

**Approved Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting  
Zoom Conference Call, 6:00 pm – Recorded by Town of Westport  
November 18, 2020**

**Trustees Present:** Iain Bruce (presiding), Scott Bennewitz, Andrea Berkley, Jonathan Cunitz, Emily DiMiceli, Rob Haroun, Randy Herbertson, Sivan Hong, Fred Klein, Celeste LaCroix, Jenna Markowitz, Krishna Patel, Meena Pellerin, Jeremy Price, Barrie Rosen, Sheila Ward, Pat Wieser, Andrew Wilk

**Trustees Absent:** Stefano Pacifico, Faye Schoenherr

**Guests:** Amy Kaplan, Dick Lowenstein

Iain Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm – Rules of Order were noted.

**Mission Moment:** Mary Parmelee

Mary shared with the Board an initiative which is focused on providing Diverse Books for children and teens relating to racism, LGBTA, religion, etc. She and her team have been working with the schools and have put together a resource guide that will go live on our website in a few weeks. The link to view the Libguide is:

<https://westportlibrary.libguides.com/DiverseBooksNeedUs/Home?preview=69ac6543d76086a9fe2a6b19fefc7f6d>.

**President's Report: Iain Bruce**

Minutes of the October 18, 2020 meeting previously distributed were reviewed. Iain asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Rob Haroun moved to approve the minutes and Pat Wieser seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

Iain then spoke about reactivating the Executive Committee which is comprised of the Officers on the Board. The committee met last week, and the discussion revolved around the Library's Charter. They will begin to meet on a quarterly basis and will report back to the Board and Bill. Their focus will largely be on strategic and tactical issues.

He also shared that an Advocacy Task Force has been formed. Members of this new committee are: Fred Klein, Barrie Rosen, Faye Schoenherr, Sheila Ward and Pat Wieser

#### **Gov/Nom Committee: P. Wieser**

Pat reiterated that an Advocacy Task Form has been formed as a means to provide avenues for greater engagement of Board members with various constituencies in the community as advocates for the Library.

She mentioned that the Mentoring Program reported on last month, is now in full swing. All mentors and mentees have met with one another.

She also shared that Scott Bennewitz attended the Gov/Nom meeting and went over the Form 990 in detail with the committee. The committee approved the document for submission to the IRS by the auditors on behalf of the Library.

The committee has been working on amending policies. Two policies were amended and approved by the committee. They will be shared at next month's meeting.

#### **Treasurer's Report: J. Cunitz**

Jonathan reviewed the Treasurer's report previously circulated to the Board.

He noted that there are two distinct sections to the report: YTD results and the Forecast.

The YTD results are a net surplus of \$53,000. He noted that revenues are down, but so are expenses due to open personnel position and reduced book purchase.

The Forecast for the year is a deficit of \$301,000. When the PPP loan is approved it will become a surplus.

Jonathan talked about the upcoming transition with Natasha Smith, who will be replacing Wafaa Naggar's position. He then asked the Board members if they felt whether the Treasurer's Report was too detailed. After discussion it was determined that the group likes the report as is and Jonathan encouraged members to reach out directly to him if ever a question arises.

The Capital Campaign report is much the same as last month. There is a forecast of excess funds and the loan should be paid back by the end of 2021.

#### **Finance Report: S. Bennewitz**

Scott reported that it is currently Budget season and that he and the Finance Committee have been speaking with Bill about some of the assumptions driving the proposed budget. The committee will present the budget in January. He noted that a critical part of the process is putting together a Narrative and encouraged that anyone on the Board who is interested in assisting in crafting this document reach out to him.

He then shared that the Investment Committee met recently. He shared a document, previously distributed, which showed a synopsis of the Library's Investment Portfolio.

**Development Committee: E. DiMiceli & A. Berkley**

Andrea gave an update on the Annual Appeal and thanked the Board members for their efforts in personalizing the letters this year and shared the difference it has made. There will be a year end letter going out soon to be received by December 7. This letter will not go to the families that have already contributed. Nancy will send everyone their lists with names of those to solicit.

Nancy then talked about Giving Tuesday, which is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. The Library will post on all Social Media channels and she encouraged those that are active on Social Media to please share.

Emily then shared results from her interviews with Board members regarding how members can become more engaged in the Fundraising category, based upon question from the annual Board survey.

**Executive Director Report: B. Harmer**

Prior to the meeting, Bill distributed a detailed report.

Bill then shared that due to the quickly rising number of COVID cases in Fairfield County that new challenges are being presented, especially with the plan to have increased number of hours that the Library would be open. He said the merge of curbside and open hours has been well received well by patrons, but that there is concern about extending hours and services. There had been plans to open up the meeting rooms and Forum and offer more services, but due to the spike, those plans have been placed on hold.

He noted that several smaller libraries across the state have begun to close again.

Bill has been working closely with his peers, Town officials and the Superintendent of Schools to determine how they are making decisions.

There was discussion on providing testing for COVID for staff members.

**Other Business**

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Iain entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Jonathan Cunitz , seconded by Andrew Wilk and unanimously approved by the Board, and the meeting thereupon adjourned at 7:39 p.m to enter Executive Session.

Executive Session opened at 7:41 pm.

Scott Bennewitz made a motion to accept the proposed compensation package for the Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Andrew Wilk and the Board unanimously approved the motion.

Jonathan Cunitz then made a motion to end Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Andrew Wilk and the Board unanimously approved the motion at 8:06 pm.

**Respectfully submitted by,**

**Andrea Berkley**  
**Secretary**