

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

SOUTH BERWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY (June 19, 2012)

A meeting of the South Berwick Library Advisory Board took place on Tuesday, June 19, 2012. The meeting got underway at 6:05 pm. In attendance were: Peter Howell, Tim Benoit, Sandy Agrafiotis, and Al Whitaker. Also in attendance was Karen Eger, the Director of the Library.

The first item of business was the adoption of the minutes for the meeting of May 12, 2012. On a motion by Peter Howell, seconded by Sandy Agrafiotis, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Ms. Eger then reported on several aspects of the new library project. First, she observed that the Friends' Capital Campaign is looking for more people to work on fundraising. The Friends are anxious to broaden those people who can be approached for help.

Next, she reported on finishing costs. Of these, electrical service is being worked on. Lights in the sanctuary area still need to be funded. Painting in that area is progressing slowly.

According to Ms. Eger, Tucker Interiors has been very helpful. They have designed a space layout for the sanctuary area. A schematic of that plan was distributed to the Board. The circulation desk has been cast as a circular area and moved into the middle of the space. New books have been relocated to where circulation originally was placed. According to Ms. Eger, the center area has a better line-of-sight for the whole space. She had checked the listserv on the subject of circular work areas and found the return comments were positive. Ms. Eger said that adult fiction would be on shelves in the back. Shelving design has been built to accommodate growth. Furniture in the middle will be on casters to facilitate moving items around to make the space more flexible. Mr. Whitaker again expressed concern that the project had been undertaken without a "design program" from the architect.

According to Ms. Eger, the funding plans for the Friends have changed, with the result that they are less able to help with the retirement of the building bond. Project expenses have come on so quickly, Ms. Eger explained, that money raised by the Friends has been used up front to cover current building project expenses.

Regarding space for strollers, Ms. Eger reported that set a space aside for them during the summer and fall period. During the winter and spring period, she feels that it will be sufficient to keep them on the porch.

Ms. Eger observed that Fred Widenauer plans to ask local furniture makers if they would like to make custom crafted furniture items for the facility. Ms. Agrafiotis mentioned that she had spoken with Loweries about donating a set of outdoor concrete furniture to

the Library. It could be located out on the patio, making it possible for people to use the Wi Fi connection when the Library was closed.

At this point, Mr. Whitaker asked about the status of the project's architect. Ms. Eger responded by explaining that Mr. Ellsworth had been in touch with the architect, who may continue to be owed something in the order of \$23,000. Ms. Eger said that Mr. Ellsworth had invited her to come to a meeting to see what contribution she could make. Ms. Eger indicated that the architect chose not to follow through and attend the meeting. Ms. Eger expressed confidence that Mr. Ellsworth is on top of the situation.

Ms. Agrafiotis asked about noise abatement and problems with vibration arising from the geo-thermal system. Ms. Eger acknowledged that such problems exist and that she plans to continue to follow-up on the problem.

At this time, attention shifted to old business. Regarding the problem of water intrusion in the basement, Ms. Eger reported that John St. Pierre and Mr. Ellsworth are studying the matter. She believes that they think they know what the problem is, but have not settled on a remedy. No further water intrusion has occurred, according to Ms. Eger. She observed that she was confident that Mr. Ellsworth will resolve the water problem since he has discussed his intention to have a vault built in the basement to house town records. Mr. Ellsworth also has purchased a commercial dehumidifier which has been put in the Library basement. Regarding subsequent use of the basement, Ms. Agrafiotis inquired about handicapped access provision for staff. Ms. Eger responded by observing that it was not an issue, as handicapped staff would not be required to go into the basement.

Ms. Eger went on to report about an incident which occurred right after the book sale. According to her, between the time she wrapped up after the book sale and the time she arrived at the Library on Monday, approximately three hundred dollars had been stolen from the small window in the wall between the sanctuary and the new part of the Library. She pointed out that she raised the problem of the difficulty of locking doors at a subsequent meeting of the Building Committee. She said that Mr. Ellsworth and the Friends had expressed a willingness to reduce the number of doors in operation if that is necessary.

