

Wethersfield Library Board Minutes of May 27, 2008

Members present: Greg Bedula, Tracy Gionfriddo, Susan Grady, Howard Greenblatt, Clare Meade, Brad Milvae, Pauline Moon

Members excused: Paul Courchaine; Greg Curtin

Staff present: Laurel Goodgion, director; Liz Kirkpatrick, asst. director

Others present: Luci Domick, President of the Friends of the Library; John Cascio, Council Liaison

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-chairperson Polly Moon called the meeting to order at 7:00.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: NONE

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

President Luci Domick reported that the Friends sponsored a luncheon last Wednesday for the Library staff to thank them for all their hard work. Individual Friends of the Library have donated \$8100 so far to the fundraising campaign. Members of the Library Board have pledged \$4700, but not all pledges are in. Lucille Plouffe will be sending pledge letters out to those whose pledges are still outstanding. Fundraising letters can be still sent out if anyone thinks of more people to send them to.

Luci also reported that the Friends have donated \$2500 to the Library to cover the cost of the children's summer reading program.

Councilor John Cascio arrived at 7:08.

RENOVATION

Laurel reported that the problems encountered in the Town Hall wall will delay the project two months. The contractor will try to catch up. The Library re-opening will now probably be at the end of December. There will still be a lot to be done when Town Hall moves out of the Library:

Carpets will need to be cleaned.

Old shelving will need to be retrieved from storage and installed.

New shelving will need to be installed.

(Each of the above tasks may take a couple of weeks.)

The stored books will have to be returned from storage and unpacked and shelved.

At that point the Library will have to be closed to the public while the staff moves the 30,000 adult and teen items now in the ground floor interim library and interfiles them with the returned collections on the main and second floors.

The shelving bid has not been awarded yet. The Building Committee is still discussing it. Their next meeting is June 9. The shelving will need to be delivered in late October.

This will be the third time the Library has had to move.

Laurel added that the façade looks nice, and the windows are beautiful. The contractor is doing a good job. The contractor's work should be finished by mid-October.

COUNCIL LIAISON

John Cascio said that he didn't want to "beat a dead horse," but he had predicted that the Library wouldn't open until January of 2009. People don't realize all that the Library staff has done and put up with. The budget was disappointing. He discussed the Library's position. Town Council minutes reflect this. The Town Council has committed money in contingency for the children's positions. The Library Board can come to Council and request the funds when they are needed. The Board was very surprised and pleased with this news.

John further added that the town budget focused on the Board of Education two years ago. He said last year the focus was on the town. This year was the Library's turn, so he thought. Where will the money come in the following year? They are not planning for three floors.

Polly Moon thanked John for his support of the Library in this grueling budget year. John said that the Town incurred a lot of unforeseen insurance needs and that investment funds were drastically reduced. The town needs a rainy day fund. He added that the Library Board did a good job in presenting its budget. Without the renovation, the budget would have been reduced more.

John said to lay out the Library's core services. Just what is the Town responsible for? The Library needs to communicate and educate concerning its services and needs.

Board members thought more advocacy is needed for the Library, especially at the annual Budget Hearing.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2008

The [minutes of April 22, 2008](#) were approved as distributed.

QUESTIONS FOR THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Polly Moon asked a question about why money for a Web consultant hadn't been encumbered previously since the Board approved it a year ago. Laurel answered it was an oversight. Then she explained that most of the encumbered funds are for the renovation. For example, the Moms' Club money is going to be used for a new book display unit.

Clare Meade asked a question about the operating budget, whether all of it is always spent. Laurel answered yes, but that it is hard to spend down to the penny. For example, in the Salaries and Wages account, money was saved for a while for a staff member who was out on medical leave but who did not return. Some vacant positions were left unfilled while the Library operation was confined to one room. Laurel was being prudent in not filling these positions while library use was limited. Now that the entire ground floor of the Library is open, use has greatly increased (loans are up 40%) and vacant positions are being filled. The Library will purchase computers before the end of the budget year.

John Cascio said the Library is being fiscally responsible.

Howard Greenblatt added that the renovation made allocation of resources very difficult.

PROPOSED LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET FOR 2008-2009

Laurel walked the Board through the budget. The biggest increase is for custodial services because of the move from one to three floors. Repair and maintenance are higher because of the renovation.

The new water fountain has been installed. The book drop replacement has been received, but it has not been put in yet. Materials used by Town staff in order to install the replacement may be charged to the operating budget.

Polly Moon added that the budget should be okay considering that the children's positions are guaranteed. There should be more monies for new materials. The Finance Committee will tweak the budget. There should be no drastic program cuts.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fundraising Committee

Clare Meade reported that most of the fundraising is done. There should be an event in the new Library to build an esprit de corps. Library Board members should call donors to personally thank them for their contributions.

John Cascio liked the idea of sending thank you letters to donors. He suggested a donor reception where each donor can bring a friend. He also suggested a thank-you ad with donors' names in the Library newsletter and Wethersfield Life.

Polly Moon suggested photos of the new Library and any events be sent to the press.

Maybe something can be set up at the Cornfest on September 13.

Board Development Committee

As of July 1 there will be a new Library Board. Four current members are leaving: Greg Curtin, Tracy Gionfriddo, Howard Greenblatt, and Brad Milvae. Members of the Board Development Committee are Greg Bedula, Paul Courchaine, Susan Grady, and Polly Moon. They will be recruiting and interviewing new members. Clare Meade suggested prospective members be made aware up front that they are expected to financially participate in any fundraising done by the Board. Greg Bedula said it will be hard to get new members if money is mandated. Clare answered that non-participation financially will hamper fundraising, and a smaller subset of the Board will bear the burden.

Nominating Committee

Clare Meade agreed to head up the Nominating Committee, the main task of which is to come up with a slate of officers for the coming year: chairman, vice-chair, and secretary.

CORE LIBRARY SERVICES

Laurel reported that Town Manager Bonnie Therrien has asked every department to develop a list of core services by June 1 that will be used by Council in developing the 2009 - 2010 budget. This information will be the focus of the Town Council meeting of June 30. Liz Kirkpatrick has done some research on this and Laurel has contacted other libraries in the country for ideas on what they do. The Public Library Association has another list of key roles, which Pam Kelly obtained. Laurel will ask library staff members for their ideas.

TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Susan Grady moved to approve the Library Technology Plan 2008-2010. Howard Greenblatt seconded. The motion carried.

Polly Moon announced that she would be sending Board members forms for the evaluation of the Library Director.

At 8:45 Howard Greenblatt moved to adjourn. Tracy Gionfriddo seconded. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Grady
Secretary