

Pawlet Public Library
Special Meeting of Board of Trustees

MINUTES

August 8, 2024

Present: Trustees in attendance: Harley Cudney, Grace Larson, Joni Lee, Lauren Herbert, Cori Rail

Members of the public present:

Lyndsi Barnes, Sue LaPorte, Juli Haley, Molly Beverage, Bob Schoenemann

5:30 Call to order

- Joni reads Operating Norms.
- Addition or deletion of agenda items: None. Cori and Lauren point out that reading the Operating Norms is not on the agenda.
- Joni motions to approve the agenda, Grace seconds, motion carries.
- Warrant review and approval:
 - o Cori reads the warrant items – overdue bills paid, reimbursements, library sale expenses, etc., and goes over how she has done it so far and plans to include more automation in the future.
 - o Lyndsi – Harley paid the internet bill without the approval of the board, there was no discussion or vote that he could pay that and now I am interested to learn that he is now being reimbursed and was that ever discussed and voted upon in a public meeting.
 - This was before Cori was on the board so she assumes that since that bill is a part of operating expenses it would get paid and then reimbursed if someone had to pay it out of pocket.
 - Joni suggests that we could vote to approve this retroactively. It was a normal expenditure that got paid out of sync because of the way things work.
 - Lauren – no one is disputing that, it's a procedure that should have been done, but going forward we should have better practices. The board should vote on this before it is put on the warrant.
 - There is some discussion regarding reimbursement and funds allocation in general.
 - Cori needs the actual budget file.
 - Molly asks if there is anything in the Bylaws establishing a number cap below which a vote is not necessary.
 - Harley – there is nothing in the Bylaws except that expenses over \$1,000 or more must be put to bid and be discussed in open meeting.
 - Cori is working on getting the budget for last year and this year, and is working with Julie on that.
 - o Joni motions to approve the warrant, Lauren seconds, motion carries.

- Joni motions to approve reimbursement to Harley for the Comcast bill, Grace seconds, motion carries.
- Curing the open meeting law violation that physical posting locations for Meeting Warnings were not explicitly discussed and chosen at the March 2024 Organizational Meeting [1 V.S.A. § 314(b)(3)] by either ratifying, or declaring as void, any action taken at regular meetings since Town Meeting day:
 - Ratification of motions passed during the 12 March 2024 regular meeting
 - Motions made for electing Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.
 - Motion to authorize Town of Pawlet and Legal Counsel to initiate an investigation of complaints about library workplace conduct.
 - Motion to pass budget.
 - Grace motions to ratify, Joni seconds.
 - Cori clarifies that while she was not on the board at the time of these meetings, the vote is to pass the motions pertaining to not having the physical posting locations discussed and chosen during the organizational meeting.
 - Motion carries.
 - Ratification of motions passed during the 9 April 2024 regular meeting:
 - Motion to require 5 column accounting (title, copywrite, gross, cost, net) for rare book sales.
 - Lauren motions to ratify, Joni seconds, no discussion, motion carries.
 - Ratification of motions passed during the 7 May 2024 regular meeting:
 - Motion to post Rules of Procedure as a draft on library's website.
 - Motion to start director hiring process.
 - Joni motions to ratify, Grace seconds.
 - Sue – Are these posted? Yes.
 - Motion carries.
 - Ratification of motions passed during the 4 June 2024 regular meeting:
 - Motion to modify procedure for approving the warrant to be - the board receives warrant some number of days before meeting, reviews, signs in open meeting.
 - Motion made to approve Rules of Procedure as amended.
 - Lauren motions to ratify, Joni seconds.
 - Cori – Where is the procedure for approving the warrant?
 - Joni – It's in the policy dropdown.
 - The Board has not modified the Rules of Procedure to reflect the updated procedure.
 - Cori – Would invoices and receipts be included within the warrant, or just the list?
 - Harley – these are usually physical and there's no need to scan and include them. Anyone can raise a question via email and come in and review them.
 - Motion carries.

