

Ashleigh Blake:

You're ready.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Thanks. So this is Mariya Hurwitz, the president of the Sherman Library Association Board of Trustees. It is March 8th, at 5:02 PM. This is our monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees. I'd like to call the meeting to order at 5:02. May I have you... Oh, Laura, I need to hand it off to you.

Laura Jagodzinski:

That's okay. Could I have two people to review this meeting's minutes?

Barbara Ireland:

Barbara will.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Okay. I got Barb and Dee. Thank you very much. I would like to motion to approve the minutes from February 8th. Is there a second?

Irit Granger:

I second.

Laura Jagodzinski:

All in favor? Henry, I can't see you. Thank you. All right, so moved. Back to you, Mariya.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay, Ashleigh, we're going to go into executive session now.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay, this is Mariya Hurwitz. We have exited executive session. We are back in a recorded session public Sherman Library Association board meeting. It is 6:04 PM. I would like to make a motion that the strategic plan dated 2020 to 2025, the draft that we just reviewed, be adopted in its current state.

Irit Granger:

I second the motion

Laura Jagodzinski:

All in favor?

Irit Granger:

Aye

Barbara Ireland:

Aye.

Henry Cooperman:

Aye.

Laura Jagodzinski:

So approved. All in favor.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Great. Okay. Thank you everybody. I am going to turn it over to Ashleigh for the director's report.

Ashleigh Blake:

Great. Thanks Mariya. So you all received my report. On the first page of documents about the programs we're doing. We are very busy with programs. Of course, they're all currently on Zoom still, due to COVID, but they're well attended and people are enjoying them. The annual budget is on the second page and, as you know, it was presented at the board of selectmen town meeting or a budget meeting on February 24th. The board of selectmen didn't seem to have any issues with it, which is great, and so we proceed. Thank you to the trustees who were able to join us. It does make a difference to have you there. Tonight and Wednesday night, they are working on a workshop. So if you'd like to jump on, it's on the town website. Other than that, I think it's pretty straightforward. Does anyone have any questions about the director's report?

Mariya Hurwitz:

Thank you.

Ashleigh Blake:

The stats are pretty much there too. We do see usually a dipping of circulation in the winter months. We are up from December and, as you can see, our programming is robust and everything else. So I don't know, does anyone have any questions about the stats?

Laura Jagodzinski:

Ashleigh, I have a question. On the borrow IT New York State, ILL borrow and ILL lend, is that all related to interlibrary stats?

Ashleigh Blake:

Okay. Our interlibrary ILL borrow and ILL lend are the ones that we get back and forth and borrow from other libraries. The borrowing is actually tracking other people in the Connecticut library system using their cards at our library. That's when we get people from New Fairfield or New Milford coming to Sherman, or in this case calling in to order books Doorside. We have a couple of patrons who are from New York state too. That tracks basically people from other libraries coming to our library while the ILL is actually us physically getting books in or sending books out from our library for our patrons.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Okay. So, understood. Thanks.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Sure. Irit, do you have a question?

Irit Granger:

Well, I don't know. I wanted to just ask in terms of hours open, do we anticipate opening this month?

Ashleigh Blake:

Well, we have a group of people who are going to meet to discuss that. Right now, we have one staff member who's been vaccinated and no one else, so we do have to consider that as a factor. It will certainly be discussed what is going on as far as the state and no loosening of rules and how to do it safely. When we do, we'll phase back into where we were before we close to the public around Thanksgiving. So I think we do have to consider while some people it's really great, I'm super happy that people have been able to get vaccines, it's still 19% of Connecticut residents. So we do have, like I said, staff who haven't been vaccinated and we do have patrons, obviously, who come in, so we have to weigh that and consider it. I think we'll probably be getting back to board members later in the month with that information.

Irit Granger:

Okay.

Barbara Ireland:

Ashleigh, what is borrow IT?

Ashleigh Blake:

That was what Laura was just asking. Say you belong to the Bethel Library and you had a Bethel Library card, but you came to the Sherman Library and took out books here, that's when we track that. It's basically people coming in from other towns to use our library versus ILL would be someone in the Bethel Library requesting a book that we had that we send out. It's very complicated.

Barbara Ireland:

Thank you again. I certainly [inaudible 00:05:04] the first question.

Ashleigh Blake:

Yeah. I remember when I first started doing the stats, it was hard to tease out some of the differences, but that's what the difference is between them.

Henry Cooperman:

Ashleigh, I have a question. The fines seem to have doubled. Are you seeing a problem because of the curb side?

Ashleigh Blake:

We're seeing some books being damaged. So, someone spills a cup of coffee on a book and then they have to pay for a new one, that money that they pay for that new book is put into our fines. This is where it goes in.

Henry Cooperman:

So is that \$109 or is it 109 incidents?

