

Pawlet Public Library
Regular Meeting of Board of Trustees

DRAFT MINUTES

September 10, 2024

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

Members of the public present:

Ruth Lampi, Jessica Van Oort, Sue LaPorte, Joanne Van Meter, Lyndsi Barnes, Bob Schoenemann, Barbara O'Connor, Steve Williams

5:32 Call to order

- Review of Operating Norms: Harley reads Operating Norms.
- Addition or deletion of agenda items and approval of Agenda:
 - o Lauren would like to add discussion of a possible retreat/mediation for the board.
 - o Lauren motions to approve the agenda, with the addition of aforementioned discussion, Joni seconds, no discussion, motion carries.
- Public Comment:
 - o Sue – Asks about the open meeting law violation complaint form – Grace reports that she has created one based on a template from VLCT, it is posted on the website under “Policies” and “Open Meeting Law”.
- MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program) presented by Jessica Van Oort (Pawlet Select Board)
 - o Grant funding to “increase energy resilience, reduce energy use and operating costs, and curb greenhouse gas emissions by promoting weatherization, thermal improvements, fuel switching, renewable energy, battery storage, electric vehicle charging, and enhanced comfort in municipal buildings.”
 - o This grant would apply to the Town office building and the Library.
 - o Energy audit has already been completed.
 - o Pawlet is likely to receive this grant due to its having an “excessive energy burden”.
 - o 20% of this grant would be designated for ADA accessibility – the Select Board would like the Library Board to consider how these funds could be best used for the library building. There has been discussion in the past of improving the ramp or installing an elevator.
 - Records of these discussions, including any plans, quotes, and/or blueprints, should be located and considered.
 - o Deadline for the grant application is September 20, 2024, the RRPC is assisting with the application.
 - o This would be an up front no-match disbursement.
 - o Joni asks if there would be a deadline for spending the funds.
 - o Barbara asks if there would be any issues with the historic registry.
 - o Cori suggests we include this on a future agenda, all agree.
 - o Thank you to Jessica and the rest of the Select Board!
- Approval of minutes:
 - o Joni motions to approve the August minutes, Cori seconds.
 - o No discussion, motion carries.

- Secretary's report:
 - o Nothing to report.
- Treasurer's report:
 - o Cori has prepared a warrant and brought it to be approved and signed by the Board.
 - It is mainly regular operating expenses with some book sale expenses.
 - o Cori has obtained two thumb drives, and is in touch with Kathryn and Julie to make sure she has all information to continue.
 - o Joni asks if we should consider an on-line accounting system.
 - Cori is happy to continue to use Microsoft Office.
 - o There is a discussion of audits.
 - There has not been an audit in any of the existing board member's tenure.
 - Cori suggests getting an outside audit initially, then do an internal audit yearly. She will look into this, starting by asking Julie.
 - Barbara points out that it is a good idea to have an audit between Kathryn's and Cori's tenure.
 - o Director's report:
 - Christine reports on library use in August, as well as programing for August and September.
 - Cori asks if there are statistics available to track use over time/identify trends.
 - The library will be partnering with Scout Palmedo Proft for the Celebrate LAND Project.
 - Christine is meeting with Les Jorgensen to go over what has been done and what still needs to be done for the website update.
 - Wednesday evening open hours have begun.
 - Christine is working on an application for the 2024 Jordan Miller Storytelling Mini-Grant.
 - Root for Library Raffle:
 - There is discussion on how this is organized and executed.
 - Lyndsi – the community coordinator is in charge of the raffle.
 - Board members are responsible for providing/soliciting donations.
 - Barbara asks if there is a way to solicit items from local businesses as a form of sponsorship (advertising for them).
 - There will be a Harvest Homecoming Party on October 18th 5-7pm with On-Tone Music and food provided by the library Board and staff.
 - o Committee reports:
 - Book Sale post-action review:
 - Cori asks about how many hours are spent on the sale – probably about 500+ person hours.
 - Book sorters/organizers had some ideas about how to improve for next year, including
 - o More postings/advertising locally
 - o Attention to smell/mustiness of books (maybe using baking powder/Febreze for storage)
 - o More advertising on social media

