

Friends of the Keene Public Library  
Executive Board Meeting Feb. 10, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm via Zoom

**Present:** Jill Cielinski, Kathleen Chertok, Marilyn Gemmell, Michelle Fuller, Sally Rinehart, Lou-Anne Beauregard, Dave Meader, Paul Ledell, Mike Chelstowski, Marti Fiske, Kathleen Kennedy Burke.      **Absent:** Jen English

**President's Remarks:** Jill thanked Michelle for taking the January minutes as Kathleen C was unable to attend that meeting. She reports that she had reached out to Jen Alexander the Trustee president to ask her to come to our March meeting vs this month due to our busy agenda. Jen agreed.

**Secretary's Report:** The January minutes were sent out for review via email. There were no changes or omissions. *Mike Chelstowski made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Marilyn Gemmell seconded the motion. All approved.*

**Treasurer's Report:** Marilyn sent out the treasurer's report via email. She notes that there is nothing unusual to report. She reminds us that as we are a cash system the December membership donations show up on this months report. She reports that a new excel form is being used for 2021.

*Dave Meader made the motion to accept the report as presented. Michelle Fuller seconded the motion. All approved.*

**Director's Report:** Marti reports the following:

AARP tax prep informational packets are available for pick up at the Recreation Center. As of this week an AARP tax volunteer will start meeting clients at the Library parking lot to pick up tax filing paperwork and drop off their completed taxes.

The annual budget process has started. The proposed budget will be presented to the Trustees Finance Committee tomorrow (Thursday February 11). The Trustees full board meeting was moved up one week, to February 16, so that the budget request could be approved and passed to the City Manager by February 18 deadline. The first draft proposes no changes in Personnel assignments; an increase in the Collection line, half of which would cover new video services; and an increase in Equipment line.

The Library will be closed February 24 for staff training. Topics include: brain storming with the Trustees of the Long Range Planning Committee for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to be used in a one year plan; exercises to help the staff understand how they learn new skills under pressure; and the first of three sessions for implicit bias training. Full time staff will also have time for individual training and project work.

The City Manager announced that, on January 22, the City gave Cheshire TV 120 days to meet several demands related to issues with CTV's governance or the City will end their contract. The

City owns all of CTV's equipment and holds their lease so if the City ends their contract CTV effectively dissolves. \$1,800 per month goes into the Heberton Cost Center to help pay for maintenance, repairs, upgrades associated with the Annex. Dissolution of CTV's lease would end that income. Resolution or termination could be completed by late April.

Finally she notes that curb side pick up continues. The City positivity rate for COVID hovers around the 5% level. Changes to the current library access plan will be discussed at the next Trustee meeting.

**Trustees Report:** Kathleen reports that with the agreement by all three parties involved (the City, the FKPL and the Trustees) the monies allocated will be spent to hire the consultant to analyze the sound issues at Heberton Hall. The City will pursue appropriate compensation for the problem.

The Trustees approved the Sentinel (newspaper) digitalization project.

She reports that the long range planning committee met in January and they will first work on a one year plan and then a five year plan. They will participate in the Library's staff training day and will do a SWOT brain storming with staff and have also invited members of the Friends to participate.

She notes that the Trustees continue to work on their policy revisions and updates so that they meet current needs and that the online and written versions match.

She reports that the monthly Trustee meeting has been moved up by a week so that the Library budget can be approved before it goes to the City Manager by the 2/18/2021 deadline.

**Jill's Recap of Trustee Meeting:** Kathie, Lou-Anne, Sally and I attended the Library Board of trustees meeting on January 26th. The purpose of the invitation for the Friends to attend was to clarify the recent discussions and concerns regarding fundraising and a policy recently unearthed during the Board of Trustees review of all Trustee policies. There was a lot of confusion regarding the policy which seemed to be targeted at our interest in fundraising for the library utilizing the gaming opportunity. The policy itself pertains to any organization that would like to fundraise for the library and is not specifically targeted at the FKPL. (although we are currently the main organization that fundraises for the library). The policy was put in place in the mid 1980s.

Jen Alexander clarified that The Friends are not controlled by the Trustees in any way, and they would not interfere should we choose to go forward with the gaming opportunity. They did say that they have the right not to accept the funds. The Trustees are in the process of reviewing and updating all of their policies. In no way do they want to change the relationship they have with the FKPL as we have been longstanding partners with the same goal, to support the Keene Public Library.

To that end, they had 3 proposals for us to consider.

1. We have liaison from the Trustees (Kathleen Kennedy-Burke) who attends our meetings, they would like us to consider our having a liaison that attends their meetings.

2. They are proposing a working group that would be charged with creating a Memorandum of Understanding that describes our working relationship. I has been suggested that such a document existed long ago but neither party can find this document.

3. They would like to include FKPL participation in the newly regenerated Strategic Planning Process that the Trustees are implementing in the near future.

Jen Alexander would like to attend our meeting to discuss these initiatives. I have invited her to join us.

**Gaming Funding Raising Opportunity:** Paul reports that all the paper work is complete and that the Friends now need to decide if we are moving ahead with this opportunity to raise funds by entering into a contract with Wonder Casino this year.

It has been clarified by the Library Trustees (above) that the FKPL is free to make their own decision about how to raise funds. The Trustees are currently clarifying their policy concerning what manner of fund raising is appropriate for Library acceptance. They note that they have the right to not accept funds for the Library if they deem the source to be in conflict with their policy.

It is noted by Marilyn that any funds received from this gaming opportunity can be put into a restricted fund and how this money is spent could be itemized so that if the Trustees should decide to not accept gaming funds it would be clear as to where the money is used.

A discussion followed.

*Sally Rinehart made a motion to move forward to enter into a contract for the year 2021 with Wonder Casino. Lou-Anne Beauregard seconded the motion. The motion passed. Five for, four against and one abstention.*

**Committee Structure:** Mike distributed, by email, a document regarding potential committees and their purpose and structure to start a discussion.

The goal of updating current committees would be to define roles and responsibilities; set clear expectations of board members and committee members; relieve the burden on officers and one-member committees and help with recruiting of new members and officers.

Of note, per our by laws, committees can include non-board members. By reaching out to our members/volunteers to join committees, the goal would be to engage them to participate more in the Friends' work and to see how the board functions leading to the possibility of interest in becoming a board member.

Further discussion/suggestions of this agenda item will be brought to the March meeting.

**Other Business:** A letter from Kevin Watterson regarding the Reading with Ribby program was forwarded by email from Jill to the board. He acknowledged that with the COVID situation nonprofit's fund raising opportunities have been impacted which might affect what/how we are able to contribute to the program this year. Of note, our 2021 budget which was passed last November included the usual \$5000 to the Reading with Ribby program. Jill will contact him with that information.

Jill asks board members to consider volunteering to participate in the Trustees' strategic planning exercise (SWOT). It will be via Zoom with Jen Alexander facilitating and they would like up to

three of the Friends board or members/volunteers to participate. This SWOT exercise will take place at a time to be determined but likely in March. This is a separate SWOT exercise then the one being held with Library staff on the Staff training day in February.

Michelle has volunteered to draft a letter of appeal for the National Library Giving Day which is April 7,2021. She is looking for suggestions/theme for this letter and states that the appeal would be for donations to be made to FKPL.

It was also suggested that we consider looking for a matching fund donor.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm**

**Upcoming meeting dates: 2021: 3/10;4/14; 5/12; 6/19**