

GREENWICH FREE LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JANUARY 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Regular Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

7:00 pm

Community Room

Attendees: Patrice Abate, Mary Ann Spiezio, Ellen Fronhofer, Christine Richards, Teri Pendergrass, Aaron Northrup, Sarah Murphy (Library Director), Sandy McReynolds (Library Employee), Lisa Hayes (Architect), Kathy Rapp (Friends Group and Community Member)

1. Call to order 7:04 pm
2. Board Action Items
 - a. Approval of proposed December 2024 Minutes (separate document)
Ellen made a motion to approve the revised December meeting minutes. Christine seconds. Board approved.
3. Board Committee Reports

- a. Facilities Committee (Aaron, Paul, Teri) – Sarah asked John Hartnett if he was interested in being our Clerk of the Works for the upcoming renovation of the Community Room. He is thinking about it. Sarah will ask Mitch Throop if John declines. Lisa Hayes clarified that John is not able to direct construction and he would have to reach out to Lisa if there are any issues. Carpet has been selected. The kitchen floor will be vinyl. We have decided to go with the same cabinets used downstairs. We have the specification and we can get them locally. While they are specified in the project documents, the contractor can propose an equivalent. We would then review their selection and determine whether or not we feel it is equivalent.

Aaron reached out to a friend who has AV experience about the projector. He also looked at some pricing and systems can be as expensive as \$10,000. Lisa said that SALS and the Mohawk Valley Library System have a joint automation committee that can advise us on AV needs as well. Sarah said that our current system technically still works, but the way it was wired creates some complications when hooking a laptop to it. We either need a new screen or have to figure out if the old one can be remounted. We could install a screen behind the soffit that is in our design and Lisa stated that during the renovations the contractor can move the connection to the laptop to where the door currently is as that is going to be removed anyway. Lisa will make sure that this in the electrical drawings. There could possibly be lighting recessed in the soffit as well. Ellen suggested that we come out further with the soffit so that it is easier to work within it. If it is too narrow it will create issues down the road if we have to repair or change the screen mount.

We have quotes from Access Furniture for furniture as well. The entire room will be painted. We will have to select a paint color after the carpet. Lisa has a sample of the wood-like acoustic planks that she will share with us.

Tony Jordan has reviewed the construction documents. Lisa said that the engineers want to do one more walk through of the library with their drawings. Lisa asked about alternates, thinks that we could hold off on if there is not enough money to cover everything we want done. We agreed that the plank ceiling can be on this list and we could perhaps do the windows later. This would allow us to get individual pricing for these items. Movable storage benches could also be done later. Lisa can also pull in the basement work as an alternate. This is part of the 24-25 grant application that we have not been awarded yet. We feel the odds of getting this \$75k for the downstairs renovations are pretty good.

Lisa needs to update the timeline and put that in the documents. She has to wait to see where the engineers are in order to figure out when the work is going to start. We need to have this work done by June 30th per the grant. If not, then we would have to file for an extension. Sarah is going to reach out to her contact about getting an extension. The room will be closed for 3-4 weeks during actual construction.

The odor in the basement has been better. There is a hidden drain in the middle furnace room that was most likely causing the issue as it dried out. We are trying to make sure it gets more water so it doesn't dry out again.

- b. Finance & Fundraising Committee (Mary Ann, Patrice, Paul) – We have to put in our number for the school ballot for 2026. \$164,008 is our number. This represents an increase of 2.6%. Teri made a motion to request an increase to \$164,008. Aaron seconds. Board approved. Our number was \$159,738 for 2025. We will plan to send out our annual appeal letter in late April or May.
 - c. Material Review Committee (Cliff, Patrice, Paul) – No report
 - d. Policy & Audit Committee (Mary Ann, Patrice, Paul) – We are going to make a concerted effort to review the Library policies over this coming year. Sarah mentioned that the room use, code of conduct, and internet policies were all revised in 2024, so these should be good. Patrice suggested that we start with emergency preparedness policies such as active shooter.
 - e. Board Recruitment (Cliff, Patrice) – No word yet from Kathy Nichols-Tomkins.
 - f. Personnel & HR Committee (Mary Ann, Paul) – No report
4. Gill Room Report (presented by Sandy McReynolds, Historian) – Sandy has had several requests. The camera is up and running, but the angle needs to be tweaked, and Sandy can't access the footage, just the live feed. Air quality is good.
 5. Treasurer's Report – We reviewed the Quarterly Financial Review. We had an increase in the cash and investment accounts (about \$35k). As far as our budget is concerned, we increased our income by \$15k and our expenses were less than expected. However, some

2024 expenses are being paid in 2025, including some computer expenses. Ellen added a line in income for transfer from investment account to balance the budget because of the unplanned expenses hitting in January. We also reviewed December transactions and full year financials. **Patrice made a motion to approve the transaction reports from December and Year to Date. Christine seconds. Board approved.**

6. Friends of the Greenwich Free Library Update – We are almost sold out of calendars. Kathy Rapp said that in 1991 they published Book Cooks, a little cookbook that went out to the Library. She recalls that it was the Library volunteers that did it back then and the Friends would like to put together an updated version. They are asking people to contribute a favorite recipe. A little story about where it came from would also be appreciated. They hope to get started on this in the spring. Patrice suggested that Kathy get information to Sarah so she can send out an email to our volunteers.