- List it on the NE book sale website
 - Press release
 - Check with more local businesses that might have volunteer hour requirements
 - Simpler food for volunteers, water not soda
- Bake sale –
 - About \$709 revenue from bake sale.
- Cori reports \$12,646 revenue, \$13,000 projected, \$3,000 projected expenses, about \$2,000 actual expenses, so about \$10,000 in revenue.
- Unfinished business:
 - 2024 Open Meeting Law – minutes (including audio) are being posted in accordance with the new requirements.
 - Website – Christine is meeting about this, and will keep the Board updated.
 - Window washing – Lauren motions to put the window washing job out to bid, Cori seconds, no discussion, motion carries. Lauren will do this.
 - Lauren motions to approve the warrant, Joni seconds, no discussion, motion carries.
 - Raffle –
 - Donated items need to be at the library by September 25th so there is time to advertise properly.
 - The drawing will take place at the regular Board meeting on November 12, 2024, where the public is encouraged to attend.
 - Email addresses –
 - Jessica reports that the Select Board is moving away from using gmail accounts, we should consider having email addresses with the library domain name.
 - It is agreed that we should do this, but until the website is sorted the Board should set up gmail accounts in the meantime so we are not using personal accounts.
 - Lauren motions that the Board individually set up their own gmail account using initial, last name, pawletpl@gmail.com. Cori seconds, no discussion, motion carries. Harley will remind the Board members to do this.
 - There is a discussion about non-profit status for the library. There may be implications for grant eligibility, but a municipal library can't have 501(c)(3) status, but we could look into a "Friends of the Library" entity.
 - Personnel policies –
 - Joni has worked on this, how do we move forward?
 - Lauren suggests having a policy committee that organizes existing policies and identifies any new ones needed, then prioritize them and work on 2 or 3 at a time. Rather than a committee this can be a working group that presents recommendations to the Board at a public meeting. As long as there are no discussions within the Board outside of a public meeting this complies with open meeting law.

- Lauren motions to form a working group to start working on policies, Cori seconds, no further discussion, motion carries. Lauren and Joni will be this working group.
- New business:
 - Retreat –
 - Lauren has done some research on available resources to help an organization such as the library Board to facilitate retreat/discussion/mediation.
 - She has identified SHRM Vermont and Common Good Vermont Nonprofit Consultant Directory as resources to consult.
 - The Board is asked to look at the information she has provided and send her thoughts so we can discuss and take action at the next meeting.
 - This should start within the Board, then it should naturally lead to a broader consideration of the Strategic Plan.
 - Christine suggests Library Land as another resource to explore.
 - Laptop purchase -
 - The library has one laptop that could be allocated for the treasurer to use, in which case we would need another laptop for the Director.
 - Cori reports that she is happy working at the library and doesn't need a laptop.
 - There is a question about the computer owned by the library that is currently inaccessible. This needs to be reset by a professional. Hopefully the information on it can be retrieved, and we will have both the information and use of the computer again. Harley will look into hiring someone to do this.
- Public comment:
 - Lyndsi – Finds it disgraceful that the Chair of the Board can joke about being fired and about the need for personnel policies when she was fired over 9 months ago for no reason.
 - Sue – Asks about Christine's hours, why are some hours worked from home? Harley – some hours are required to be on-site, some can be off-site. Sue asks why all work can't be done in the library.
 - Lyndsi – Finds it interesting that she wasn't allowed to work from home even though the job description has duties that would take one outside the library, and now the new Director is being allowed to work from home, when that was apparently a problem when she was Director.
 - Joanne points out that patrons need to know when the librarian is in if they need to do research or have questions for the librarian (not another staff member), that information should be put on the website.
 - Ruth asks about the length of the contract – it's just short of two years, and aligns with the fiscal year.
 - Sue – points out that hours need to be updated and corrected on the Facebook page and the telephone answering machine.
- Harley reads Reflection of Operating Norms.
- Next meeting is October 8, 2024, agenda items will include draft budget (salary requests are due to the town in mid-October), 501(c)(3) designation, and Board mediation/retreat.
- Lauren motions to reschedule the regular November meeting to November 12, 2024, Joni seconds, no discussion, motion carries.
- Joni motions to adjourn, Grace seconds, motion carries.

- 7:44 meeting adjourned.

Next regular meeting: October 8, 2024, 5:30 pm at the Pawlet Library.

Dated September 14, 2024, Grace Larson, Secretary.