

Great Barrington Libraries Board of Trustees March 12, 2020 5:30 pm  
Mason Library 231 Main Street Great Barrington, MA 01230

I. Call to Order at 5:36 pm.

A. Attendance: Patrick Hollenbeck Kathleen Plungis Lauren Clarke Samara Klein  
Jane Stanhope Margaret Heilbrun Amanda DeGiorgis, Library Director  
Audience: 5

B. Approval of January & February Minutes: PH made an announcement that due to corona virus concerns, the Trustee meeting would be a short one. PH had wanted to table the approval of the Minutes till April, KP stated that the January Minutes could be approved with corrections (minor word corrections).

After comments by a member of the audience regarding comments supposedly made by the Director at the December meeting (regarding the changing of the hours at Ramsdell), a short discussion between the audience member and various Trustees and the Director ensued. PH tabled the approval of the January and February Minutes until April at which time the Minutes will be discussed in more detail.

C. Friends Report: Ed Abrahams stated that the Valentine Day Book Give Away saw thousands of books leave the library. About \$400 in donations were received. A thank you to the Staff for putting up with the extra tables and clutter that occurred with the indoor give away.

He noted that the usual First Saturday film series may not occur in April due to the town's request that large group activities be curtailed for the foreseeable future (guidelines for the corona virus situation).

A member of the audience asked that the Friends consider donating books to Kimball Farms (Lenox) library. Ed asked for a contact name which the audience member will give him. It was stated tht in the past the Friends hav doanted books to various places in town, among them Fairview Hosptal, various nursing homes, etc.

D. Website Design: (See the Director's report) The Director stated that she has met with the 2 website designers and that she expects the new website to be live by the end of May.

E. Request of \$500 for Children's Room tables:

Motion to approve up to \$200 from Mason Capital account for two Mason Children's Room Tables. 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Discussion. Vote: 6 – 0

Motion to approve up to \$300 from the Smith Trust towards the purchase of the above two Mason Children's Room tables. 2<sup>nd</sup>. No discussion. Vote: 6 – 0

F. Ramsdell Hours Revisited: PH noted that since Ramsdell Sunday hours had begun about 2 years ago, there has not been a 6 month review as had originally been planned. This needs to be addressed.

PH continued a discussion from the February Meeting concerning April Sunday hours at Ramsdell. With a religious holiday and a 3 day weekend (Patriot's Day) Sunday hours during the month of April will be reduced 2 Sundays. He would like to see Ramsdell open on another day of each week, noting it would cost roughly \$175 per day.

Ed Abrahams, sitting in the audience, noted that this is a Union contract issue and that it is probably too late to negotiate a change. ADeG stated that a new contract is currently being negotiated and any

change such as opening on another day of the week in response to PH's request will have to be addressed to the Town Manager. A short discussion continued.

An audience member asked if Trustee meetings were recorded. KP replied No. There had been a few instances in the past that meetings were recorded, but on the whole, No. PH asked that future meetings be recorded from now on. ADeG agreed to assist KP with this.

## II. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

A. Buildings & Grounds: K. Plungis noted that 5 chores that had been on the "To Do" Ramsdell list have been completed.

B. Director's Report – A. DeGiorgis: (See Attached report) PH spoke of the corona virus concerns and guidelines issued by the town and state library commissioners. ADEG concurred. The DPW vacuums and disinfects the libraries every day and the Staff then disinfects various areas (computers, keyboards, tables, etc) throughout the day. The toys and stuffed animals in the Children's Rooms have been cleaned and packed away. Pillows in the libraries will have the same done. Responding to a question, she noted that cleaning supplies are limited.

She noted that when the Library of Things items are returned, they are disinfected before being placed back on the shelves. PH noted that there are nontoxic cleaners that the libraries can use.

MH asked whether the books, DVD's, etc. are wiped when they are returned.

Another Trustee asked as to whether the libraries will remain open regarding the virus concern.. ADeG stated that is up to the Town Manager and Massachusetts Library Commissioners.

An audience member felt that people are over reacting to the virus concerns.

PH noted that the State will make decisions on library closings.

C. Treasurer's Report: K. Plungis: (See attached report) KP noted that all is in order.

## III. Unfinished Business:

CPA Out of Cycle Request: PH noted that the completed archeology study showed underground areas that need to be further explored, which means unearthing. That would take place during Phase 2.

PH is going to request that the Town Planner and the CPA board grant an "out of cycle" award so that Phase 2 can proceed. If not granted, the Trustees will need to wait till the Fall to apply for CPA money. That the Ramsdell grounds need remediation now and by not completing Phase 2 in a timely manner interferes with Ramsdell improvements.

