

**LIVE in person only at TOWN HALL 5:00 pm**

**Wednesday November 15, 2023**

**Town Hall, 2nd Floor 334 Main St.**

**Great Barrington, MA 01230**

**Call to Order (Note new meeting start time is 5:07 pm)**

Board Members: Patrick Hollenbeck (Chair)

Lauren Clark

Rob Shaeffer

Ruby Chang

Sandy Pantorno

Carol McGlinchey (not present)

Interim Director: Donna Brown (not present due to illness)

Community Members: Sharon Gregory

Friends of the Library: Ed Abrahams

Holly Hamer

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from November 1, 2023 were amended to remove all numbers pertaining to possible charges from various agencies. Motion made by Ruby and second by Lauren. All approved.

**Friends Report:**

Ed reported new changes in the main room of the Mason Library. With Bobby Houston's guidance, Donna and staff members rearranged the furniture and Friends purchased new rug. Now the room looks beautiful. We need to acknowledge, Bobby, his staff, David and Donna for all the hard work.

Ruby made motion to write a thank you card to Bobby. Motion approved by all. Ruby will write card.

The rugs are industrial grade and durable. Book sales are done inside the library due to winter season. Books are stored in the community room downstairs, not raising funds. Friends may want to contact local shops who may be willing to donate flower arrangements.

**Directors Report:**

- Pat: Donna is ill and not able to join our meeting today. There is one page of report. Of interest, the town of Orleans is smaller than ours (6015) but in summer is 21,000. Our statistics for August was 6977 people then in September was 5375. We are considered the same as the Cape and Islands now per government. We don't know how much (population) is shifted, no data.

- Sharon: Chamber of Commerce in Pittsfield. IBerkshire may be places that would help you. Second home owners used to be 10% and now is 20%. IBerkshires have the number of tourism which is not quite the same.

- Pat:Gov does not account for second home owners.

- Pat reviewed the Director's Report. There is some new staff and training is on going.

- Rob: New candidate interview tomorrow.

**CPA discussion:**

- Pat: We will be go before the Selectboard December 4, CPC Step 2 review is December 13. Paperwork need to in by December 1.

- Sharon: Endorsement letters from individual would be good. Even Selectboard individual members' letters for support would be good. We can add to the packet before the deadline. Pat contacted the disability office in Boston as well.

- Discussion made to request endorsement letter from various Board members. • Pat noted bullet points and talking points, questions and answers would be better for CPA

application, less confusion.

- Ruby, Pat can you get a ball park figure of the budget for renovation such as amount/square feet?

- Pat; I will reach out to D. R. A. Architectural firm that had done work for us before and see if they could update our construction needs assessment and also give us a budget. They say that the cost would be about \$25,000. LEED certification will be expensive. We will get a percentage of reimbursement but that is fuzzy.

— — — Review of why \$150,000 discussed.

- Ruby explained the planning and design phase from MBLC program is about \$250,000. MBLC would provide \$100,000 and the \$150,000 from town will cover that need.

- Sharon: Bryant School had conceptual design, then next stage is design process. We are satisfying that the town will support some of the funding.

- Sandy: CPA committee members need the name of people we will be working with and cost.

- Pat: Need information from the company. Stretch code, each level has to have bathrooms.

- Sharon: Noted historical storage spaces still in the plans this need updated. Bathrooms are big updates. not comfortable unless having letter and cost commitment.

- Rob: request estimates from these companies in writing. Cannot just do piecemeal spending. Actual cost and what we are going to get from it and then go before the board and approve of it. We need to go before the board and discuss it. We cannot afford to run out of the \$50,000.

- Pat: intend to do that.

- Lauren: cart before the horse, nail down what we are presenting before CPA really tight. We need to tell them what we are going to do with the \$150,000. Talk about tonight. Do we need to get estimates from others?

- Pat: only above a certain number, Rob Cullin will come in and do community engagement twice.

We cannot sign with actual architectural work till after we get the grant. DRA will work on the building to get up to code.

- Ruby: We do have a fiduciary duty to make sure we are getting the bids and keep track of the spending as we start this process.

- Sharon: Having a budget would be a good thing. Let them put it on paper the budget. Having an estimate from each vendor. We have about 5 months time and last 2 months are to prepare for the application of the grant. Rob may not have the timing of the contract to come when he is doing work in the next town and we would pay for the full boat. Need real estimates.

- Pat; We are working on it right now.