Ms. Eger also reported that she had had some concern for the lack of procedures for collecting money for the Friends. She is working on new procedures to better account for money taken in at the Library for the Friends.

Ms. Eger went on to report that she had gotten no response to concerns expressed earlier by the board about security and wiring for a security program. She observed that, in the absence of better security and more staff, it will be hard to make the Library available for use to local groups after hours. Ms. Agrafiotis and Mr. Howell raised the prospect of

obtaining “rent-a-cops” for use in such situations. Ms. Eger observed that it was likely that local groups with small resources would be unable to cover the insurance necessary.

Mr. Howell indicated that he had done some checking and determined that a four-camera security system would cost somewhere in the vicinity of four thousand dollars. A server could be programmed to alert someone if an alarm sensor was disturbed. Such coverage would be for a twenty-four hour period and could be tied into the local police dispatcher. Ms. Eger again observed that she has been unable to evoke any interest from town officials on the subject of security. Mr. Whitaker asked her to continue to inform town officers of the concerns of the Board, in this regard.

In addressing new business, Ms. Eger discussed a programming vision for the new Library. She said that she would like to make the Library available to other users on a generous basis. She observed that a meeting was going to take place to discuss use of town buildings. She encouraged the Board to bring her any thoughts on the subject before this meeting. In this connection, Mr. Benoit asked if there was a policy on keys. Ms. Eger responded in the negative.

Ms. Eger next reported on a prospective internet policy for the Library. She had prepared a draft of such a policy and distributed it to the members of the Board. She asked for comments from the Board after they have had a chance to review it.

Then, Ms. Eger raised the question of the Library’s responsibility to the Sarah Orne Jewett collection of memorabilia. She speculated about other organizations which might be interested in the materials. Mr. Whitaker suggested that one course of action is to determine the informational value of the collection and base any decision about retaining or disposing of the materials on that. Mr. Howell asked how the material fits with other elements of the Library’s special collections. Mr. Benoit and Ms. Agrafiotis offered the opinion that then local historical society might be a more appropriate place for the Jewett materials to be placed. Mr. Whitaker suggested that three criteria should be considered in any decision about what to do with the materials: They include security, use, and fit. In effect, where will they be housed most securely, used to best effect, and fit with other elements of the collection. He expressed his sense that the Library wins on each point.

In the course of the discussion, Ms. Eger mentioned that Sarah Orne Jewett had a substantial correspondence with John Greenleaf Whittier. Mr. Whitaker indicated that the Haverhill (MA) Public Library has an extensive collection of Whittier papers which likely include some elements of that correspondence. He thought it might be useful for Ms. Eger to contact the Haverhill Public Library to determine what links might exist with that collection.

Mr. Benoit mentioned that he had a friend who was a specialist on Sarah Orne Jewett. Mr. Whitaker suggested that Ms. Eger might seek the help of such an expert on Sarah Orne Jewett to help in reviewing the significance of the large collection of Jewett books.

A discussion ensued about the continuation of Ms. Agrafiotis on the Board. Ms. Agrafiotis expressed some uncertainty about the length of her term on the Board. A discussion of the length of terms on the Board and the number of years which constitute a term then occurred. Mr. Whitaker pointed out that the Town Council Code and the Board by-laws each mention seven members. Ms. Agrafiotis will consider her decision over the course of the next month. A decision was made to consult the Town Clerk on the language and intent of the Charter and the by-laws as to whether the number of members was intended to be five or seven. Any decision about what constitutes a quorum will be held until such information is returned to the Board.

At the end of the meeting, a brief discussion occurred on the placement of the bicycle racks. Ms. Agrafiotis questioned the placement of the racks. Ms. Eger said she would work on the issue.

Mr. Benoit moved and Mr. Howell seconded a motion to adjourn. It was passed unanimously. The meeting concluded at 7:50 pm.

Submitted by Al Whitaker.