

Roeliff Jansen Community Library
Board of Trustee Meeting
Held via Zoom Meeting
February 16, 2021

Present: Tamara (Tammy) Gaskell, Ned Schneier, Joan Wallstein, Marilyn Gross, Pat Placona, Barbara Barrantes, Meg Wormley, Chris Atkins, Steve Smith, Jane Plasman, John Cady, John Thompson, Marian Dodds, Colleen Lutz

Absent: Michael Citrin, Ron Bixby

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm by chairperson Pat Placona.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Changes to the previous month's minutes were proposed via email.

A motion was made by Meg Wormley to accept the minutes with amendments. The motion was seconded by Jane Plasman and the members in attendance unanimously agreed.

Treasurer's Report

Meg Wormley presented the Treasurers Report. She stated that the library income for the month was \$79,647 which included, \$13,841 in individual contributions, \$2,500 from Berkshire Taconic Grant, \$2,500 from Evelyn Bordewick Foundation Grant, \$5,000 from the Friends, \$55,000 from the Town of Copake, and \$1,000 from the Town of Taghkanic. The library was \$865 over the income budget for the month. She also noted that Hillsdale's payment will be coming within the next month.

The operating expenses of \$28,167 exceeded the budget by \$1,085 due to several building operation and maintenance expenses. Accumulated assets from previous years, in the amount of \$13,377, will remain in the operating account to cover budgeting shortfalls.

The final payment on the construction grant was received in the amount of \$7,263. Funds from the Dorothy Reinhardt bequest were moved from the reserve account to the operating account, in the amount of \$7,000.

The Finance Committee met in early February to discuss the use of the library's surplus funds. Currently, the amount of surplus funds is \$51,913. The Finance committee made the following recommendations:

1. \$ 1,343 should be used to cover any shortfall in in reserve funds.
2. \$10,184 should remain in the operating account.
3. \$33,136 should be used to cover the 2022 mortgage payments.
4. \$7,250 should be moved to the maintenance and repair fund.

Meg noted that interest rates were low, so it did not pay to move money around to get higher interest rates.

A motion was made by Meg Wormley to accept the recommendations of the finance committee. John Cady seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried by the members in attendance.

A motion was made by Meg Wormley to accept the Warrant report. Steve Smith seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried by the attending members.

Director's Report

Tammy Gaskell presented the director's report to the Board. She directed the Board to her report and noted that she had added a few metrics of interest in the charts that she prepares. She noted that there were more patrons in January 2021 as compared to January 2020. She also made a comparison between the types of circulation and the impact of the pandemic. Physical circulation was down very slightly in January 2021 compared to January 2020; however, it is still higher than the previous 3-year average. Digital circulation was up in January 2020 and has continued to rise through January 2021.

Tammy presented the amended leave policy which was amended to include jury duty. Pat Placona and Jane Plasman recommended that the board consider paying the employees. Barbara Barrantes made a motion to add language to the policy to include payment of the employee during their time served on a jury. Meg Wormley seconded the motion and all attending members of the board agreed.

Tammy presented the annual report. Chris Atkins stated that he found the report interesting and will be using it for the promotion of National Library Week. Tammy also noted that because of the pandemic, the State will be counting more of the virtual programs than they normally would.

Jane Plasman made a motion to accept the annual report. John Cady seconded the motion and the vote unanimously carried with the attending members.

Strategic Plan: Goal 6

Tammy Gaskell indicated that it would be a good idea to review Goal Six: Stability and Sustainability. She stated that reviewing this goal is crucial, especially if the library intends to reduce reliance on donations to cover the expenses of the library. One suggested action item is exercising the 414 in Ancram (2021) to help fund the 2022 budget. Copake and Hillsdale would be up for new 414s (2023) for the 2024 budget. After that, the library could have a regular schedule of 414 votes every three years.

Meg suggested that the library could pay off the mortgage by 2024. She also suggested maintaining a reserve account of \$80,000 for three years. She noted that this has become increasingly difficult. Chris Atkins suggested that perhaps the reserve account be increased as expenses are increasing.

Jane Plasman asked if Tammy could clarify the annual staff and volunteer training goals. Tammy explained that advises the staff and volunteers to attend the trainings offered by MHLS. She said that they had taken advantage of this during COVID because there were many virtual trainings offered and the library was not open to patrons.

Jane asked if there were other trainings that Tammy wanted to complete that MHLS did not offer. Tammy said that MHLS has a broad offering of webinar trainings and did not feel that the training needs were not being met. Joan Wallstein suggested that the tracking spreadsheet be updated.

Meg Wormley asked if there was any expectation when the volunteers will be asked to return. Tammy stated that she did not have a date at this time.

Tammy stated that she was trying to reimagine what the tasks of the volunteers should be. She stated that the staff can handle the front desk. She would like to have additional that the volunteers can help with. She also stated that she wanted to be transparent with the volunteers and give them an idea of concrete tasks they might be asked to do. Pat Placona agreed and stated that having a list will help potential and previous volunteers know what is expected of them. Not all volunteers can complete some of the tasks.

Tammy also mentioned that this goal also included evaluating a succession plan annually.