- Lauren: nail down tonight is what we present to the CPC real tight. We have to be ready to give to them. We are not going to be able to get to the town meeting if we do not get past them right now. We need to tell them what we are going to do with the \$150,000. We need to have the numbers.

- Sharon: The town need to have the exact use of the money.

- Pat: what we may need at the time of the meeting is a power point.

More discussion: about what we need to do to prepare for the Step 2 meeting. If the committee is not reading it, we will have to say it. Sharon recommend an executive summary. Sandy noted they voted for the fifty thousand because information on Ramsdell was needed, one way or other. Sharon noted about 3/4 M for private funding. There is unknown, that is risky part before the CPC. They will not fund partial projects. Housatonic is as large as Egremont and Monterey. People in GB does not care but people in Housatonic do. Real kicker is if want people to want something is to make them need it. So, you need to make sure you use that library to fulfill that need, even if they do not know they need it. So it could mean meetings, gatherings which we cannot do any of that till it is ADA compliant. It is a catch-22.

#### **Fundraising PR discussion/vote**

- General discussion focus on: People do not know they need the Ramsdell. Ramsdell has

been limping along all these years, and people have not used it to any extent. Why should we go there that is dark and dingy. There is no programming. We (per Rob Cullin) started Library of Things only at the Ramsdell for the main reason for people to go there. PR point of "Library of things" in focus group and they did not know what it was. We do not do community outreach. Town of Richmond built a new library and they had many community meetings almost every other week. People talked about what they want. Keep giving community information. We need a library director to do that which we don't have. Question tours of Ramsdell, not when ramp is not done. Once it is done we should have a celebration and get people to come in.

- Pat: Orleans had been involved in the building program and they had great powerpoint, that went over points that people are asking. Told people about the grant and you had to do what the grant said. Show this to anyone at anytime. Selectboard using powerpoint for community engagement. Fundraising consultant could put together a powerpoint, right? We are voting to spend some money, probably through state aid to go to consultants. Nonprofit of Berkshire, Iliana does not do that much of powerpoint, how much would they charge, come out of State Aid. Selling the the building program find out how much? Can they put a power point together? We could give them a budget and can find out from Donna. Funding for Mason one year involved taking all the money from State Aid.

- Rob find out how much we have left. We have \$23,000 left.

- Ruby: Did all of you get an email that we were not part of the dispersement for State Aid this fall. Will we get it in the Spring? Did we file late? We are not sure if we will guarantee State Aid. We did not make the first round. Chris Rembold said that the money from the special round will be dispersed end of November or December.

- Pat: CPC will not pay for fund raising. They pay for hard assets. We only have State Aid and no other trustee money set aside.

- Rob will confirm with State aid money and whether we can use.

Discussion about how much time would be needed for making the powerpoint. Discussed 3-10 hours at \$145/hour. We need to give them content, from survey results. If we do not tell them the longer it will be. We need the power point for everything. We can ask Rob Cullin for this service and has done work for us in the past. At this point we need the power point for the grant. This would be part of updating the Building Program. Sharon suggest have 10 slides and give him the photos and they can work on it with the fancy graphics. 10 slides will win over the audience and make sure they want this thing. Lauren noted that this could be the preliminary power point for the grant and use it for later as well.

- Rob: What are 10 attributes we would like to communicate to the community?

1. It is a historical site
2. Needs full ADA compliant
3. Reallocating space for community needs —third place for cultural events
4. We have wonderful gem of both libraries, but Ramsdell is in need of more support.

We will have 10 messages as to why the library is important in our lives. Pat will ask how much that will cost and see if it can be done. 10 is all people have attention for. A few visuals to make a point. This could be used for CPA grant and then present the full picture for fundraising and other needs.—whole library has something positive. Pat will also ask around and find out more. Communicate by email when we get more information. We are not voting at this time.

**Reconfirming 2nd Wednesday of month 5 PM meetings at Mason Sandy motion/ Rob second. All in favor say "Aye" all agreed.**

We will present it once to Mark then go to the Selectboard.

**Strategic Plan/Action Plan FY25 timeline: Due December 1st.**

- Pat spoke with MLS and explained present condition. She said use the present MBLC template. We do not have enough staff right now, it would be library leadership.

Don't need 6 goals, just a few, state the goals and flush them out a bit more. Some are positive considerations using practical timelines. In FY25, November we will need to think about Union contract. Happy to look at it and see if it is okay. Rob will do the draft and Sandy edit it.

