

Fiske Free Library Trustee Meeting Wednesday, July 26, 2017

Meeting called to order at 5:25

Roll Call

Present: Bill Scala, Arthur Vidro, Sean Magee, Robert Arcand, George Caccavaro, Director Michael Grace and secretary Marta Smith, also present City Manager Ryan McNutt and Mayor Charlene Lovett.

a. Problems at the library

George asked the City Manager what specific problems he saw at the library since the City Manager had expressed on several occasions that there were issues at the library.

The City Manager stated that the library needed to develop a strategic plan.

George asked if other departments were being asked to develop strategic plans.

The City Manager replied that he was not there to talk about other departments.

The City Manager stated the following regarding the library:

Is it being innovative?

Is it approachable?

Is it reaching out to the community?

George stated that the library is heavily used noting that in June 4200 people visited the library.

The City Manager replied that those are “great round numbers” but expressed skepticism over the relevance of them.

The City Manager stated that he wants the library to be more innovative, to do more outreach in the community and to work collaboratively with non-profits and other organizations in the community.

George stated that singling out the library to develop a strategic plan while other departments were not required to do so was not fair.

The City Manager stated that the world is not fair and that fairness is ephemeral and we should not be considering what is fair or not fair.

The City Manager stated that there were areas in the library that could be improved.

Marta Smith asked how the library staff could improve the library with reduced staff and reduced budget.

The City Manager answered that we can “improve the library with the existing budget” and that it is not an issue of resources.

The Mayor mentioned that the role of the Board of Trustees as defined in the City Code is to advise the City Manager on issues related to the library. The Mayor wants the Board and the City Manager to find a way to move forward. George stated that the City Manager has not sought any advice from the Trustees so far.

The Mayor stated that she would be interested in having a list of items that the Friends of the Library have donated to the library.

The City Manager stated that he wanted to see “actual energy put toward a strategic plan.”

The City Manager read his proposal for a strategic plan that he would like the City Librarian to develop.

He stated that he wanted the plan completed and on his desk by October 1, 2017.

Marta Smith stated that the City Librarian would have to lock himself in his office to get the strategic plan done. The City Manager stated “I never do this,” but he was disturbed that Marta Smith was being “snarky”. He stated that she is an employee of the library.

Someone stated that the City Manager had disparaged the library staff in public. The City Manager stated “I have not disparaged the library in public” and “I have said the library needs improvement.”

The City Manager stated that even the people who supported the library said that there were issues with the library that needed improvement. George Caccavaro asked if the Board could meet with these people and the City Manager said that they would not be comfortable with that and probably wouldn't talk to the Board.

Arthur Vidro asked if volunteers could be used for grant writing and the City Manager said that they could. George Caccavaro stated that the city could not fill all of its board vacancies with volunteers so how could the library count on volunteers. The Mayor stated that it was not fair to question the City Manager about that since the Council appoints the board members.

Bill Scala stated that fairness is not relevant because it is ephemeral.

George Caccavaro stated that he was merely pointing out the difficulty of getting volunteers.

The City Manager said that getting volunteers to serve on boards is different since it is a commitment to meet once a month. The Mayor stated that she has found that it is easier to get volunteers for a specific job short-term than it is to get a volunteer for a long-term commitment.

The City Manager stated that he had been talking to other library directors, town managers, and library trustees around the state. He said that the research he has done shows that the Claremont library is unique even among city libraries in New Hampshire in that the library board has no power. The City Manager stated that he would be willing to consider at some point in the future returning control of the library to the board. But not without some improvement and changes at the library.

The City Manager and the Mayor left the meeting and the City Manager said that he would be coming to a future meeting.

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the June 2017 meeting were read and Arthur Vidro moved to accept them, seconded by Bill Scala and passed.

Treasurer's Report

Read and Bill Scala made a motion to accept it seconded by Bob Arcand and passed.

Directors Report

June 2017

Circulation was strong in June with patrons checking out 7,422 items. Patrons used 520 computer sessions and 208 wireless internet sessions for a total of 628 hours of computer time during the month. The library provided patrons with 24 hours of computer time per day during June. 125 items were loaned to other libraries through interlibrary loan and 145 new items were added to the collection. Patrons downloaded 248 audio books and 102 e-books from our downloadable books service. 53 new patrons signed up for library cards during the month.

Circulation of materials

2017	Books	Audio-books	Music CDs	Magazines	Misc	Total Items
January	4477	462	83	30	2073	7125
February	4304	465	71	36	1921	6797
March	4705	522	96	36	2064	7423
April	4366	569	76	21	1893	6925
May	4806	575	94	51	2052	7578
June	5021	488	64	33	1816	7422

Items added to collection

2017	Books	Audio-books	Music CDs	Magazines	Misc	Total Items
January	294	1	0	3	72	370
February	202	4	0	0	81	287
March	250	4	6	0	184	444
April	392	19	0	1	86	498
May	169	8	0	0	58	235

June	104	11	4	0	26	145
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This year's Children's Summer Reading Program "Build a Better World" started on a high note on June 23rd with another high energy musical performance by perennial favorite Steve Blunt. Children signing up for Summer Reading this year are placing their names on houses that are placed on our Build a Better World bulletin board. Participants are also provided with reading logs that let them track their summer reading by number of minutes read or by number of books. So far 69 children have signed up. Coming up in July we have a puppet show presented by Diane Kordas on the 8th, Simon Brooks, storyteller, on the 14th, the Children's Museum of New Hampshire on the 21st, and the Children's Literacy Foundation book giveaway and storytelling event on the 31st. The library is also working with the Claremont Children's Community Lunch program this summer providing STEM activity kits and games for children to enjoy during the lunch sessions. The Community Lunch program provides free lunches for all youth 18 and under M-F through September 1st.

Currently the library has two high school student volunteers helping us out. Both are working in the Children's area helping with our barcoding project, cleaning, and helping with Summer Reading programs. Rene LaCasse, another volunteer, is currently doing an exceptional job cleaning up, weeding, and maintaining our new flower beds in front of the library.

We are currently working with our new automation system vendor, BookSystems, to set up material, patron, and circulation data parameters in preparation for converting our existing data into a format to be accessible in the new system. The data conversion process should take about a month to complete.

Also, to make room in our overcrowded fiction section we have started a weeding project.

Colin Sanborn has been working on a presentation related to the 100th anniversary of U.S. involvement in WWI. He is using newspaper and other accounts to tell the stories of the Claremonters who went "over there" and did not return.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Grace

City Librarian

Arthur Vidro made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Bill Scala and accepted.

Old/New Business

George asked about the new library computer system and Mike Grace said that he had information on the new specs, but not prepared for the meeting. George Caccavaro asked if he could have the information for the next meeting and Mike Grace said that he would bring them to the August meeting.

Mike Grace suggested tabling the policy plans until the August meeting, and all agreed.

Robert Arcand asked about reapplying for another term when his term expires in September and everyone agreed that he should.

Robert moved to adjourn, seconded by Bill Scala. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.