

George H. Stowell Free Library Trustee Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2024, 6:00 p.m. at the George H. Stowell Free Library

PRESENT: Trustees: Kathi Patterson, Laura Cousineau, Marie De Rusha **CITIZENS:** Merilynn Bourne, Brian Meyette, Kim Patterson, Karen Gillock, Alicia Simino, Jill Edson, Martha Zoerheide, Judith Kaufman, Heidi Jaarsma.

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Reviewed the evening's agenda.
3. Approval of March 28th 2024 meeting minutes was moved by Laura, seconded by Kathi and agreed by all three Trustees.
4. Librarian's Report:

Lucy Applegate gave her first official report stating the Library has had 416 patrons since she started on May 1st and 2,000 patrons since the year started. 600 books have been checked out this year as well as 621 general items which includes audio books and items from the Library of Things. Toddler Story Time has been consistent with 4 attending each week and the summer reading program will be starting soon. Lucy met with the school Librarian and met and talked with the 3rd graders. She is looking forward to having a Black Out Poetry event for the older kids this summer. The Library staff has made great strides in recategorizing the Young Adult and Juvenile books along with relocating the YA into the adult section. She is still in touch with Stephanie McAndrew. The Library has a credit card which she plans to use for purchasing things for the summer reading program this year. She hopes to start working on an official Stowell Library website outside of the link on the Town's website.

5. Treasurer's Report:

- a. Building Fund balance as of 5/31/2024 is \$14,728.89
 - b. Checkbook balance as of 6/11/2024 is \$13,930.35
 - c. Donation Fund as of 5/31/2024 is \$1,556.76
 - d. Non-Lapsing Fund as of 5/31/2024 is \$2,729.94, this includes the Tasker Grant money.
 - e. Palmer Fund as of 5/31/2024 is \$\$1,007.01
 - f. Tasker Grant as of 5/31/2024 is \$0.03
- Donation of \$75.00 from the Hanover Garden Club

6. Request from Brian Meyette to return the balance of his mother's donation of \$30,000 as he felt the funds were misspent on fees on studies for the move to the new Library by the Exploratory Committee. At the time the donation was received the Cornish General Store building was not an option. Kathi explained the donation was lumped into the Building Fund along with other donations (donation information and its expenditure can be found at both the Town Office and the Stowell Library). On 8/9/2021 the Library Trustees voted to use the donations received and spend it on what the Exploratory Committee thought needed to be done for the Cornish General Store. Kathi stated that at the time of Mrs. Meyette's donation the only option for the funds was to go toward was the Stowell Library and felt the intent was clear due to the time frame that that was Mrs. Meyette's true intention. The funds were held onto until the vote in August of 2021. Laura stated she did not think it appropriate to return the

money as the bequest was too vague and wants to refer to counsel. Brian was worried they were simply spending more money on lawyers to which Laura offered him to rescind his request and again stated she would like to contact legal counsel for proper guidance. Marie agreed with Kathi that returning the money was the right thing to do as Peggy Meyette's donation came in 2020, a year before the offer of the Cornish General Store, therefore the offer spoke for itself in its intent. According To Brian Meyette, his mother made it very clear that what she wanted the money to go toward specifically was an access ramp. Heidi Jaarsma strongly recommended that rather than using counsel to contact the NH Charitable Trust directly and they would easily, quickly and for no charge have the answer the Trustees are looking for. Laura made a motion to contact NH Charitable Trust via email and include a copy of the check with the handwritten note stating the check was for improvements on the Library as well as a copy of the minutes from the 254th Annual Report from Article 3, # za, under Library on page 12. Marie requested to make an addition to Laura's motion that all three Trustees read and agree on the letter to NH Charitable trust. Amended motion passed unanimously.

7. A letter was received from the Board of Selectmen regarding well and septic for the Sowell Library using Local Fiscal Recovery funds from the State of New Hampshire. Laura moved to have a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss accepting and using the funds to install a well and septic for the Stowell Library. Kathi seconded the motion. Vote was a unanimous affirmative.

