

Scituate Town Library Board of Trustees' Meeting

Monday, March 8, 2021, 4:00 PM

Scituate Town Library – Video/Call-in Meeting

Present on video call: Jessi Finnie, Kevin Carleton, Sheila Kukstis, Carol Sullivan Hanley, Elizabeth Holthaus; Pat Murphy, Chris Mirarchi absent. Karen Canfield present representing the Select Board. Maura Deedy representing Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

- Meeting began at 4:06 pm
- Roll call taken
- Presentation on Library Advocacy—Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Maura speaks about the role of trustees in library advocacy on the local, state and federal levels. Maura is grateful to present to the trustees in a pro-active way. Maura stated that she is aware of the recent proposed project (Thoreau's Way) and can speak on conflict of interest. At a local level trustees are the closest to the community. She encourages the trustees to think of their advocacy role in an ongoing, proactive way in our relationships with the community. Advocacy is usually our passion along with data and facts to help inform the public. The trustees are the voice of the library. In our role as elected trustees, we can elevate the conversation. Maura addressed the difference between lobbying and advocacy. Our advocacy would be to just speak up to help inform the public. Advocacy can be as simple as speaking to civic groups, talking with friends about the library, writing letters to a newspaper and testifying at meetings. She encourages trustees to have their "stories" ready for stakeholders, including the various services that the library offers to users. Thinking about funding, framing it and thinking it about return on investment. Looking at statistics, if we are talking to an elected official, using statistics and connecting a story with this can be useful. Also, how do these connect with the local community's values. How other boards may operationalize their stories could be through a "mission moment". Another idea may be to establish a Board calendar with an advocacy plan. Skillsets of trustees may vary and using the strength of individual trustee skillsets is important. In terms of preparing for Town Meeting, plan for what questions may come up when the items for Town Meeting are publicized. The practice of having a Foundation member present at trustee meetings is a best practice. Kevin Carleton asks about social media and the presence of library information on sites that may be misleading. Should it be addressed? Maura suggests being proactive with facts and a strategy could be to have one or two trustees review these sites and if something comes up answer as the voice of the trustees. Maura will send a link to a podcast that addresses dis/misinformation. Karen Canfield speaks to this in regards of trustees as elected officials. The moderator to a specific site does not allow links to specific facts. Karen cautions that the trustees speak on behalf of the board. Elizabeth asks whether the

Foundation and/or Friends could respond. That answer is yes, they can respond. Jessi speaks to other boards that may respond by giving information on how to reach out for more information- not responding specifically to the issue at hand. Jessi asks specifically about the project coming up (Thoreau's Way)- is there a line that the trustees need to draw when supporting the project? Maura states that she does not know the answer to this and this is a gray area. She suggests that the conflict advisory may give more guidance on this. Sticking to facts and information when speaking to others may be the safest way to go. Jessi requests that Maura speak about how the Board can speak to legislators. Maura reminds the board that the MLA Advocacy Day is coming up. This is scheduled virtually for April 8th this year. MLA has many tools that are available. She recommends using these tools. Questions were asked about what the day will look like and suggested ways to contacted legislators. Kevin asks Maura about the role that trustees can/should play in the role of fundraising. Maura did not have any legal clarification on this. She feels that it is permissible to provide information, but is unsure when it comes down to an "ask". Jessi states that this was looked into and trustees may attend events to provide information but not be part of the direct ask.

- Approval of February minutes -approved- Ayes- Holthaus, Kukstis, Sullivan- Hanley, Carleton. Nays- none.
- Foundation update- none
- Director's report - The following items were covered by Jessi's Director's Report sent to the trustees ahead of time. Jessi does address that there have been many patrons and she would like to reiterate how incredibly impressed at how the staff has been and that she is hopeful for patron patience in how the library is able to reopen and offer pre-COVID services. Librarians have not been vaccinated and Jessi wants to continue to keep the experience safe for everyone. Jessi reminds the trustees about 2021 Library Legislative Day and encourages trustees to reach out to legislatures. The library first's allotment of state aid is on its way. It is a little less than \$15,000. State aid is distributed twice a year. Jessi tells the trustees that there are two retirements (both from the Children's Room- Sue D'Arcangelo and Claire Kisker). These positions will be posted in a couple of weeks but it means that staffing will be down three positions by the end of March. The job description will be written.
 - Building Updates
 - Flooding issues
 - LED lighting project
 - HVAC/Boiler for Staff/Conf. Suite
 - Gutters
 - General Library News
 - COVID-19
 - Update on reopening as of 2/16; seamless transition
 - LSTA application, "Dig In"- Elizabeth Holthaus and Marla Minier are working with Jessi on this.

- SORA schools
 - ALA Grant, “Transforming Communities”
 - SEA Funds
 - SEF Grants
 - Summer Reading Kick-Off
 - Summer programming
 - State Aid funds, digitizing mariner (VOTE) Fifty-two rolls of film (remainder of the Scituate Mariners) to be digitized and a fee for the information on a flash drive. This is approved- Ayes- Holthaus, Kukstis, Sullivan- Hanley, Carleton. Nays- none.
- Miscellaneous- Kevin Carleton reminds everyone to complete their state ethics conflict of interest training.
- Incident Reports-none
- Next meeting date: April 12, 2021, 4 p.m. (may need to be postponed if conflicts with Annual Town Meeting)
- Motion to adjourn at 5:20- Approved- Ayes- Holthaus, Kukstis, Sullivan- Hanley, Carleton. Nays- none.