

Great Barrington Library Board of Trustee Meeting

June 20, 2023

2:00 PM

Meeting conducted in Town Hall and via Zoom

Roll Call: Patrick Hollenbeck, Chair; Carol McGlinchey, Laura Clark, Rob Shaeffer, Sandra Pantorno (via zoom), Ruby Chang, Mark Pruhenski, town manager. All “here”.

Vote for Ruby Chang as secretary for the Board: Roll Call; unanimous “aye”.

Friends of the Library Report:

- Ed Abrahams report putting out the books every week. Randy Weinstein closed his bookstore and gave huge donation, not rare books but tons of books in great condition. Books are arranged in basement by Ed (due to fire inspector due to come). Books are put out every weekend except this coming weekend. Rob reports we have tables at the Farmer's Market. Pat will help to transport books over and prepare for sales with library banner.

Vote for members for Strategic Plan Subcommittee

- Members for this subcommittee were volunteers and they are Rob Shaeffer, Sandra Pantorno, Ruby Chang and Patrick Hollenbeck. Laura made motion and Carol second the motion.
- Rob questioned how many people should be on the committee. Pat say quorum is 4 and he is willing to step aside. As for the members for the Strategic Plan Committee should be 2 with other members made up of library staff and community members with goal of 7.
- Mark stated the subcommittee members should be elected members of the board. First meeting will be 2:45 pm today. Mark remarked the committee members are usually appointed by the Selectboard.
- Pat mentioned that the library charter is different. Mark gave go ahead for the meeting posted today and he will do some research and get back to us. Since the Selectboard will meet to June 26 and July 10, and he will discuss with Selectboard.
- Sandra spoke of Maura Deedy from the MA Board of Library Commissioners agreed with member participation involving members of the Trustee board, staff of library and community members.
- Mark did attend the training for the Strategic Plan along with 2 library staff members. Library is down 6 employees as of last Friday and Staff will have difficulties keeping the library open and responding to the Strategic Plan. Mark would like Donna the interim director to focus on the daily functions of the library. Sandy remarked we support the staff and still feel need feedback from the staff and do the best we can.

Citizen Speak

- Sharon Gregory—We will need reports from the staff in the future for the Strategic Plan. Mark feel the senior staff members will need to provide data as needed.

No further questions.

Vote placed for the elected board members Rob Shaeffer, Sandro Pantorno, Ruby Chang and Pat Hollenbeck to participate for the subcommittee. All members including Sandra on Zoom voted “Aye” via voice Roll Call.

- Donna Brown via zoom, she noted they are short staffed and it is hard to serve the front desk along with other duties. Pat appreciated all her services.

Questions:

- Sharon request staff positions posted?
- Mark indicate not all positions are posted and Sophia is actively working on it. The library director position is posted.
- Carol requested perspective of how the director is hired. Mark reviewed the process of hiring and resumes are coming in and being reviewed. He will hold back the assistant director

position till director position is filled so the new director will have participation in selecting the assistant director. Donna Brown will be announced as interim director and Christine Warner will be interim assistant director at the next Selectboard meeting on Monday.

- Sandra asked about salary will be commensurate to their new jobs and Mark said “ Yes” . Carol asked about doing both their old and now new responsibilities and the response from Mark is “No, they will not be doubling up!”. Samara and Talya both has agreed to come in to do part time work. Samara has agreed to do the year end work and payroll. Talya will be doing the required the state reporting. Rob mentioned that we should correct the minutes from the last meeting to note both had attended the webinar that is required to be attended by staff members for the Strategic Plan. The minutes will be amended to reflect that.
- Eileen wonder about whether Samara and Talya are still working at the library now.
- Mark stated Samara’s last day was June 13 and Talya’s last day will be June 23rd and then will be working on a very part time basis.
- Pat would like to jump into the charter, the 3 P’s Maura Deedy noted everything flow from Strategic Plan from priority to policy from the plan. Strategic plan is of utmost importance. We can see the previous plan on our website. Community participation is important. The previous plan 2017-2022 has expired.

Citizen Speak:

Eileen Mooney, request copy of the strategic plan from whatever the subcommittee is considering. Pat say the old plan was sent to Eileen last week.

- Carol comment: she had been on the Trustee Board for the past year. She got to know Samara who gave her a tour of the library. She is concerned about the disconnect between trustees and staff. She is feeling the staff is unsupported, and why the attrition? These are not passing things and we need to have their backs They are working for four summers without air conditioner. We need to let them know how well they are appreciated. She sees how much they are stressed with 6 people out. She is concerned and there are lots of disgruntled people there.
- Pat remarked that there are job openings in education and libraries as well all over. There are a lot of things we cannot fix and salaries are up to the Selectboard. There is nothing preventing you from supporting them. They are part of union and we need to reflect back to the Town manager. Pat feel the newspaper reports are awful with Samara’s picture on the paper.
- Sandra after speaking with Maura Deedy. There is a flow chart of chain of command. Director talk with the trustees with any problem. Absolutely not per Maura for the trustees to talk to the staff. The trustees should have the director’s back. We will back the director as long as legal and not checking around the director to the staff. New director will need to know that.
- Sharon Gregory: She understand staff report to town manager, about things going wrong. Trustees do not have jurisdiction. If messing with the roles, then people will get upset. Not saying anyone is wrong. But need to have understanding of what is appropriate. Should have orientation for this type of chain of command.
- Carol: some libraries not managed by the town manager and would like clarification. We have town manager type of government. The staff is hired by the Town manager. Clear goals and responsibilities.
- Mark request someone from trustees to help him with recruitment, conducting interviews. Clearly identify roles and responsibilities and work as a team. He feel we should feel free to communicate with the staff and murky when trustees get involve with the day to day operations.
- Carol: She recalled specific meeting where trustees request open on Sundays on long holiday weekends. Mark recommend bring to his attention.
- Pat: If you google back, the employees do not have to work on Sundays ever, still is so and does not effect the staff at all.
- Carol: Need to understand that we are not to interfere with day to day operation.
- Sandra: How many trustees to recommend the director?

- Mark: one out of six

Sandra: recommend increasing the number, just a thought.

More conversation occurred about staffing and responsibilities between Pat and Carol and Sharon.

Donna: clarified. Volunteer just could not do it on weekends any more. They have 2 staff members who work the weekend hours and to have an occasional weekend off is great.

Pat moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:51 PM. Rob second at 2:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruby Chang
Library Trustee Board Secretary