

**Derry Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
Paul Collette Meeting Room B  
Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2021**

**Present:** Caitlin Powers (Treasurer), Pete Marcotte, Monica Cataldo (Secretary), Margaret Ives, Lorraine Lindenberg, Rachael Armstrong, Eric Stern (Director).

**Absent:** Elizabeth Greenberg (Acting Chair); Dr. Sarah Taylor (SAU Liaison), Erin Spencer (Town Council DPL Liaison)

Guests: Members of the public

Meeting called to order at 6:30 by Caitlin Powers

**Amendments to agenda:**

- Move correspondence and public comments up to directly after acceptance of minutes because some in attendance want to attend the Taylor Library Board of Trustees Meeting, which starts at 7pm.

**Acceptance of minutes:**

- *Motion to accept the May 17, 2021 public hearing to accept donation minutes by Trustee Marcotte. Seconded by Trustee Cataldo. Motion passed 6-0.*
- *Motion to accept the May 17, 2021 regular BOT meeting minutes by Trustee Marcotte. Seconded by Trustee Lindenberg. Motion passed 6-0.*

**Correspondence:**

- Director Stern reviewed the correspondence received relating to the Taylor Library's scheduled and subsequently cancelled/relocated Drag Story time. 2 emails sent to the Derry Public Library by accident were responded to by Trustee Greenberg – not requiring further Board discussion. 1 letter left by a staff member anonymously on Director Stern's desk, which expressed concern over Trustee Lindenberg's, and State Rep Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien. 1 email sent by State Rep Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien responding to the aforementioned letter. 1 additional email sent to the trustees' email address expressing concerns over potential ethical violations by Trustee Lindenberg.
- Trustee Lindenberg stated that she would like to clear the air. She is saddened by negative comments online stating that she abused her power to push the director to cancel. She was concerned about staff because of the comments online. Taylor Library director Jen Thielker told Lorraine she was going to cancel because it was so divisive she was concerned about the young man running the event. Trustee Lindenberg was relieved because of the comments and name calling. She stated she would love to see a listening session to bring both sides together. She stated she's not a bigot or homophobe. She said she has friends of all persuasions. She was looking forward to meeting the young man and would like to go to the storytime to educate herself. The Taylor Library director Jen Thielker put out a statement that she alone made the decision to schedule the program and she alone cancelled it. Trustee Lindenberg asserted that all the accusations about her are wrong but she was relieved it was cancelled.
- Trustee Powers asked Trustee Lindenberg if she will attend the Drag Story time at the new location. Trustee Lindenberg responded yes she would like to go. Trustee Powers asked Trustee Lindenberg if she thought responding on Facebook as representative of Taylor Library was appropriate and Trustee Lindenberg said she should not have. Trustee Cataldo asked why Trustee Lindenberg was accompanied by someone from outside the library when visiting Taylor and Trustee Lindenberg responded she needed help on the stairs due to knee surgery. Trustee Cataldo stated that her actions appeared political.