Ashleigh Blake:

It's dollars. I'm sorry. I can switch that to maybe have a dollar sign in front of it so that it's clearer and the other numbers are not dollars. I will start adding a dollar sign in front of that. It's \$109. As you know, we stopped doing fines on DVDs. We have been fine free on our books for a while now, and we decided to make that step as well with DVDs. It seems to be okay. But if somebody does lose a book or abuses a book, they do have to pay to replace it. We're not completely exempt of people possibly mistreating our books and most of the time it's purely an accident. A book gets dropped in a puddle, a cup of coffee, that kind of thing.

Barbara Ireland:

The dog ate it.

Ashleigh Blake:

We recently had a dog eating a book.

Henry Cooperman:

I thought dogs only ate homework.

Dee Ratterree:

They love books too.

Ashleigh Blake:

They have a taste for library books too.

Dee Ratterree:

Hide your early Dr. Seuss's as well because they're being sold on eBay for millions.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay. Ashleigh, did you have anything else after stats?

Ashleigh Blake:

Nope.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay. I'm going to turn it over to Laura for the secretary's report.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Just a short update, I'm going to be updating the compliance procedures so we can forward emails with any compliance related items to Ro. And I've also found some opportunities to clarify some items and the procedures for the committees on notices, agendas and minutes on my to-do list, that's all I have.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Thank you. Interim treasurer, Henry.

Henry Cooperman:

So I think everybody has a copy of the financials along with my highlights of the treasury's report. The current year revenue through January, 2021, is up \$19,000, which represents an 8.4% increase over the last year. \$68,000 comes from an increase in the grants that are received. Expenses are down \$13,949 and comparing our results fiscal year to date against our budget total income, is \$62,000 over the budget, mostly relating to the timing of how we receive funds and expenses were down \$6,100 as projected in the budget.

Henry Cooperman:

Great. And Ashleigh, this is just through January. So through February and to date, no funds withdrawn from Vanguard?

Henry Cooperman:

Thank you.

Ashleigh Blake:

Not at this time.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Excellent. Any questions for Henry? Great. I'm going to go back to you, Henry, for investment and nominating.

Henry Cooperman:

Sure. So the investment committee pleased to report that the balance of the investment account at the end of February was \$1,022,889. I'm pleased to share that, as of today, it was \$1,050,000. So the increase in February was \$30,000, which was over January, which represented a 3% increase and was up from \$1,005,000 at the end of December. Year to date, not including today but through the first two months, we represented a 1.6% increase over the calendar year. We are comfortable with that portfolio, which is well balanced, that has over 150,000 in cash and cash equivalents. Year to date income was \$5,636,49 for the calendar year. Any questions on the investment committee report? I'll go to the nominating committee. Before today, the committee had not received any new referrals for the office of treasurer this month and we'll continue our search. We have one opening and then one pending opening in October.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay. Thank you.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Henry?

Mariya Hurwitz:

Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Yes?

Laura Jagodzinski:

That's okay. Do you want to mention in your new committee member?

Henry Cooperman:

Oh yeah. I'm pleased to share that Jennifer Laviano has joined our nominating committee. So thank you, Jennifer, for raising your hand.

Jennifer:

Thank you.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Great. Okay. Irit, membership committee.

Irit Granger:

Fundraising.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Fundraising. Oops, they're flipped. Sorry.

Irit Granger:

That's okay. Is fundraising next?

Mariya Hurwitz:

Go ahead, fundraising. That's good.

Irit Granger:

So, because of the pandemic, obviously we've had to cancel the Women's Soiree and the Duck Fest, for this fiscal year. The committee has been meeting and we've been focusing on strategies for the next fiscal year and we're in a good shape because we had support from the PPP and other grants, which satisfied our fundraising goals. So we're not behind despite the current pandemic. The golf outing is still on and is scheduled for Monday, July 12th, at a new venue, which is Hollow Brook in Cortlandt Manor. Lauren and Al Kenny are co-chairs, once again, and they will lead the planning and logistics to include the pricing and promotions to attract early sales. We're trying to beef up this event, give it a little bit more pop than we had time to do last year. There will be sponsors for holes and prizes, tickets sales, hole in one prize. Sounds like a great day actually, but Lauren and Al are going to need help from the entire board to help solicit whole sponsors and also participants to the event.

Irit Granger:

So more on that to come. We've also had a consensus to hold a book sale instead of Memorial Day weekend because of the pandemic to push it to Labor Day weekend, all things being well by then. We're hopeful that the historical society will still have their bond sale to coordinate with them. But even if not, we were thinking of going ahead.

Irit Granger:

In addition to the book sale, we're going to hold a tag sale, which we're calling Bags and Baubles to help raise more money. We have Laura, who's organizing all the merchandise for that from past events that we couldn't hold this year. What else? Ashleigh is going to reach out to Pat Corrigan about the book sale to just make sure of the date, and Dee and hopefully Barb will co-chair the Bags and Baubles event, which will be wonderful and we'll present it to the board once we have a clear idea of our plans. We're still looking at some other fundraising streams as well, as some of them new and exciting. Some of them just a one-off to help perhaps raise money for a capital improvements of the building. More on that to come. Any questions on that? Nope? Good.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Thank you. John, membership.

