$18k+! Sales from the Book Nook have fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels (since October 2020). Book sales from April 2021 are the highest they've been since April 2015. An

advertising campaign will be underway to show the public what we accept for donations.

- e. Dan wondered if the library could put a plug in the newsletter for the museum passes.

6. Old Business

- a. N/A

7. New Business

- a. New YTD Budget Reports (see Director's Report)

8. Public Comment

- a. N/A

- 9. Adjournment** - the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m. on a motion made by Lori Vernon, seconded by Martha Parks. The motion carries.

Respectfully submitted - Maggie Browne