

Town of Glastonbury  
Welles-Turner Memorial Library Board  
Monday, June 12, 2023  
Minutes

A meeting of the Welles-Turner Memorial Library Board was held on Monday, June 12, 2023, in the Glastonbury Room. A virtual attendance option was available.

Meeting officially called to order at 6:12 p.m. A quorum was present at that time.

**1. Roll Call**

Present Board Members: Susan Pearlman (Chair), Jennifer Hudner, Ellen Saunig, Rosemary Coggeshall

Other Attendees: Amy McCue (Library Director), Donald Kray (Friends of the Library), Andrea Barton (Poet Laureate)

**2. Next Meeting**

September 11, 2023

The meeting attendees discussed having a special meeting on Monday, August 14, 2023 to discuss some policies as well as help acclimate new Board members. Chair Pearlman officially called a special meeting for August 14, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Amy McCue suggested having a packet of information to provide to new Board members about their role as a Board member, give a tour of the library, etc. The Board supported this suggestion.

**3. Public Comment**

None.

**4. Acceptance of Prior Meeting's Minutes**

The May 2023 minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

**5. Liaison Reports**

Friends of the Library (Donald Kray):

- The Friends book sale on May 13 made \$16,110.25. As of June 1, Friends has started collecting books for the September 9, 2023 sale. They will be collecting for three months. Friends also reviews the books that were left over from the last sale to determine if they want to attempt to sell them again. Also, there will be some price reviews for higher-priced books.

- Compared to prior years' numbers, overall, the number is lower than in the past. The book stop in the last year (over about 14 months) has made about \$7k. Between the two book sales + book stop the Friends has made around \$36k. \$40-50k a year was typical before the pandemic.
- Friends is continuing to sell at the book stop which has been successful. However, the issue with potentially adding another book stop is that it's difficult to staff. Additionally, typically sell newer books there which may detract from the book sale.
- Don Kray will consider sending another letter to the editor about collecting books again.
- Per Amy, in other towns there are sponsors who will donate money to have their name around the book sale.
- Friends are discussing an author event for local authors to come together and sell their books.
- Don Kray suggested a change to the "fines and fees" of the library to adjust the language for the Friends from just "become a member" to donate *or* become a member.
- Chair Pearlman expressed her gratitude for the Friends and all they do for the Library.

Second Century Fund (no liaison was able to attend the meeting):

- No official report. Second Century is meeting next month.

## **6. Library Director's Report**

Prior to the meeting, the Library Director circulated a report to the Board. The Library Director highlighted several items from the report.

- The new "Library Calendar" on the website just went live this past week. Increased readability. Made things better on the back end as well as improved the patron experience.
- The Library was gifted a telescope that we'll be able to lend to the public. Currently working on the cataloguing it. Staff attended telescope training. Also discussing doing a program with the Astronomical Society of Greater Hartford.
- The Library set up a welcome e-mail for all new library card holders. This is offered through our consortium. Everyone who registers for a new library card and provides an e-mail address will receive an e-mail with information about the

library's offerings. With respect to existing card holders, we send a copy of our digital newsletter. Once a month we highlight as least one of our digital resources. E-newsletter readership has jumped by 1000% which is very exciting.

- One of the Librarians had been working on a Creative Aging in Connecticut Program Grant. We were not ultimately selected. However, it was a very positive experience for the Librarian to get to know staff from different town departments/commissions and it's something to build on in the future.
- The Library Director attended two strategic planning workshops. One of them mentioned a consortium consultant share. We would work with other libraries so we wouldn't have to pay the entire cost of a consultant. There is discussion about doing another cohort in Spring 2024 so we will discuss as we get closer to that time.
- Library attendance was down a bit in May, which was expected due to the weather.
- Summer reading is live today!
- In May we held a reception for featured artist. There were about 17 people who attended. It was a small but engaged group.
- The Library Director contracted our next featured artist, Jean Dalton, to discuss a plan for installing her show. Part of the Library's policy is that the staff does not help hang the art. There are a few artists lined up for our display case for September & October and November & December. The Library is searching for an artist with oceanic theme for the next few months.
- In May, the Library hosted 1,765 people at in-person, hybrid, and virtual programs. Megan, the teen librarian, visited local schools to discuss summer reading. We received fantastic feedback from the kids. Lots of excitement is being generated about the program. We are in the process of decorating not just the children's section but the teen and adult. We want everyone to join the surf club!
- May circulation was 25,276. Last year at this time we were around 21,000. Digital circulation was great. We were able to increase the number of circulations available in Hoopla. Nearing the end of the fiscal year we are working on increasing our digital purchases.
- E-book legislation was brought to the floor of the CT General Assembly on the last night of session. However, there was a motion for an amendment that was not relevant to e-books. Ultimately, it was tabled. Hopefully it will be back up next year. In the meantime, another bill passed – SB 2 – aimed toward children's mental health, which requires libraries to have a "reconsideration policy" in place

that cannot be vetoed by town council. This means we have a process in place that we follow to make sure that people can have access to what they want. Takes politics out of the process. As long as we have a policy in place for the library board to the final decision maker and not town council, we can get state funding. Allows us to make sure our collection is strong/diverse. This funding has been restored for the first time since 2015.