- Trustee Ives explained she is not on social media and Trustee Powers explained the context. Director Stern provided Trustee Ives copies of the letters that were at issue.
- Trustee Marcotte asked Trustee Lindenberg if she is familiar with the Trustees Code of Ethics. Trustee Lindenberg responded yes. Trustee Cataldo stated that Trustee Lindenberg mentions being a trustee in her Facebook post and Trustee Marcotte explained that it is difficult to separate your own opinion and your position as a trustee and so he suggested that once one becomes a trustee, they must act as a trustee. Trustee Lindenberg responded that she is new at this and will try to be better.
- Trustee Powers asked if there is other correspondence and should we respond to the letters?
- Trustee Marcotte raised another point that he is concerned about regarding Trustee Lindenberg – she is on two different library boards which creates the appearance of a conflict of interest. The 2 libraries – DPL and Taylor – occasionally compete for employees and budget, and actions at 1 library can impact another. He stated that it is not the best look and he asked Trustee Lindenberg why she is on both boards. Trustee Lindenberg responds that she loves her community and her libraries. She said that she understood his concerns and would take that into consideration.
- Trustee Powers noted that expectations of serving as a library trustee can be out of line with the actual day-to-day responsibilities, and noted the conflict with meeting times of both Boards which Trustee Lindenberg is on. Trustee Marcotte asked Trustee Lindenberg if she has thought of resigning from one. She responds she has thought of it but hasn't decided yet.
- Trustee Cataldo addressed Trustee Lindenberg and said that employees are nervous about her personal leanings on Pride Month. Trustee Cataldo stated the impression on Facebook is that Trustee Lindenberg is not open to Pride principles and may be letting her opinions get in the way of her position.
- Trustee Powers asked Trustee Lindenberg if she has a plan to address the concerns raised in the letters outside of this meeting, or whether this should be addressed formally by the Board. She asked Trustee Lindenberg if she plans to respond formally to the letters. Trustee Cataldo stated that because of backlash, a written response from Trustee Lindenberg seems appropriate. Trustee Lindenberg responded that as a trustee she needs to remain unbiased. As a board we are one vote. We all agree or disagree.
- Trustee Marcotte voiced his concern that we are in the process of receiving a significant donation, and doesn't want that jeopardized because of the possibility that people could perceive the DPL as being intolerant or bigoted.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien asked for letters not to be read publicly because she felt them to be defamatory and libelous. She suggested she could return for nonpublic session in the following month but Trustee Armstrong responded a month was too long to wait. Trustee Powers explained that the Board typically does not read aloud correspondence that it receives between meetings.
- Mark Connors of 5 Cabot Drive responded to Trustee Lindenberg saying: It is sad Trustee Lindenberg has no stake in this game. He would have given her more credit if she owned her actions. Her actions are akin to book burning. Does Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien always help Trustee Lindenberg up stairs when she goes places? Was Trustee Lindenberg aware of Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien's video complaining about pride events? Did Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien come of her own volition? Did the Taylor Director know that Trustee Lindenberg would be showing up with Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien? Did they both know about the topic when they were going there? In the corporate world, Trustee Lindenberg would resign. She made a terrible mistake and should resign both boards. Sensitivity training is needed in Derry. People make mistakes, but Trustee Lindenberg aligned herself with people who have a political agenda. In 2021, if it was a priest going to the Taylor Library it wouldn't be a problem for a man to be in a robe, or Scotsman to be in a kilt, or Donald Trump in makeup and a wig. None of these are a problem. Why was Michael

McMahon a problem? Taylor Library director Jen Thielker showed leadership, and this didn't have to be what it became. It became a problem because two people made it a problem.

- Trustee Ives commented that sensitivity training is a good idea.
- Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien commented that she knew Trustee Lindenberg was going to the library. Then Trustee Lindenberg said she was concerned about stairs, so she met her there. When Director Thielker met her and Trustee Lindenberg, the first thing Ms. Thielker said is that she was cancelling the event. Ms Prudhomme-O'Brien stated she made her opinions known on Facebook. She stated she asked when trustees discussed this at Taylor Library and why is it hard to find information on when their meetings are held? She stated the trustee meetings shouldn't be at the same time both libraries. Very challenging for Trustee Lindenberg but also for the public who may want to attend. Previously, Nashua Public Library had a drag performer speak to children. She opposed it because of what she saw on social media of the performer. Sexual acts in bathroom, pretending to be naked woman or nun.
- Trustee Cataldo asked her if she looked up Michael McMahon? Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien responded that she did and he does not have a social media presence yet and that is a problem as well. He could have worn a miniskirt and could have flashed children. She stated she is not naïve, and she is not biased. Every drag performer is not dangerous but if you were dangerous she feels you could hide as a drag performer. Taylor Library Director Thielker had already made up her mind upon their arrival at the library. Her point was that Director Thielker should work with library trustees before having a controversial program. In her time as a DPL trustee hours were spent talking about purchasing windows in this meeting room. This should also be talked about as well and that is separate from how she feels about drag queens.
- Trustee Powers questioned Trustee Lindenberg on when she went to the Taylor Library. Trustee Lindenberg responded last Tuesday afternoon she went and met with the Taylor Library director Jen Thielker and Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien. Trustee Powers then asked Trustee Lindenberg and Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien if they thought that it was inappropriate to meet with director. Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien responded that she can meet with the director to ask questions if she likes, and any member of the community can also meet with the director if they'd like. Trustee Lindenberg stated that it wasn't a meeting. She just wanted to know if she and staff were OK. It was just a conversation between herself, Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien and Taylor Director Thielker.
- Trustee Marcotte addressed Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien and said that as former trustee, she should know better – it was inappropriate because she probably intimidated the director. Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien said she disagreed and that Taylor Director Jen Thielker may not have realized she should discuss this with her Board of Trustees.
- Trustee Cataldo responded that Taylor Director Thielker likely didn't clear the program with the Trustees due to not knowing it would be so controversial. Trustee Cataldo said she understood why she didn't speak to her Trustees about it, because typically a Director clears no programs with the Trustees. Katherine Prudhomme-O'Brien responded that she disagrees. This was controversial and out of touch with community.
- Sage Plumer, age 21, from New Hampshire Unsilenced Facebook page (used to be uncensored) spoke next. She stated they didn't call anybody. Their group is conservative leaning, but not bigoted. Sage stated she is bisexual and has a daughter. She said we have a duty to protect our children. We have not shown any hate but feel drag queens are adult entertainers and are not for children. Usually see them in clubs. This event was created by a new director – are we not vetting people who want to work with children? Michael McMahon's screenshot said he would be speaking about pride. Why do we suddenly need drag queen to teach our children? This has an agenda and is divisive and not in children's best interest. It is hurting LGBTQ community. Profiling us as predators and sex offenders. Take children to a circus instead of drag show. Some pander to the community just during the month of June. This is a marketing scam from people who want to make money.