John Ehrenreich:

Okay. We've been working on a membership appeal envelope, and I think at this point we have a final draft, although we won't be sure of that until I guess our next meeting. A lot of the work had to do with clarifying the membership levels and they're now all named after Connecticut associated authors. We also tried to address the issue related to the bylaws of what a member is in terms of if somebody makes a contribution that covers more than one person, how to make sure that that's indicated on the envelope. We've also been working on the Thank You letter to go out to people who've given money, and there's some minor wording changes to that, still to come, which we'll be dealing with at the next meeting. And then larger task, the others are close to done, but at the next meeting, we'll be discussing drafting a Welcome to the Library out letter for new members, including both new and existing residents of Sherman.

Mariya Hurwitz:

That's great. A lot of good work.

Rosemarie D'Ostilio:

Yeah, those are good ideas. I like that adding onto the welcome letter or doing the welcome letter, and adding onto it.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Any questions for John? So that's it for our committee reports, I'm moving on to unfinished business. Ro, Can we get an update on the annual acknowledgements of the conflict and whistleblower?

Rosemarie D'Ostilio:

Sorry. This is Rosemarie D'Ostilio. all trustees and staff have acknowledged receipt and understanding of the whistleblower and conflict of interest policies. There's no disclosures of actual or potential conflict of interest with the library.

Mariya Hurwitz:

That's it? Perfect. Thank you everybody for taking care of that. Ashleigh, website update.

Ashleigh Blake:

Yes. We are almost there. It is pretty much 95% done. I met with the advisory group last week and we went through it and tweaked a couple of things. So we're hoping to be able to unveil it either next Monday or the Monday after. Marie is working on coordinating with Bibliomation on shifting over the domain from our current Dreamweaver site to the new one. I can't stress enough what a great job that Marie has done.

Ashleigh Blake:

She's volunteered her time. It saved the library a lot of money and I'm most appreciative, and I like to find a way to really thank her. I do plan on doing a press release on the unveiling of the website, followed up by lots of PR on all the different aspects and things that you can find on the new website. In addition to that, speaking to Marie's involvement as well, so that she knows that she's very appreciated and credit's given. A lot of work has gone into this, but I'm very excited about it because we have a lot of new aspects in there too. So you will be updated on its progress as to when it will go live. I think that's about it, for now. Any questions?

Elly Bockley:

No, but I have a comment. I think we should do something for her. She's done so much work on that website and it wasn't insignificant. I don't know if we want to give her a gift of some kind, we can donate or something, but she really should get something for all that work.

Ashleigh Blake:

No, definitely. I can speak to her husband to get a little intel on what she likes and, but she said too, that she's really enjoyed it. She's really enjoyed working with me on it and expanding her knowledge in it and everything. So it's nice that she's been pleased with the process too. She's a wonderful person and a lovely lady, so I'm glad that it's been positive for everyone and, of course, the community will be the biggest beneficiary of it when they get to see it and its ease of use. It will make many things much easier for the staff, the community. It's a really nice reflection on the library too.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Yeah, once you get an idea, maybe from her husband, of some ideas, then shoot me an email and I can coordinate with the group of us and come up with a plan, but we should do something to say thank you for sure.

Ashleigh Blake:

Certainly. And, like I said, too, in the press release so that people out and about know her contribution as well.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Yeah. I'm very excited to see it. COVID update, Ashleigh.

Ashleigh Blake:

So we touched on that a little bit before when Irit had asked about the reopening of the library. I will be meeting with a couple of advisory members later this week to discuss the current status in the state of Connecticut and our neighboring area, positivity rates, other libraries being open, vaccine status, all the different aspects that weave into it so that we can discuss how to proceed. We will definitely be in touch with the board as to what direction we are going to take with the reopening of the library or the timeline, I should say. We're definitely reopening, at some point, to the public. That's not an option, but the timeline when it will happen. And I would like to also, this is being stressed a lot in area libraries and discussions that the library is not closed. Public cannot come into the building right now, but it's certainly not closed.

Ashleigh Blake:

Staff has been working full hours and beyond, and people have been able to get the resources they need through Doortside. The remote programming has been above and beyond to compensate for people not being able to physically get into the building. It's a point of pride with the staff and other libraries too, that we've all been working very hard behind the scenes to make things work in a very difficult time and we're eager to open the doors to the public again. We'd love for it to return to normal where we didn't have to check people in and people just walked in and stayed for hours and everything. That's the ultimate goal, but we just want to make sure we do it safely. Any questions? No?

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay. So that was the last item on our agenda. I think we covered everything. I didn't miss anything. Did I, Laura?

Laura Jagodzinski:

Nope.

Mariya Hurwitz:

Okay. So it is 6:25 PM. We were very efficient with our time and I'd like to make a motion to adjourn the meeting. Wait, did I say the right word? Adjourn, yes. Okay.

Laura Jagodzinski:

Everybody in favor?

Dee Ratterree:

Aye.

Henry Cooperman:

Aye.

Mariya Hurwitz:

All approved. Okay.