- Ratification of motions passed during the 2 July 2024 regular meeting:
 - Motion to approve the warrant.
 - Motion to retroactively ratify a previous decision to pay the invoice from Kupferer & Blake for legal services.
 - Joni motions to ratify, Grace seconds, no discussion, motion carries.
- Public Comment:
 - Joni will moderate, and introduces the format of the comment period.
 - Lauren – We need to discuss as a board how we want to proceed with public comment, because none of this was agreed upon in an open meeting. I appreciate the efforts and intention, but we need to do it the right way. We haven't discussed it, and we hadn't at the last meeting either.
 - Joni – Will send a document with parliamentary procedure regarding public comment, the board will review and add it to an agenda to discuss in open meeting. There is discussion about Roberts Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure.
 - Cori – We need a robust public conversation about that because we have heard from the public being frustrated about things, not limit it and pay attention to everything said. We need to hear from people and acknowledge them.
 - Joni – It's tricky to have a robust time where the public is being heard without it becoming a back and forth.
 - Cori – We are outside the bounds of normal, we should have a public engagement meeting on how public comment would work best.
 - Lauren – They spoke about this at the open meeting law seminar, how important it is, especially at difficult times, to let everyone be heard, respectfully.
 - Harley – We forgot to sign the Rules of Procedure, which has been approved. It has been on the website in draft form, but hasn't been signed. The board signs.
 - Sue – Maybe with all the talk about public comment and discussion coming up, maybe it's not time to sign that right away, but wait until it's discussed.
 - Grace – Since we've already approved this we should have something on the website that doesn't say "draft" since it's not a draft anymore. If we want to reconsider we can go through it again, but it should be on the website now.
 - Molly – Re: ratifying motions today – does the board need to ratify where the postings will be?
 - The board did that at the last meeting.
 - Lyndsi – Is there a date on that signed document?
 - May 7th.
 - Lyndsi – Why isn't the Chair of the board conducting the meeting?
 - Harley – The Chair is chairing the meeting, and has asked for help managing the public comment portion of the meeting.
 - Joni – I actually asked if I could chair the public comment section because I felt that the public felt that they weren't being heard, and I wanted to make sure they felt that the full board was listening. It seemed like people were frustrated that everything was going through Harley, so I asked if it

would be appropriate for me to do this section so the public knew that there was full board interaction.

- Lauren – I wish that we had discussed it as a board, not you asking Harley.
 - Cori – that discussion is important so the public knows the effort and the meaning of it. It's not a takeover or anything.
 - Lyndsi – What it demonstrates now is that the current Chair is inept to run meetings and can't handle the responsibility to do so by passing it on to other board members when it is his responsibility to chair the entire meeting.
 - Juli – It seemed when I watched the meetings Harley seemed to be a lightning rod and all of the wrath and comments were directed at him, so I can see why you wanted to diffuse the situation so he is no longer a lightning rod.
 - Lauren – Your point is well taken, and it would be appropriate if we put it on the agenda and discuss how we run it. There are lots of good reasons why we did it and we should discuss it when everybody is here because they would appreciate it too.
 - Cori – It sounds like Harley is acknowledging that he's a lightning rod, it sounds like it was acknowledged and it's important to be forthright with.
 - Julie – He asked for help, it doesn't sound like he was a victim.
 - Lauren – He should have asked for help with the whole board, not just one person.
 - Joni – I should have asked the whole board but I thought it would be a way for more engagement.
- End of public comment.
 - Harley entertains a motion to enter executive session.
 - Joni motions to enter executive session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee. [1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F) and 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)]. Grace seconds.
 - No discussion, motion carries.
 - 6:10 meeting enters executive session.
 - Grace motions to leave executive session, Joni seconds, motion carries.
 - 9:08 executive session ends. No decisions were made.
 - Harley entertains a motion to adjourn.
 - Lauren motions to adjourn, Joni seconds, motion carries.

9:07 meeting adjourned.

Next regular meeting August 13, 2024, 5:30 pm at the Library.

Dated August 9, 2024, Grace Larson, Secretary.