

MINUTES, NORMAN WILLIAMS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

January 24, 2022, 5:15 p.m.
Board Meeting

Attending (via Zoom):

- Joe Boyd, Ron Miller, William Colson, Brenda Metzler, Chris McIlroy, Anthea LaVallee, Rachael Ringenberg, David Green and Priscilla Marsicovetere
- Karen Copenhaver joined the meeting at 5:43 p.m.
- A quorum was present for all votes taken.
- Also Attending: Library Director Clare McFarland; Noah Anderson joined by invitation at 5:30.
- Not present: Board Member Elizabeth Daniels
- Submitted by Karen Copenhaver, Secretary

Zoom Meeting

Call to Order at 5:18 PM

Opening Remarks & Announcements (Joe Boyd, Chair):

Joe called the meeting to order at 5:18 having confirmed that a quorum was present.

Joe proposed Noah Anderson as a potential new trustee. Noah, 19, was the Valedictorian for Woodstock Union High School's 2021 graduating class. He is taking a gap year this year and will be starting college in the fall of 2022. Among other accomplishments, Noah was invited to serve as a legislative page for the Sergeant of Arms in Washington, D.C. for the second semester of his junior year. Joe invited Noah to join the meeting as an observer later in the evening.

Approval of December 2021 Minutes:

Motion (call for a motion by Joe Boyd)	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Motion to accept the minutes of the December 2021 Board Meeting, as amended.	Ron Miller	Bill Colson	Approved unanimously.

Library Director's Report (Clare McFarland):

Clare submitted a written report in advance of the meeting. She provided the Board with a narrative overview of many of the projects underway at the library.

- Although details are still being worked out, Clare has reserved a tentative date, without further commitment, for installation of the new carpet on September 6-16. It is important to get on the calendar in order to avoid delay if we make the final decision to move forward. No commitment.
- Window restoration proceeding as planned.

- The FireTech system inspection uncovered a number of issues which were addressed. The results of the inspection of the sprinkler system are still under review by the State. Clare is hopeful that no further updating of the system will be required.
- Granite State Glass completed repairs to the front door.
- Scheduled quarterly maintenance has been completed on the HVAC system.
- Tesha Buss, who coordinates the Mountain Rainbow solar project, of which NWPL owns a portion, asked if we would be interested in purchasing the shares of another owner who is looking to sell. The Executive Committee investigated the pros and cons and met to decide that this purchase would not be beneficial to the Library at this time.
- As part of the ARPA grant money received by VT Dept of Libraries (VTLIB), \$1,000 in funding is being made available to each library for a specific technology project. We have requested the money for the purchase of a Meeting Owl Pro, a 360-degree camera, mic, and speaker that creates the experience of in-person participation for hybrid programming. Clare believes that library programming going forward will continue as a hybrid mix, in some way, of in person and online participation at least for some time to come.
- Clare has requested funding from the Friends of the NWPL funding for the purchase of a new book cart for the book sale volunteers.
- Clare expressed her appreciation to Dave Green for his assistance in connecting Clare with Michael Skuro of Skuro Data Management & Consulting Company who is willing and able to provide some additional technology assistance for NWPL.
- Most library programming has returned to a virtual format for the time being. Knitters, Needlepointers, QiGong, Recite, Zentangle have all returned to Zoom. Our virtual author event hosted on Zoom this past Tuesday was very successful and well attended (50 participants). We have three more online programs being scheduled for February. The one exception is StoryTime. The parents are so enthusiastic that they wanted to continue in person.
- The staff has begun preparations for the implementation of Aspen Discovery. Clare has designated Ria Heinz as point person. Ria and Clare will attend all seven two-hour training sessions (Implementation, Admin Training, Catalog Training, Customization, Web Builder, Patron Experience and Additional Integrations) and various other staff will attend different sessions as need be.
- Staff evaluations are nearly completed. These interviews have identified a widely-held and longstanding concern about the way the employee handbook provides for paying staff for holidays depending on the employee's normal personal work schedule and the day on which the holiday happens to fall. Clare has made inquiries regarding how other similarly sized institutions deal with this issue and there is no clear consensus. Clare will propose a revision to the policy as set forth in the handbook and consult with the Personnel Committee for feedback on the impact of any change with respect to finances and accounting and confirmation that the proposed wording is precise and not subject to misinterpretation.