8. CCI Updates:

a. CCI Fundraising Committee:

Merilynn Bourne clarified she is not a member of the CCI board. She is on the fundraising sub-committee. She passed out new brochures from the CCI. The annual report from the CCI will come due in November of 2024. She stated the revenue is roughly around \$1,150,000 and they are waiting to hear from Northern Borders for a grant of \$250,000. Alicia Simino asked how much is pledged and how much is cash. Merilynn said each is about 50% but to remember the pledges are real and it's a commitment. A legal contract is signed and the contract states it is a legally binding pledge, even in death, resulting in monies being taken from your estate after death. Merilynn suggested a link to the CCI webpage be added to the Library page on the Town website. Marie pointed out the Library page honors the Stowell Library and felt the CCI should remain separate. Merilynn argued there are many questions regarding CCI therefor a link would give the public access to the CCI website. Laura made a motion to add a rubric that has supporting organizations which will have a link to the Friends of the Library and the CCI, then opened it to discussion. Marie agreed the Friends should be accessible but not the CCI as they are a completely separate entity who does not support the Stowell Library, therefore are not a "supporting organization". Judith stated all Friends activities and mission is to support the Library yet they are separate from the Library. Karen Gillock pointed out a large portion of residents do not think the CCI is supportive of the Stowell. The Library page is designed to support the Stowell. Alicia asked Laura, as a person elected by the Town who is also the proclaimed liason to the CCI, working for the people of Cornish, does the CCI give you the updates or are those your own words? Laura wanted to clarify she is not the liason to the CCI but is a member of the building sub-committee. She requests reports from the CCI therefore the reports come from the CCI. Lucy stated the difference between the Friends and the CCI is when money is donated to the Friends the money goes directly to the Library (no matter which building it will be in) whereas donations to the CCI goes to the store and only to the store. While she feels the CCI possibly

should be on the town website, she doesn't think the Library page is where it belongs. Laura called the question and motioned that both Library and Library Trustee pages on the Town website add the rubric of Supporting Organizations which will include the Friends of the Library and the CCI. Kathi seconded the motion. Both Kathi and Laura voted in the affirmative, Marie in the negative. Vote passed 2-1.

b. CCI Update:

Laura shared the April report from the CCI. The building committee meets with Banwell Architects and Trumbull-Nelson bi-weekly to work on finalizing construction documents. They are currently looking for a furniture vendor and specifications for all equipment to be used in the new Library are being gathered. Land survey has been completed and a driveway application will be submitted to the NH Department of Transportation.

c. Building Committee Update:

Architects are working on more specific cost estimates. The estimate given at Town Meeting was not final. The new estimate will have more detail. The interior/exterior committee are currently looking at finishes (color schemes, tiles, carpeting etc.).

9. Citizens Comments:

Judith Kaufman gave the current fiscal report for the Friends of the Library. As of June 9th, the total income raised as of 2024 is \$1,899. The current balance after expenses is \$4,944.10. Funds come from memberships, donations and fundraising events. Saturday, July 13th from 9-4 and Sunday, July 14th from 9-12 a book sale will take place to honor Sandy Guest at the Town Hall on Townhouse Road. All book purchases are by donation and proceeds go to the Friends of the Library, but per Sandy's request, funds raised will go to the CCI project at the Cornish General Store. Alicia wanted to thank Lucy and the Stowell Library for donating books no longer in use to her first grade students for summer reading. Kathi requested permission to have a donation given through the Library Trustees in Sandy Guest's memory to the CCI using a George H Stowell Library check. Given the permission to do so the expense would go under "Trustee Expenses". Laura pointed out it would have to come from individuals, not the Board. Kathi rescinded her request. Laura offered to make a contribution with Kathi as individual supporters. Brian asked what the plan of action would be regarding his request. Laura told him once an answer is received from Charitable Trust we can have a meeting to address it. We cannot act on any information we receive outside of a public meeting.

10. The next Trustee meeting will be determined

Meeting was adjourned at 7:20