

George H. Stowell Free Library Trustee Minutes

March 28, 2024, 5:30 p.m. at the George H. Stowell Free Library

PRESENT: Trustees: Kathi Patterson, Laura Cousineau, Marie De Rusha **Librarian:** Stephanie McAndrew **Citizens:** Alicia Simino, Richard Scheuer

1. Call to order was at 5:30
2. Announcements:
 - a. Result of the recount for Library Trustee were the same as on election day.
 - b. NHLTA conference is scheduled for June 5th, 2024 at 7:45 a.m. at the Grappone Conference Center. All three Trustees plan to attend.
3. Review of agenda for citizens present.
4. Non-public session was called at 5:33 regarding personnel discussion pursuant to State RSA 91-A:3,11(c). Present were Kathi Patterson, Laura Cousineau and Marie De Rusha. It was decided minutes for the non-public session would not be sealed. The trustees were all in agreement that Stephanie's request for an 18 month leave of absence was too long and in the best interest for the Stowell Library we would seek a replacement. The position will become vacant as of April 15th, 2024.
5. Approval of the March 15th minutes was unanimous.
6. Hiring a new Librarian:
 - a. Hours and salary were discussed. Hours will stay the same, the pay will be advertised at \$20 an hour.
 - b. An advertisement for the position will be posted on the Cornish Town website, Upper Valley List Serve, New England Library Association, Vermont Library Association and the New Hampshire State Library website. Stephanie is willing to help the transition until the family departs in May. Applications will be sent directly to Chair, Laura Cousineau, and forwarded to all Trustees. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.
7. Librarian's Report:

There will be a barn dance on Saturday, April 5th at the Town Hall on Townhouse Rd. There have been discussions with St. Gauden's regarding a summer reading program.
8. Old Business:

Referral to the CCI report that was last posted on Connect Cornish and given at Town Meeting was made.
9. New Business:

Kathi wanted to address the comments about lack of transparency and hiding information that she has heard. Marie requested this go under "other business" for the next meeting, felt rumors should not be a part of agenda discussion and believes what Kathi referenced had to do with the CCI not the Trustees. Laura suggested having a meeting specifically to answer any questions the public had that the Trustees could answer.

10. Citizen's Comments:

Alicia asked how much of the \$800,000 was cash in hand and how much was pledged. Not being on the fundraising committee for the CCI Laura did not have that answer and recommended Alicia contact the CCI. Laura explained that the CCI being a non-profit they are not required to be public with their meetings or information. Alicia pointed out although they are not required to have public meetings they made the decision to have private meetings, thereby perpetuating the comments being shared among Cornish residents. Alicia felt without transparency about the process for a library that will eventually be our Town's public Library these comments will continue. Alicia said she is speaking for a lot of people and those people feel unheard and ignored by the lack of public meetings. Marie agreed with Alicia that the CCI holding onto their decision to keep meetings private only helps to divide as people aren't getting the information they feel they deserve. Marie also agreed the rumors will continue as long as those meetings are kept closed to the public. Alicia requested to see the cost estimate for the building restoration and stated that not everyone felt welcome when they came into the library and employees should not be talking about library card status. At the last meeting the Trustees instituted a policy that all Library employees and trustees must read, sign and acknowledge NH Statute 201-D:11. Laura strongly recommended Alicia contact Colleen directly in order to get the answers she is looking for. Kathi explained to Alicia that any reports that have been received by the CCI have been included in the minutes as we receive them.

At this time Marie had to excuse herself from the meeting due to an unexpected situation and Kathi continued with the minutes.

The completion of minutes was received through email and are such:

Kathi added to the above conversation under Citizen's Comments that the Library Trustees, the Board of Selectmen and the architect would have the final say as to whether or not the building donation fit the restrictions of the warrant article and should be accepted or not.

11: Next meeting date is to be determined. Meeting was adjourned at 6:53

Respectfully submitted,
Marie De Rusha
George H. Stowell Free Library Trustee