Treasurer's Report (Ron Miller)

Ron prepared and submitted for the Board's consideration a detailed financial report as of the close of calendar year 2021, which is half way through the NWPL's fiscal year which ends on June 30, 2022.

Ron wanted to make sure that the Board reviewed the overall progress we have made to date to achieve the revenue, from both contributions and grants, that was provided for in the budget. Although the response from our development work continues to be very promising, we should focus our energies to bring in sufficient revenues to replace what we had budgeted for the annual gala, which has been cancelled, as well as the amount we included in the budget for the Spring appeal. Thus, although the

actual and budgeted numbers may tell slightly different stories, the end result is the same. We need to raise a considerable amount of money in the next five months to achieve a balanced budget for this fiscal year. Clare has continued to focus on keeping expenses down, so the focus needs to be on development.

Ron also reviewed the formula used to calculate the maximum amount we can draw from the endowment. Ron walked the board through a 12-quarter average calculation that moderates the base number to temper the impact of temporary highs and lows in the investment results. Our discipline limits that amount we can draw down to 5% of that average.

The endowment is doing well, despite a bumpy week in the markets, we have money in the bank to support all of the proposed capital projects, and our current cash requirements are in the bank account. But we have work to do.

Motion (Joe Boyd)	1st	2nd	Vote
Motion to approve Treasurer's Report	Karen Copenhaver	Chris McIlroy	Approved unanimously.

Development/Planned Giving (Chris McIlroy)

Chris has received a few final edits on the tri-fold mailer designed to encourage public participation in a planned giving program. He hopes to distribute a draft for the Board's review in the next week or so. When the brochure is completed, we will discuss the most effective use of the brochure in library outreach going forward.

Although, as Ron reported, we have had a good response so far and we are still receiving responses to the Annual Appeal, we obviously have a challenging task ahead for the Spring Appeal. The Development and Executive Committees are exploring ways to bring in new donors and to use creative challenges to increase the response to the appeal. Although we usually delay the launch of the Spring appeal until after the annual gala, this year we can start the Spring appeal earlier to provide some additional time to get the responses in before the close of the fiscal year on June 30. The Board also expressed enthusiasm for an outdoor event in June either at the library or at East End Park which may be available at little or no charge.

A request was made to provide more time for Board members to come to the library to personalize the Spring appeal letters. Everyone agrees that these personal statements make a difference.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (formerly Anti-Racism Task Force) (ARTF)) (Chris McIlroy)

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is comprised of Chris, Priscilla and Brenda. Priscilla introduced the other members of the Committee to James McKim, a consultant working with many companies on diversity equity and inclusion initiatives. The Committee members were extremely enthusiastic about James' input in reviewing the work that has already been done and suggestions on meaningful next steps to move the library and Board forward. The Committee looks forward to receiving a proposal from James for ways that the Board might engage him for additional assistance, including, potentially, a meeting with the entire Board.

Other Business

The Board discussed various proposals to provide a frictionless way for families in surrounding towns to obtain a library card without incurring the usual card fee. Although the website already explains that anyone who is burdened by the card fee can approach Clare for a waiver, that process is potentially intimidating and parents of small children, who would potentially benefit the most from library access, may not have the time or ability to take those additional steps. The Board agreed that Clare should consider the options and take appropriate steps to improve the implementation of the existing policy to make library cards available to individuals who would benefit from access but for whom the fee is a potential barrier.

The date having been set for the next meeting of the Board for February 28, 2022, at 5:15, and there being no further business, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn:

Motion (Joe Boyd)	1st	2nd	Vote
Motion to adjourn.	Ron Miller	Brenda Metzler	Approved unanimously.

Thereafter the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Copenhaver, Secretary
January 26, 2022