

Approved Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
Board Room and Zoom - 7:00 pm
February 28, 2024

Trustees Present: Pat Wieser (presiding), Melissa Banks, Scott Bennewitz, Andrea Berkley, Bob Boroujerdi, Dave Briggs, Ben Chan, Randy Herbertson, Celeste LaCroix, Jay Norris, Krishna Patel, Jeremy Price, Martina Sze, Mark Silverstein, Sheila Ward, Andrew Wilk, Peter Zakowich

Trustees Absent: Anna Alemani, Stefano Pacifico

Guests: Dick Lowenstein, Kristin Mott, Karl Mergenthaler

The meeting was called to order by Pat at 7:03 p.m.

Mission Moment:

None this month.

Treasurer's Report: P. Zakowich

Peter reported that everything is currently on track and that we are at the halfway point for the fiscal year. There is currently about a negative \$42k deviation being caused by increased and unexpected legal expenses and café/retail expenses.

President's Report: P. Wieser

The minutes from the January meeting, were reviewed. Pat made a motion to approve and Randy Herbertson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Regarding the Budget process, the next meeting will be on March 6.

Pat reminded everyone that the Brubeck Brothers Fundraising concert is March 9.

Discussion on the recent Gerber Pledge to support the Building Bridges Coalition Initiative at the Library took place.

Bob Boroujerdi made a motion to approve the pledge:

I move to approve the generous pledge of \$100,000 over five years from Nicole and Steve Gerber to the Westport Library. The pledge will be provided in the form of five annual payments according to the following schedule:

- a. \$20,000 by June 30, 2024
- b. \$20,000 by June 30, 2025
- c. \$20,000 by June 30, 2026
- d. \$20,000 by June 30, 2027
- e. \$20,000 by June 30, 2028

The purpose of this pledge is to support the Building Bridges Initiative, which aims to unite students through experiential learning, collaborative projects, and the cultivation of lasting relationships. Specifically, the funds will be utilized to establish a dynamic platform for collaborative endeavors, including diverse cultural events, and workshops focusing on media production, design, and contemporary fields to empower students with practical skills relevant to the digital age.

In recognition of their extraordinary commitment, I further move to approve the opportunity to name the flash studio (room 214) in the Westport Library after Nicole and Steve Gerber. This enduring acknowledgment will stand as a testament to their dedication to education, community building, and the empowerment of our youth.

I hereby request a vote in favor of approving the donation from Nicole and Steve Gerber and the naming of the flash studio in their honor.

The motion was seconded by Jeremy Price and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Irma Schacter Bequest was discussed, and Randy made a motion to approve it:

I move to approve the establishment of the Irma Schacter Legacy Venture Fund at the Westport Library, as outlined in the proposal presented by the Finance Committee and Development Committees. This fund will leverage the generous bequest of \$500,000 from Irma Schachter to achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance flexibility in programming to promptly respond to community needs and interests.
- Ensure sustainability of essential programs, including author talks, workshops, discussions, and initiatives promoting literacy, entrepreneurship, technology and wellness.
- Foster a culture of innovation by piloting new program ideas that align with the Library's mission.
- Seize unforeseen programming opportunities to cater to evolving community interests.
- Engage the local community through community-driven programs, interactive events, and collaborative initiatives.
- Promote inclusivity, diversity, and lifelong learning among patrons.

The implementation of the Irma Schachter Legacy Venture Fund will be overseen by the Library's administration, in alignment with the Library's Gift Acceptance Policy and best practices in endowment management.

I request a vote in favor of approving the establishment of the Irma Schachter Legacy Venture Fund to ensure the long term sustainability and vitality of the Westport Library's programs and initiative.

The motion was seconded by Pat Wieser and was unanimously approved.

Finance Committee: S. Bennewitz

Scott reported that the Finance Committee met yesterday. The committee is moving ahead with the possibility of switching auditing firms. RFP's have been sent out and 4 proposals have been received.

Scott mentioned that Melanie Myers is currently receiving bids for the Capital Maintenance Plan.

The next step in the Budget approval process is to meet with the Town's Budget Appropriation Committee which will be held on March 6.

Governance & Nominations Committee: S. Ward

Sheila reported that the committee met and reviewed revisions for the Whistleblower Policy which will be included in the Employee Handbook.

She also reported that the new trustee process has begun. The ad was sent out and resume deadline is March 15. The skillsets required this year are a strong development/fundraising acumen and finance and legal background for non profits.

Development Committee: A. Berkley

Andrea reported that the Annual Appeal has reached \$309,074 from a total of 607 gifts. A spring letter will be sent to everyone that gave last year but not this year yet.

April 3 is Library Giving Day through ALA. The DEV Committee has set of goal of raising \$5000.

A Planned Giving letter will also be sent to about 400 thoughtfully curated donors.

Finally, Andrea reminded everyone about the Brubeck Concert Fundraiser on Saturday, March 9.

Executive Director Report: B. Harmer

Bill reviewed highlights from his report which was previously distributed to the Board.

He talked about the challenges regarding securing a Booked *for the evening* honoree.

He also shared that the President of ALA attended a meeting here last week and that he has connected her to Clarence Jones. She will also be coming back to attend VersoFest.

New Business

None

Other Business

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Andrew Wilk entertained a motion to adjourn and Martina Sze seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting ended at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Melissa Banks
Secretary