7. Library Director’s Report –

2024 Statistics

	Visitors to the library	Community space use	Community attendees	Library programs	Library program and event attendees	Early Childhood programs (Targeting 0-5)	Early Childhood program attendees	Volunteer hours	Farm 2 Library participants	Pounds of waste diverted
TOTAL 2023	36225	472	3626	265	5090	137	2685	1716	2847	6917.4
TOTAL 2024	45108	717	4469	323	5891	140	3724	1711	3651	7892.6

	Check outs	Borrowers	Holds satisfied	New cards issued	Computer sessions	WiFi uses	Cossayuna WiFi	Overdrive checkouts	Kanopy plays
TOTAL 2023	31864	5237	6950	191	2050	5680	742	4304	1105
TOTAL 2024	28112	4733	5496	177	2068	7153	198*	4576	1149

All year, we were trending towards increased numbers when it comes to visitors, space use and programming, stagnation or drops in circulation, and slight increases in technology use. Our final figures bear all that out.

Goals for 2025:

- Increase Libby eBook and audiobook use, especially targeting new users
- Do our best to maintain programming and event numbers, even when our in-house space may be temporarily unavailable or reduced
- Continue to grow the Early Learning programs in a sustainable way, with an eye towards staffing and space needs

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS:

Public Promotion

A1 Communications A2 Expand patron base A3 Outreach & Reduce Barriers to Access

- I’m working with Sydney Nichols on a communication/media strategy for letting the public know about the upcoming changes to the community room and how it will affect public access to our meeting rooms.

Programming

B1 Programs that fulfill patron needs

- Current and upcoming programs and events can be found [on our website calendar](#).
- Kris and Emily report on their goings on [here](#).
- Early learning highlights include 3 new Yoga for Kids classes (first met this morning) with Haley, a new Building Blocks session beginning in February, and consistently large groups at every Monday and Friday drop-in program
- Teen highlights include an upcoming Dungeons & Dragons club, to meet late Thursday afternoons beginning in February.
- All ages events include Wizard of Oz Interactive Screening on 1/18, Lunar New Year on 1/28, Valentine's Day Card making on 2/6.

B2 Give local artists, writers, creators, and experts a platform:

- The GALA artists' "New Beginnings" group show has been a terrific success and a pleasure to host. About 70 people came for the opening reception last Sunday.
- Next up is Rupert, VT artist (and library regular) Christopher Smith. His show, "Going Places" will open in February, with a public reception on February 13

Partnerships

C1. C2 Local not-for-profits and businesses

- The MoonBee last Saturday was well attended and resulted in 40 MoonCatcher kits completed to send to Kenya later this month, and 624 disposable products were donated to help respond to local period poverty.
- We are working on building a partnership with the primary and middle grade buildings at GCSD in order to expand our Reading Buddies program. We received a grant from the Glens Falls Foundation which allows us to pair high school volunteers with young readers for tutoring and mentorship. We hope to start during the last week of February.

Place

- See Facilities report
- I would like to begin some work responding to the space audit, presented to us in November. My suggestion will be to concentrate on just one of the recommendations to start: the "Marketplace." This will allow us to use the restricted donation to purchase one or more flexible and moveable pieces of display furniture, and we can begin to strategize how to better promote collections beyond New/Popular. I'd like to form a small group to do this brainstorming and planning, made up of anyone interested from the staff and board.

Preservation

- See Gill Room report

OTHER

Fundraising and financial

- At the end of December, we received our anonymous matching donation in the amount of \$25,000, allowing us to reach our \$50,000 Annual Appeal goal. Amazing work, everyone! Now, let's do it again.
- I have written to the Business Manager at Greenwich Central School District requesting the allocated funding for FY 24/25, \$159,738.
- I have recently applied for grants from Stewart's and WGY, and I am working on a grant application for Better World Books. This type of funding is essential to maintaining our programming needs.

Staff

Teri will be joining us for an all-staff meeting on Friday January 31st so she can review all the construction developments

8. Period for Public Expression – Kathy Rapp wanted to let us know that she has given us a letter written by Diane Thomas a year ago regarding the construction. The second letter was from her, introducing herself and the different interests that she represents. She was concerned about the availability of the Community Room space and this has been resolved. They are also concerned about when this is going to start because the DAR and the osteo group need to know for planning purposes when they will no longer have use of the room. Patrice said that we should know in the next month and will communicate that timeline mid to late February.
9. Old Business – None
10. New Business – Patrice has asked for the Board’s approval to partner with National Grid to buy into a solar farm, It would allow us to save 10-15%. We agreed that we will do this. Sarah will be at SALS tomorrow working on the annual report to the state. Sarah will be sending out our annual report to the Board of Trustees for approval as it will be due to SALS before our next meeting on 2/19/25.
11. Dates of Future Board Meeting Calendar –Annual meeting scheduled for February 19, 2025 at 6 pm followed by the monthly Board of Trustees meeting.
12. Adjournment –Patrice made motion to adjourn. Teri seconds. Meeting adjourned at 8:36:pm.

Digitally signed by Mary Ann Spiezio