- Trustee Lindenberg stated she needs to leave for the Taylor Library trustees meeting now. She stated she would take into consideration everything that was said and will consider resigning from a board. Trustee Ives stated that Trustee Lindenberg knows what she should do, and should resign.
- Mark Vines from 7 Marblehead Road spoke next. He said that he felt that Taylor Director Thielker did everything right at the start. On Friday the Taylor Library closes at 3pm and the Drag Story time was scheduled at 6pm. There was no chance of kids wandering in. This is what should have happened to the threats: the police should have been contacted and a board meeting scheduled. They could have mitigated the security issues and the event could go on. He works with a Boy Scout group and has the same priorities: they need to be safe and funded.
- Meryle Zusman, former DPL employee and current alternate to the Board, commented that the public doesn't understand that DPL wasn't responsible for any of this – this all occurred at a separate library, Taylor. Per a quote read from social media, the Autism Support group will no longer meet here due to blaming DPL. People don't know how the library is funded and feel the libraries are the same. Ms. Zusman stated that Trustee Lindenberg has a conflict of interest serving on both boards. As a former staff member she knows how much trustees do and how much time it takes. She stated that it is her belief that someone can't serve each library fairly by serving on both boards. Both libraries are vying for same amount of money from the town. She questioned if there is some way to make Trustee Lindenberg choose a board. She says staff have always appreciated the Board of Trustees and she hopes we can clear our name in the town. She feels that Trustee Lindenberg and Ms. Prudhomme-O'Brien made this a media issue on purpose.
- Mark Vines suggested a public censure of Lorraine by the DPL Board of Trustees.
- Trustee Ives suggested the library could have a sign saying all are welcome.
- Trustee Powers stated that the Board must act together, and it is clear that all other Board members felt that Trustee Lindenberg's actions were wrong. She felt there is more action to be taken as a board. The Board needs to collect more information to pursue what avenues are available, and then meet again soon. Trustee Powers stated that individuals have their own opinions but in acting as a Trustee must uphold the values of Libraries and comply with applicable laws and codes of conduct. We don't selectively target programs to suppress or cancel. There is no requirement that directors pre-clear programs with Trustees.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Trustee Powers presented the Treasurer's Report which was reviewed by the board.

- General Fund FY21 (as of June 4, 2021) has expended 84.7% of the budget (11 months is 91.7% through the year with 8.3% remaining).
- Trustee Powers commented that this is the last month of fiscal year. We are operating efficiently with a favorable surplus. Without being sure of the exact amount, Trustee Powers gives an example that 5% of budget leftover would be about \$75k.
- Professional services – annually some subscriptions are paid in July, including GMILCS.
- Materials – all in approved budget is 120k (79,317 from General and 40,683 from Special) the way the General Funds Expense is trending, it might absorb all or most of the materials spent.
- Trustee Cataldo asked about the revenue line refund. Trustee Powers explained that it is the refund of short term disability claims. She gives this bottom line picture because it is end of the fiscal year.
- Trustee Powers brought up how they talked last meeting about surplus, that they will either encumber the funds or move to capital reserve. Director Stern explains if we are encumbering funds, we will be using purchase orders. Unspent, unencumbered funds will be moved into capital reserve at the end of the fiscal year. He will inquire with Town CFO Mark Fleischer about the timeframe on projects that use encumbered funds.

- Trustee Marcotte asked about receiving donations for some of the same items in question. Director Stern explained the donation would go to the fine account. The patio expenses will be paid from the fine account.
- Trustee Powers stated that the year-end will have an auditing process. Some reports aren't available to her yet. She will do an end of year report next month but it won't be final until the audit.

### **Director's Report**

- Director Stern presented the Director's Report which was reviewed by the Board.
  - Director Stern points out a typo on page 3 that the library opens at 9:30 and not 8:30. Trustee Armstrong asked when the new hours start and it was agreed that it could begin immediately.
  - Victoria Austin and Meryle Zusman have been approved as alternates, with start dates of 5/18. They will serve until the next election in March 2022.
  - Trustee Armstrong commented that it is great news about poetry contest and Trustee Powers asked to be sent the winners of poetry contest.

