

**VESTAL PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES: AUGUST 16, 2022**

**Present:**

**Dianne Cappiello, President  
Dannielle Swart, Vice-President  
Joe Kost, Finance  
Suzanne Johnson, Secretary  
Shoba Agneshwar  
Lorie Avery  
MaryAnn Karre  
Barbara Morgan**

**Director of 4CLS: Steve Bachman  
Director: Paul Chapman  
Employees: Melanie Niermeyer  
Laura Farrell  
Treasurer: Bethany Stewart  
Public: Margaret Hadsell, Town Historian**

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Trustees signed the Code of Ethics forms.

Treasurer Bethany Stewart noted the previous minutes needed corrections: the month was July instead of June, previous minutes were June instead of May, the library would be open on Juneteenth, further clarifying the need for a floating holiday for employees, and the amount of funds for adult books should have been \$1,000. SA moved to accept/ approve minutes as amended. DS seconded. Motion passed.

Finance Liaison JK moved to accept warrants as presented. MK seconded. Motion passed.

The time clock issue discussed and approved in July is no longer available. The new time clock will be \$56 per month. Overall, the price is \$300 more with a \$350 fee annually, yielding \$1250 per year. It would be \$672 to lease, compared to \$1250 to purchase. JK motions to adjust the least amount for the new machine. DC clarifies we try this for 6 months. BM seconds. Motion passes. Discussion about reallocation of the funds, but JK advises against this because it is too soon to know if VPL will keep this.

**OLD BUSINESS: Patron Code of Conduct Policy: DS motioned to adopt, JK seconded, passes unanimously.**

**Meeting Room Policy changed to eliminate kitchen use fee: DS motions to change the policy to remove the fee for the use of the kitchen, LA seconds. Motion passed. DS motions to approve the policy as amended, JK seconded, passes unanimously. SA asks where the policy will be posted. PC wants to post it on the website and in the library, and post a similar policy in the children's area.**

**Strategic plan: NB not present but PC reports meeting to plan for new survey and new approach to get community input. PC suggests taking iPads out into the community as well as in the library to ask people what they are looking for in a library. SJ remembers presentation by Norwich Director Connie Dalrymple who invited focus groups into the**

library to ask what is one thing library can do for their business, or non-profit, or group. Four County Library System Director Steve Bachman clarifies Director Connie Dalrymple invited in different focus groups to discuss library services. The focus groups connected with each other. Steve Bachman suggests contacting Connie Dalrymple, inviting her to discuss her successful approach to local interest group involvement and feedback.

DS recommends asking the people what they want to see in the library. We are seeking feedback. SA recommends making surveys shorter and more concise.

Director PC presents the Director's Report, programming, Wi-Fi visits, inter-library loans incoming and outgoing statistics, adding meeting room rentals decreased because of programs offered in the large meeting room.

PC and Business Office Manager MN hope to have draft of employee handbook ready by October meeting.

4CLS Updates: Annual Trustee Training: Library Trustee Orientation concludes tomorrow.

VPL now has a weekly (Wednesdays) newsletter at <https://wowbrary.org> and we can register at <https://wowbrary.org/signup.aspx>

Ongoing and in-process projects: security cameras: tabled, depending on library lease issues.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Establishing a policy committee. DS explained board does not need to review all policies at once. Continuous examination of policies will keep them current, suggesting two policies reviewed per month and at each board meeting would be manageable. DS recommended a standing committee for policy reviews. JK asks how many policies are there? There are 22 policies at this time. JK volunteers to be on the committee. MK and SJ also volunteer. Policy committee formed: JK, MK, SJ for scheduling policies to review, hopefully two policies reviewed per board meeting. Next up for review/update are Sexual Harassment Policy and Whistleblower Policy. NYS recently expanded the whistleblower protections in January.