- Currently, reconsideration goes to library director. If patron is unhappy with the answer, then it goes to the Library Board for a final decision.
- We've been tracking our "engagements." It's not a measure of computer or database usage. Things like – our e-newsletter (how many people open it?) our instruction videos (how many people watch to learn how to use the databases?) Wowbrary book recommendations (how many people viewed the recs and borrowed books?). The Library Director will report back on trends. We currently pay for this information so we want to find out if certain things are being used, what the public wants, to look at how the usage and the expenses balance. Board members commented that this is a very valuable tool to have.
- Don Kray asked about purchasing as we get close to the end of the year. Per the Library Director, we have not reduced any physical offerings. We did have some cost savings that we were able to put toward digital offerings. Spent \$5-6k on additional digital offerings, for instance, on Overdrive where there is long "lines." There will likely be a quick purchase for e-books at the end of the month depending on whether physical books are delivered before the end of the fiscal year.
- There was a wonderful STEAM volunteer in the Makerspace. We will encourage her to volunteer as long as she's interested. We are also vetting other potential volunteers for the Makerspace.
- Fiber Arts Club is starting in the next month or two. Sewing machines are not fully set up yet.

## **7. Poet Laureate Report (Andrea Barton)**

- A very busy April. Poetry class came to the library and wrote poems in response to the photography exhibit. Project was overall successful. Kids did a good job writing under the circumstances. It was a difficult task.
- Poetry banners have been going up around town.
- Recently held a poetry reading at the South Glastonbury library. No Glastonbury students participated but some of Andrea's students from RHAM participated. It

was very well-attended. Could potentially hold something similar at the WTML as well.

- Evening of Rhyme and Rhetoric – discussion about moving to the Library which is a really exciting prospect. This would not be until next May 2024.
- In Fall 2023, will be hosting a few workshops with the teen program coordinator at the library with a special kind of black out poetry.
- Jennifer Hudner thanked Andrea for all she does. Banners should be up in some of the parks such as Riverfront and near the fountain by the end of the week.
- Andrea commented that would be nice to send information to Peter Marteka at *Glastonbury Life* for some press about the banners.

## 8. Old Business

### Bylaw changes

Prior to the meeting, a copy of the amended bylaws was circulated to the Board.

- Don Kray identified a few corrections. Section 5.1 – change to “of” and Section 7.1 “an” should be “any.”
- Rosemary Coggeshall suggested adding an adoption history in place of “change date” at the bottom of the last page. The Board discussed the wording/style of the adoption history and agreed on a format. Rose further commented that the bylaws are direct and easy to read.

**Jennifer Hudner moved to accept the amended bylaws with the above corrections. Rosemary Coggeshall seconded. The bylaws were adopted unanimously.**

### Library Behavior Policy

Prior to the meeting, the Library Director circulated the new Library Behavior Policy via e-mail.

- There are slight changes to the existing food policy. Now we allow it in designated areas, not entirely prohibited.
- There are also changes to the language about loitering, since we actually want people to loiter (within reason) at the Library!
- Removed the section on photographs with the anticipation that there will be separate photograph policy.

- Safety of children and unattended children section added.
- Jennifer Hudner compared to previous and found the new proposal much more positive. Liked this version.
- There was some discussion about the use of the teen room. The Library Director commented that while others are welcome to use the teen room if it's empty, we have a policy in place in the event we need to enforce its use to teens only.
- Rose Coggeshall asked about the policy regarding sleeping in the library and how it's enforced. Sleeping in libraries has become a serious issue in other parts of the country due to homelessness. Per Library Director, for all policies, staff is the primary enforcement of the rules. They will call a supervisor if they need backup and the town police is the third resource if necessary. The goal is to not go around patrolling, but we have a policy in place in case it becomes an issue. The core barometer is whether the behavior is preventing other people from being able to use the library to their enjoyment or unsafe behavior.
- Don Kray recommending changing "Customer Behavior Policy" to "Library Behavior Policy" on page 1.
- Adoption History will be added to the bottom of the policy.

**Motion: Ellen Saunig moved to adopt the new Library Behavior Policy and Rosemary Coggeshall seconded the motion. Jennifer Hudner moved to rescind the prior Customer Behavior Policy and replace it with the new library behavior policy as drafted. Rosemary Coggeshall seconded. Adopted unanimously.**

#### Fine Free Library

- Prior to the meeting, Library Director circulated information regarding becoming a fine free library. In other words, we would no longer charge punitive fines for overdue books. This does not mean "responsibility free" We encourage people to be responsible and bring things back.
- We are in the small minority of towns in Connecticut that is not "fine free."
- The American Library Association put out an official resolution in 2019 to encourage libraries to move toward this philosophy to make it more equitable for more people in the community. Allows us to eliminate one of those barriers. This does not mean they won't have to pay for lost materials. Change would also not lengthen the amount of time someone would have to wait on a "hold."

**After some discussion, the Board unanimously expressed support to become a fine free library. Don Kray indicated that the Friends also support the initiative. The Library Director will bring the recommendation to the Town Manager.**

## **9. New Business**

None.

## **10. Correspondence**

We received a thank you note from Barbara Bailey for her retirement gift.

We also received correspondence about whether we want a membership from the ACLB. However, Chair Pearlman commented that it makes more sense to join in January rather than in the middle of the year.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen D. Saunig