Board of Library Trustees

* Neal DeChillo- Chair
* Johannah Morgen- Vice Chair/Treasurer
* Debbie Friedlander- Secretary

Minutes: April 7, 2025

* Attendees: Johannah Morgen, Jonathan Nichols, Neal DeChillo
* Attendees from the Cookbook Club: Martha Cesarz, Jean LeVasque, Bernie White
* Attendees regarding the Poet Laureate program: Nancy Hewitt, Stephen Innaccone, Lee Freedman

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| Topic: Call to order |
| Meeting called to order at 5:34 p.m. |
| Topic: Approval of Minutes |
| *Discussion:*  Minutes from February 3, 2025 were presented.  *Outcome:*  Minutes from 2/3/25 were approved. |
| Topic: Public Comment on Cookbook Club and Poet Laureate |
| *Discussion:*  Topics will be presented by community members.  Full discussion will occur when all trustees are present. |
| Topic: Public Comment from Cookbook Club members |
| *Discussion:*  The Cookbook Club has been active for fifteen years and has had up to 25 members at various points. The library’s support for the club included: reserved space, provision of paper goods, librarian liaison who picked the cookbook and ensured there were sufficient copies for participants.  The pandemic caused the Cookbook Club to enter a hiatus.  The Cookbook Club members report there was no notice of the club being formally ended in terms of library support and are requesting reconsideration of that decision on the following grounds:   * Public health shared a preference for cooked food not being shared in the library, but this is not a policy and the pot luck exemption would likely apply. * The library is a familiar and safe location for club meetings. * The club builds commitment to the library and has successfully led to friendships and connected members to other library activities. * Sharing food builds community. * Draws in participants from neighboring communities and creates a sense of belonging.   The cookbook club is requesting:   * Space * Librarian liaison * Publicity on the website.   The library has offered:   * Collaboration to set up space for club meetings in the senior center which has appropriate facilities for food. * A librarian liaison to assist with accessing the cookbooks. * Assurance that the senior center will be staffed during the early evening meeting time.   Concerns named with the Senior Center location:   * Is it truly inter-generational or solely focused on seniors? * Safety of parking lot and building in early evening. * Level of welcome in the facility.   No outcome- discussion is tabled until all trustees are present. |
| Topic: Poet Laureate |
| *Discussion:*  There is a proposal to revive the role of a Poet Laureate for Swampscott. The goal of having a Poet Laureate would be to increase interest in the arts and elevate poetry. Swampscott had a Poet Laureate but it fell to the wayside during Covid. Previously, it was a program run by the Select Board. The Poet Laureate position was typically held for three years. There is an ongoing interest in poetry in Swampscott as evidenced by the Tinbox Poets of Swampscott, collaboration with Reach Arts, and open mike poetry readings. Other area towns, including Lynn and Salem currently have Poet Laureates.  The Poet Laureate program is requesting:   * Librarian liaison to:   + Manage judges (some question as to who will identify judges) every third year to navigate selection process.   + Manage communication to publicize the program and elicit applications from interested poets.   + Organize space within the library for both meetings and potentially work space for the poet.   The Poet Laureate program would provide:   * Collaboration with Norma Finn poetry contest * Word Wave content for school children   Participation in community events  No outcome- discussion is tabled until all trustees are present. |
| Topic: Director’s Report |
| * The vote on the assessment formula for NOBEL will take place in May. * Gordon college may be joining NOBEL. * NOBEL fees are up by 2-3% according to the proposed metric, but may decrease if Gordon joins. * The library has received a grant of $1000 to start the ELL conversation circle. This will be an opportunity for those looking to increase their English skills to practice spoken English. The circle will be facilitated by a qualified TESOL professional and will be organized by theme. There will be review materials provided to participants on the vocabulary associated with the theme. Native English speakers will be encouraged to participate. Sessions will begin with alternate Saturdays and Mondays weekly and then reduce to 1 day/week based on attendance. The Friends are committed to supporting funding. * Application out for $5000 grant from Dollar General for literacy materials with the goal of building the Wonder Book collection. A decision is expected in August. * E-rate is a federal program, run by states, that assists with technology. Programs that participate in E-rate must have filters on computers. This can provide up to $80,000 in funding to upgrade tech systems. The filters solely enforce policies that are already in place and are fully under local control. Swampscott was selected as a pilot location so we can test out the filters before making a long-term commitment. Beverly is also participating in the pilot. |
| Topic: Old Business |
| * Plans for library entrance renovation and possible Children’s Room entrance is being presented to the Historic Commission tonight along with new images. * If the funding for the Children’s Room entrance is available, the goal is to have the patio at one level and a switch-back ramp. * The windows in the front entrance will look like the original windows. * The vestibule incorporates the same windows. |
| Topic: Budget |
| * There is one meeting with team leaders, but no confirmation until budget book is printed. * The library budget is increasing by 4%, but this does not include contractual increases. * Jonathan’s salary has been flat-funded. * There is an increased line item for the building, but it is unlikely to be enough to compensate for the increased costs brought on by increased foot traffic (i.e., more people in building means more disposable resources are used). * Consortium fees are being increased to account for landscaping and sprinklers. |
| Topic: Children’s Room |
| * Rearranging of Children’s Room is on hold due to sewer issues. * Sewer backups are leading to issues with odors. * Waiting to see outcome of proposed addition of entrance to Children’s Room |
| Topic: Update to Food Policy |
| * Patrons may not bring in hot, messy foods. * No food delivery to the library. * Reserved meeting rooms may have different food policies. |
| Topic: Move to Adjourn |
| Meeting adjourned 6:55 p.m. |