PH noted that any future heating, cooling systems at Ramsdell should incorporate a carbon free footprint.

PH also stated that he had been approached by citizens questioning the request for \$600,000 to repair the front marble steps at Mason. That the public thinks that the Trustees had requested this money. He stated that the Trustees had never been approached regarding this matter, never made the request, and knew nothing about it until it appeared in the local newspaper.

Town Budget requests: PH Tabled until the April Meeting.

Two year Review of the Ramsdell Report: PH Tabled until the April meeting.

PR Outreach to the Community: PH stated that the Town Manger will attend a future meeting. That he had planned on attending tonight (March meeting), however with the corona virus situation, he was unable to attend tonight. LC asked that the Trustees know when he will be attending so that they can have a list of questions to present to him.

A. Announcements and Updates:

Library Legislative Day at the Statehouse April 2: PH stated that it has been cancelled due to the corona virus situation.

Open Meeting Law certifications overdue: LC needs to complete hers.

Trustee Vacancy Update: PH stated that 2 Trustee seats will be on the May ballot. Currently there are 3 people who have taken out nomination papers. Current Trustee Margaret Heilbrun is running for reelection. Chris Tucci of Housatonic and Holly Hamer of Great Barrington have also taken out nomination papers.

IV. Citizens Speak: A Great Barrington resident complimented the Children's room librarian for the operation of the Children's room and the fabulous programs.

He then asked why in the year 2020 there wasn't a color copier at Mason library. A discussion ensued. The Director stated that the color toners are very expensive and that a dollar would need to be charged per copy. Plus the cost of the copier. The resident replied as to finding someone to donate one, that he could spearhead this effort. PH stated that the library has needed to set up a Foundation to grant requests like this. A general discussion continued. The discussion returned to the fact that Ramsdell Library has a color copier. The Director noted that any fees generated by any copier are turned over to Town coffers and that any toner purchased needs to come out of her general budget.

The Resident then asked why Mason isn't open on Sundays. He noted that there is a segment of Great Barrington's population that would benefit from such an opening. The Director and Asst. Director stated that there is not the Staff to have this happen.

The resident mentioned Budget. MH stated Union contract. The resident asked if the used books are a major fundraiser. It was noted that those monies go to the Friends that organize the used books sales. He would like to see a "pop up" gift shop in the library. MH noted that in her experience such shops rarely raise enough, usually 1 percent of the budget.

Ending the discussion, PH noted that the libraries need to rely on philanthropy rather than solely relying on the town budget.

The resident then stated that he wanted to recognize Asst. Director Donna Brown for fixing one of the chairs at the computer station, that the chair is one that can be raised and lowered and is in great demand by patrons. He appreciated her repairing it.

A Housatonic resident, Jim Stark spoke next. He voiced concerns about Ramsdell needing its own librarian, as it had in the past, that the current Asst. Director there is there only 2 days. He would like to see new leadership, authority there.

He also questioned the hours the librarians put in on Sundays. That Ramsdell is open 3 hours yet the librarians are paid time and half for 4 hours. The Director stated that it is in the Union Contract and a minimum of 4 hours, which is in line with, for example, the DPW being called out on a Saturday or Sunday, is paid a 4 hour minimum whether the call needed 4 hours or not.

Further discussion ensued with LC asking whether they work 3 ½ hours yet paid for 4 hours. The Director stated that the librarians arrive a half hour before Sunday opening time and the other half hour is after Sunday closing time. The resident noted that he has seen the librarians leaving before that final half hour has finished. He asked, who checks their hours?

The Director stated that there is no time clock, there is no policy for this, it is a visual check in.

The Director stated that before and during the open hours, the librarians tidy up, recover books, and work on other projects. PH noted that often people rush in at 3:45 and that closing time may not be precisely at 4pm to accommodate those people.

V. Adjournment: MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 6:21 pm. 2<sup>nd</sup>. VOTE: 6 – 0

Next meeting date: April 9, 2020

IT WAS NOTED THAT APRIL 9<sup>th</sup> IS THE BEGINNING OF PASSOVER.

MOTION TO CHANGE THE TRUSTEE MEETING DATE TO THURSDAY APRIL 16<sup>th</sup>.  
2<sup>nd</sup>. NO DISCUSSION. VOTE: 6 – 0

NEXT MEETING DATE: APRIL 16, 2020

*Kathleen Plungis, Secretary*  
*approved by the Board via Zoom meeting*  
*July 9, 2020*