Friend's Report

Barbara Barrantes reported on the Friends of the Library. She stated that book donations are currently (2/15/21) being accepted. She also noted that Charlotte Shutts is the acting President to fill in the term for the Friends.

Committee Reports

Building Administration

Ron Bixby was absent from the meeting. Tammy stated that she did lose heat in January. Tufano came and did some repairs and the heat had been operating well since that time. She also stated that they had executed a LED light agreement with NYSEG.

Development

Marilyn Gross presented the Development Committee report. She stated that as of February 15th, 2021 they had received 375 gifts for a total of \$71,419.38 in contributions.

Pat Placona stated that the Gala Committee meeting will be on 2/23/2021.

Chris Atkins reminded the Board that the theme for National Library Week (NLW) will be "Welcome to Your Library". He stated that he was working on the letter and would like it to go out in the beginning of March.

Meg Wormley asked if they can let her know when the mailing will be going out.

Human Resources

Jane Plasman stated that the Human Resources committee had nothing to report.

Nominating

John Thompson stated that the Nominating Committee had nothing to report.

Discussion and New Business

414

The discussion about the petition of the 414 in Ancram was opened by Jane Plasman. She explained that this may be a good year to have this proposition on the ballot. She has already been approached by the town supervisor from Ancram, so they are expecting it. She also noted that the 2021 election will be all local races with a local focus. The 414 has been defeated twice in Ancram, however they have increased their donation from \$7,500 to \$17,500 over the years.

Steve Smith asked if the Supervisor in Ancram would remain neutral. Jane suggested that she felt he would remain neutral. She also noted that the vote is not dependent on Art Bassin, it is up to the people to make the vote.

Joan Wallstein clarified that the petition would need to get at least 25 signatures to be on the ballot.

John Cady questioned approximately how much the 414 in Ancram would be. He stated that they have donated before. He expressed a concern that if the 414 was defeated in Ancram again, they may not donate to the library again. Chris Atkins agreed.

Jane stated that the amount would roughly be \$25,000, which is about \$8,000 more than the current donation.

Barbara Barrantes stated that she had spoken to the Hillsdale Supervisor and he thought that it was unfair that Ancram does not pay as much. He thought that the residents of Hillsdale would not support a new 414 if Ancram does not pass a 414 this time. He said that he felt that Hillsdale would consider a new 414 if Ancram does pass one.

Jane reminded the Board that the amount that is asked of each town is based on the home values in the jurisdiction. Hillsdale has higher assessed home values than Ancram, therefore the share they are expected to contribute is higher than Ancram. The contribution from each town may not be equal.

Ned Schneier stated that he thought that it might be a good idea to go for the 414 in all three towns instead of just Ancram. He felt that this might be a good opportunity to bring all the towns up to their fair share of the contribution. The vote really depends on the amount that you are asking, for example, a smaller increase is more palatable than waiting and making a

larger increase. He stated that doing these every two years would regularize it to the towns and help stabilize the finances of the library.

Barbara Barrantes stated that she felt that Ancram needed to get normalized first and then all the other towns would be more likely to continue the 414 process. She also noted that budgets in the towns are strapped right now and that it would be difficult for them to justify increases in taxes. Meg Wormley agreed.

Pat Placona stated that she believed the issue was that the towns of Hillsdale and Copake feel that they are carrying Ancram.

Jane Plasman stated that she understood how the other towns felt, however Ancram does pay. She reminded the board that the Ancram donation was \$17,500. She also noted that Ancram is using the library more than they thought, which was why they agreed to increase the donation. She also noted that the residents in the towns of Hillsdale and Copake use the library considerably more.

Chris Atkins stated that he felt that the town boards in Copake and Hillsdale want Ancram to approve the 414 before they are asked again.

Joan Wallstein stated that she felt that the average homeowner does not even notice the library fees in their taxes.

Meg Wormley stated that most people do not feel the need for the library, but this past year may prove that it is really an essential service. She stated that the circulation data supports that this is a good year to go for the 414 in Ancram. More people are using the library in a variety of ways.

John Cady questioned whether the charter could be changed if Ancram does not pass the 414. Tammy affirmed that it could, if needed. She cautioned that doing so could perpetuate a spirit of dissention.

Ned Schneier stated that he would meet with Tammy to figure out the appropriate dollar amount to ask of each town.

HVRT Access Point

Ned Schneier stated that the library has nice waterfront in the Roe Jan watershed. The expansion of the rail trail will be very close to the library. He felt that it would be an opportunity to make an access point from the library to the rail trail and vice versa. He stated that he would like to pursue these options with some of the stakeholders of the project.

Meg Wormley suggested that library not be a lead on this, but rather the HVRT Association or the Towns of Hillsdale and Copake. She suggested that the library could work with them. Ned

agreed and wanted to know if this was something the board wanted him to pursue. Although there was no formal motion or vote, the board was overall in favor of Ned's suggestion.

Pat Placona stated that Ned is working on a policy to display artwork in the library.

Old Business

There was no old business reported at the meeting.

Meg Wormley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marilyn Gross seconded the motion and all the members were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:19pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Colleen Lutz, Secretary