

**Topsham Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees Business Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 18, 2017**  
**Minutes**

- 1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Larry Fitch, President, at 7:03PM.  
Present: Anne Eustis, Jerry Davis, Irene Martin, Teri Schultz, Joe Trafton, Larissa Vigue Picard, Sally Von Benken, Director Susan Preece. Absent: Jennifer Ecker, Megan Therriault.
- 2) **Consent Agenda.** The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda, which included the Minutes of December 21, 2016 Business Meeting, Development Report, and Friends Report. Teri made a motion to accept the minutes, Anne second, and the motion passed unanimously.
- 3) **Finance Committee Report.** Irene reviewed several reports. The only number that has changed in the **Balance Sheet** is the checking account. The **Comparative Cash Balances** shows the last five years. Business Roundtable numbers are consistently up since that effort began. Negative numbers in 2014 and 2015 are because Minerva had been paid but not all Business Roundtable donations had come in to cover it. In the **Profit & Loss Comparison**, the Town Appropriation line is higher because of payroll increases. Business contribution is up \$7,300 over last year. The report was provided in full detail because December was the end of the quarter. The Finance Committee has reviewed it and there aren't any items out of line. The net income still shows a deficit of \$10,944, which is not as large as at this time last year. At least \$5,000 is income reported in the last fiscal year (Bouchard Family money), but being spent in this fiscal year. The **Budget Progress-Town Appropriation** shows all line items generally on track for being 50% through the fiscal year. Electricity is higher because there were two bills paid during December. The **Budget Progress-Friends** doesn't show much activity. The contribution revenue in **Budget Progress-TPL** is 69% of budget even though we're only 50% into the year.
- 4) **Mariah Sewall—Children's Services.** Mariah spoke to the board about her role in the library. Her programs serve children and families, parents/caregivers, teachers, and a variety of organizations throughout the community. She often helps parents and others to find answers to questions about various issues going on in their lives. While the baby/toddler, and preschool programs will always be popular, she is also focus on programming for elementary and middle-school aged children.

Mariah partners with community organizations and schools. She provides information and serves as a community reader at area schools where she recognizes a lot of students. She also runs a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders "Young Critics" book group. There are 16 kids in the group this year, all very engaged and interested in sharing their opinions.

The library also offers art and science programs, and there will be several over February break. The idea is to offer a wide variety of programming to get families in the door, some of whom wouldn't come otherwise.

Current trends in Youth Services include more diverse titles for young people, including more narrative nonfiction and better early reader chapter books. While some kids use e-readers, plenty still read and enjoy print books. Kids have found other ways to combine multimedia and love of books by making book trailers. Another trend in kids's books is that many come with scannable links to extra online content.

Mariah says it's hard for the library to keep up with demand, both in terms of kids wanting new books and programming filling up. The new parents workshop is full, with six families on the waiting list. There are three storytimes a week, but she could run six and fill those. There is a constant need to strike a balance between what the public needs and wants and how much staff can do.

Mariah mentioned the highly successful Bus Book Bag Program. Bags full of books are on each school bus that drives through Topsham, Bowdoinham, and Harpswell. Kids read to themselves or read to a buddy. This brings the library to kids who can't get to it otherwise. It promotes better behavior on the bus, and social connections. The library is working on grant funding for the program to get more books as they get more wear and tear than normal.

Mariah was asked about evidence that library programs improve readiness for school and meet other needs. She said that there is plenty of anecdotal evidence about literacy improvements and school readiness. The programs also promotes social networking.

5) **Director's Report.** Susan highlighted the following items.

- She noted an additional meeting she had left off her written report: a January 6 meeting with Ken Thorson and Sam Carr to talk about a railroad program.
- Detailed statistics report. Sally asked if Susan could break out specific statistics on children's use of the library. Susan said she would provide that.
- Issues with temperature regulations. On January 13 the library had no heat in the community room and Susan's office. Titan Mechanical arrived at 3PM and finished at 11PM with two trips to Portland for parts. Sensors in the heating unit were not working. Susan noted how impressed she was with their commitment and willingness to work until the job got done.

6) **Old Business:**

- a) **FY18 Municipal Budget Draft.** Susan handed out a corrected version of the draft. Larry, Anne, and Susan met with Selectboard and Finance Committee recently about this draft. The meeting went very well, and there were no major concerns about the budget. All in attendance supports the library and accepted the numbers. They appreciate having more detailed information up front that anticipates questions they might have.
- b) **Prep for Board Development Workshop.** Board members are asked to meet at 5:30PM on Friday at Wild Duck Pub on Friday, and again at 8:30AM on Saturday. Friday includes dinner; board members are invited to bring their own wine/beer. One goal of the retreat is to figure out how to do a better job sharing what the library does well and why it

deserves community support. Susan said facilitator Sue McCleod's advice is to "think outside the box."

7) **New Business:**

- a) **Resignation of Board Member Bruce Kingdon.** Bruce has resigned; he was halfway through the first year of his second term. We now have nine trustees. Jerry and Joe are working on nominations for new candidates on behalf of the Governance Committee.
- 8) **Important Upcoming Events.** January 21 Joy of Art reception. January 27-28 Board Development Workshop, February 3 (4 is snow date) Whitten Event, February 11 Love Your Library.
- 9) **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, February 15, 2017, 7:00PM.
- 10) **Adjournment** at 8:06PM. Anne made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Teri seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Larissa Vigue Picard  
Secretary