**LSTA Grant :** Signed letter of intent due on line December 6. Draft of the grant has to be done by February. We will need grant writers. Donna will need to give us the info on where the money is coming from. Rob Cullin does write grants as part of the service.

- Sharon: Library does not develop the technology budget. Finance director under Mark, town manager did the staff and technology budget. Now has full time technology director, who does the library technology budget. Donna does not know.

- Pat: This comes from federal government and not necessarily for technology. Music, health and wellness, library services technology bucket. We got \$9000 from this grant in the past by Talya. Library writes these grants. STEM learning, digitize records, citizen hub, creative communities, decorative arts

- Sharon: Mark has some funds and we could request services of a grant writer.

**Citizen speak: none**

**Board Speak: none**

**Adjournment: Ruby make a motion, Pat second. All agreed. Adjournment at 7:04 PM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruby Chang



October 2023 Director's Report  
Great Barrington Library Board of Trustees  
November 15, 2023

**October 2023 Statistics**

In-Person Visitors	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23
Mason	6,737	6,977	5,375	5,407
Ramsdell	352	92	56	39
Circulation	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23
Mason	7,788	9,128	7,047	7,379
Ramsdell	1,020	483	124	280
Libby/Overdrive	1,923	1,998	1,950	1,939

**Funding Requests:**

- There are no current funding requests

**Financial information coming soon**

**Updates:**

- The process of opening up the front Reading Room to be able to have special events has begun.
- Christine and Marie have been busy downsizing and reorganizing the Audio Books to make room for the DVD collection.
- The DVD collection has been moved and the shelving unit dismantled.
- The Display cases have been moved. One is now located by the Circulation Desk and the Second Display case is located next to the magazines
- I have had Design meetings with Bobby Houston, David Gilbert, Ed and Holly in regards to the front Reading Room at Mason Library. Changes coming soon.
- Training for new staff has been going well.
- Director's Search continues.

**Operations:**

- The new HVAC unit was placed on the Roof at Mason on October 26th.
- The Ramp at Ramsdell continues to move forward.



September 2023 Director's Report  
Great Barrington Library Board of Trustees  
Meeting: Thursday October 12, 2023

**September 2023 Statistics**

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**Updates:**

- September has been a very busy month. Christine and I have spent quite a lot of time squeezing in interviews for new staff, in our effort to move the libraries forward.
- Patricia Sharpe has started Friday, October 6, in a part time capacity.
- Sam Rossmeissl started Tuesday, October 10, filling the full time Youth Services Technician position.
- There are two more part time positions which should be filled soon, as there are two people who are already going through the hiring process.
- The Director Search will be picking up again. We had left the search process open to give viable candidates time to apply.
- The Strategic Planning was finished by the Trustees, filed and accepted by MBLC.
- I had information gathering to do for the financial part of the Aris Report. Talya Leodari was kind enough to help me out with this report as she did the report last year. It was due October 6, and has been filed on time.
- Ramsdell Library reopened for Sundays and Mondays on 9/17 to give the Housatonic Community access to the library, while work continues on the ramp.
- Mason Library in person visitors was low this month due to the door counter coming off the door frame and being set aside for an unknown amount of time. Some new Velcro and it is back on track.

- Mason Library was also closed on Saturday 9/30, due to staff illness and short staffing, which will account for the lower circulation numbers as well.
- Staff ideas have been flowing as Fran, Christine and Cheryl have been working on new displays at Mason Library. The themes this past month were “Before they were movies” and “Hispanic Heritage Month”. The current display that Fran has set up is “Banned Books”.
- Since we could not quickly locate adequate, affordable, movable carts for the dvd collection, we are instead in the process of downsizing the audiobook collection to make space for the dvd collection. This is so that we can open up the Reading Room a bit. Once our new staff is trained, we should have more dedicated time to work on this project.
- Ed & Holly are working with Bobby Houston to make our Reading Room at Mason Library more comfortable and user friendly.

#### **Operations:**

- The Boiler at Ramsdell Library has been inspected and is now in operation.
- The Handicap Entrance is a couple of weeks behind schedule due to the weather. However, good progress is being made when the weather cooperates.
- The Mason HVAC unit has arrived. The contractor is working on scheduling a crane for the install.
- DPW has a controls contractor coming to Mason Library on Thursday to review our current heating issue.