**Note:** Vice-President DS will run the September Board Meeting. President DC will be unavailable.

DC and LA attended the Town of Vestal work session. Town Supervisor John Schaffer declared at this meeting that the TOV is not going to renew the library lease. According to him, the TOV wants the library location to be made into a public safety building. The meeting is open to the public and witnesses heard him say that even if it is not recorded in the work session's published minutes. SA requested DC send an email to the Town Supervisor to publish this in the minutes. SA reminds everyone the lease expires 08/31/22, and according to the lease, written notice is required to the tenants which gives tenants two years to vacate. JK reminds us the lease stands until written notice is sent and received, including no changes to the terms. Further discussion about the lease, John Schaffer, and legal issues pertaining to the library building and location. Four County Library Systems Director Steve Bachman interjected an attorney will guide us on this matter. JK suggests asking a lawyer to whom he is well acquainted about the issue,

with Board permission. No objections. John Schaffer stated at the work session meeting of August 8, 2022, the library will be going on a month-to-month basis as a tenant. DC will email John Schaffer about the minutes from the work session.

Steve Bachman provided a page concerning the Open Meeting Law in NYS.

Steve Bachman noted the Vestal Library is the only library in the Four County System that pays rent to the municipality for its building.

Steve Bachman brought suggestions about moving the library to a new location. He presented information about finding another building and renovating, as well as building a new library. Both options require planning, funding, and time. Purchasing property is a reason to move to executive session for discussion. Construction Grants: State-funded public library construction program/grants: Amounts are unknown until after state budgets are approved. Many formulas pertain to the distribution of funds. The difficulty is the lead time because of the paperwork involved. The grants are run under the dormitory authority. The deadline for last year's applications was September 1, 2022. We still do not have the information from those applications. Significant lag time to be remembered in any planning. It takes a year between applications and information of amount of funding. Energy efficiency, accessibility, safety issues are paramount in the planning. There is a 75-25 match. Twenty-five percent of the funding must be local (i.e. fund-raising) and that will leverage the remaining seventy-five percent of the costs. Construction grants are very helpful, but take significant time to come to fruition.

Other considerations are space, access, public transport, vacant land, and whether to renovate or build new. Steve Bachman suggests the example of Worcester where a shell of a building was renovated over years and in the end, a gorgeous library resulted. SA asked about a public/private relationship/partnership. Lower lease payment/occupancy agreement/renovation of a piece of property that a private entity may be seeking to get rid of and would welcome the partnership.

Steve Bachman advised if VPL wants to purchase land, the purchase should be between July 1 and August 31 of a year, or at least the purchasing of the property during the same year of the application for the construction grant. Stamford library is in the process of purchasing a building that a school district no longer wants to use. SA raises the issue of building near Tioga Terrace. PC mentions he has found 40 acres for \$200,000 near Arnold Park. The long-term strategic plan really matters in situations such as this.

SA asked if we should contact former Board Member Cathy Schaewe about her input. SA will connect Cathy Schaewe and DC to ask for clarification about the building contract.

As for exploring options for relocating the library, Paul will ask the school/library co-op person, Rob Warholic, to come speak to the Board about building with the NY co-op. We have to decide how much we can afford, and if can even bond. PC explains the bonding issue really depends on the taxpayers and a vote. DC reminds us we can also look at properties to lease. PC can ask the architect to come to talk to the board.

DC asks PC about the FRIENDS, and an update. The group is now formed. There is a link on the website. The group formed is comprised of five or six people: MaryAnn Karre

**(liaison), Marianne Taylor, Janine Taft, Tina Barber and Collette Waldron. The group is under the umbrella of The Community Foundation, a 501 (c) 3, which requires the first \$10,000 to be secured, and then further funds can be accessed. The FRIENDS will be a project focused group, with goals of how the funds will be used.**

**DC has reached out to and connected with Jill Gardner and asked her to present to the board how Civil Service works. No set date or time has been arranged yet.**

**Public input: MH shared insights about library service, including reading the TOV board minutes and work session meeting minutes to seek information. She also reminds us it takes several years to build a new building, and there is not necessarily utilities everywhere in the Town of Vestal. For example, the land around Arnold Park does not have utility access, and public buildings cannot use septic systems and wells. A library would need to be connected to Town of Vestal water system. She mentioned grants are slow coming and library money would need to be spent first, and wait for reimbursement. Money is disbursed slowly. She also opines parents don't tend to want to drive far to get to a library. She recommends staying near the high school and Clayton Avenue. DC suggests investigating the WSKG building, which is a former Willow Point school building once used by the Vestal School District.**

**PC recommends bringing in a real estate agent.**

**JK moved to adjourn. SA seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Johnson.**