### **Gifts**

- The Derry Medical Center Charitable Foundation sent a gift of \$1,000. Director Stern will send info to Trustee Cataldo to write a thank you card.
- Check of \$19,359.18 was received from the William Carlisle estate. Trustee Cataldo responds that she could send more of a formal letter instead of a thank you note and Director Stern clarified that it will go to the executor.
- Director Stern shared that there has been more correspondence with prospective donor Beth Kasser. It would go to the patio, front repairs, and digital sign. He explains that the plan is for the sign to be on the park side of the library and that town departments will be given an opportunity to comment on the location and appearance.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Approval of temporary, part-time summer page posting/hire
  - Director Stern asked for approval of a temporary, part-time summer page posting and hire. Interviewing has not begun yet. The position will start in July and be 11 hours a week. Trustee Powers explained we are budgeted for two, and currently have zero.

*A motion to approve the page position posting and hire made by Trustee Marcotte. Seconded by Trustee Armstrong. Motion passed 5-0.*

- Discuss Friends of the Derry Libraries resuming in-library book sales
  - Director Stern talked about resuming book sales and the question of insurance which is an issue for the Friends. Trustee Powers asked him to remind the Board of the insurance and book sale issue. Director Stern explained it is \$386/year for insurance. It was canceled at the beginning of last summer. The Friends went many years without insurance but the town and Primex (our insurer) felt it was a necessary addition. DPL wanted to pay for it but legal advice said we could not and the Friends finally bought the insurance. It usually takes a large percentage of their sales.
  - Trustee Powers asked if the proceeds go to both libraries and Trustee Marcotte explained they do and it has been that way many years. He feels they serve a valuable purpose.
- Discuss "hybrid" Board of Trustees meetings and whether to amend BOT bylaws to accommodate these in the future

- Director Stern explained that this would allow for members to attend remotely (Zoom) when there is a physical location for in-person attendance, and an in-person quorum – 4 Board members – of the Board. Director Stern confirmed they could still vote remotely, however.

*A motion was made by Trustee Cataldo to amend bylaws. Seconded by Trustee Ives. Motion passed 5-0.*

- Selection of officers and committee members (tabled from last meeting)
  - Trustee Powers asks to move this to July when more Board members will be present.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Continued FY22 Fine Account/Special Fund Budget discussion
  - Trustee Powers noted this was covered in the Treasurer’s Report.
- Vote on implementation of auto-renew for regular circulating (3-week) materials
  - Director Stern asked for a vote. He explained this is good for patrons, promotes good customer service. Jessica Delangie, Head of Technical Services, recommends auto renew for all items except telescope, ukulele, and metal detectors. It will not auto renew if there is a hold. DVDs will auto renew 1 week. Trustee Marcotte asked if this is to be in sync with GMILCS? Director Stern responded that is partially true, but mostly for good customer service. We will still be following other GMILCS libraries’ individual policies for books that we borrow from them.

*Motion to implement a single auto renew for all items except ukulele, telescope, metal detector, made by Trustee Cataldo. Seconded by Trustee Ives. Motion passed 5-0.*

- Update on ARPA Grant application
  - Director Stern reported that he and assistant Shannon May submitted the American Rescue Plan Act grant on Friday, June 11. The grant money was requested for a meeting owl, poster art for three programs and door closers that were recently installed. We expect it to be approved because it is not competitive.
- Update on library services and hours in Stage 6 of Pandemic Service Plan; Discuss evolving mask rules & hours of operation; when to move to State 7
  - For mask usage, Director Stern suggested policy to say for the public: if vaccinated, no need to wear a mask. Unvaccinated visitors please wear a mask. Trustee Marcotte asked if it would be the honor system. Director Stern agreed. Director Stern suggested masks optional for staff, starting the following week. The Board agreed. Trustee Marcotte asked what would be done if things start to go bad again in the fall? Director Stern explained in the pandemic plan DPL could re-implement mask policy, and we could go back to earlier stages. Trustee Powers was supportive and said we should continue following the data.
  - Director Stern asked for the Board’s blessing to update the Pandemic Service Plan without formal Board approval at a meeting, and the Board said that he could do so, as it is procedure, not policy.
  - Director Stern questioned when we would be back to 100% services. He and the Board would like the goal of next month’s meeting if numbers continue to justify it.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to adjourn by Trustee Marcotte. Seconded by Trustee Cataldo. Motion passed 5-0.*

- Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

**Next meeting is Monday, June 28, 2021 at 6:30pm (In-person location at DPL to be determined)**

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Shannon May.*