

## **LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

### **SOUTH BERWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY (September 18, 2012)**

A meeting of the South Berwick Library Advisory Board took place on Tuesday, September 18, 2012. The meeting opened at 6:00 pm. In attendance were: Elaine Pridham, Peter Howell, Tim Benoit, and Al Whitaker. Karen Eger, the Director of the Library, also was present.

The first item of business was the adoption of minutes for the meeting of June 19, 2012. Mr. Howell moved and Mr. Benoit seconded a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Next, discussion moved to an update on the new library project. Ms. Eger reported that everything was to be completed by September 17 which involves principally the interior. Available shelving will be moved into the main area. Mr. Howell asked how all of this will affect operations. Ms. Eger observed that there will be a line across the opening preventing access to the unoccupied space. She will be taking this subject up with town officials. Asked about vibrations caused by the heating/air handling equipment, Ms. Eger said that cushions will be installed to reduce the effect of the vibrations. She observed that not all of this may be signed off by September 27. Karen explained that she has raised questions about the thermostats which she has found hard to manage. She further explained that it takes too much of her time each week to prep the thermostats. She observed that it would cost about \$1,200 dollars to upgrade the thermostats. She reported that the architect and the Town Manager have arrived at a settlement which favors the Town. Money arising from the settlement will be used on insulation.

#### *Old Business*

Discussion returned to the subject of the role of the Library Advisory Board. In previous discussion, the Board had observed discrepancies in the various documents which speak to the role of the Board. Ms. Pridham pointed out that the matter had been discussed by the Board a couple of years ago. She

offered to review earlier documents and prepare a draft which would speak to the role of the Library Advisory Board. All agreed that this would be desirable before bringing the matter to the Town Council.

It seemed that consideration was given some time ago to converting to a 501c arrangement which would have changed the role of the Board, creating a Board with more authority. Mr. Whitaker expressed his support for an “advisory board,” rather than an “executive board” which would have some directing functions. He suggested that it might be useful for Ms. Eger to speak with Ms. Smart, the Director of the North Berwick Library, to see what her experience has been. The North Berwick Library does have a system involving a Board of Trustees.

Ms. Pridham concluded the discussion by indicating that she will get some information back to the Library Advisory Board on the subject before the next meeting.

Next, attention turned to the search for a new Board member. Ms. Eger reported that there were no prospects for a new appointee. Mr. Howell suggested that it might be useful to have someone advocating for a new member at the next election. The use of the Town’s web site also was suggested. Ms. Eger indicated that the Assistant Town Manager has an email which she sends out regularly which possibly could be used. After a discussion, the Board recommended that Ms. Eger see if the Assistant Town Manager’s email could be used to solicit membership for the Board. Discussion then moved to whether the Board should consist of five, or seven, members. It was decided that this matter will be further reviewed when Ms. Pridham brings back a draft on the by-laws.

The Board next expressed its approval of the new policy on fines prepared and put into effect by Ms. Eger.

The attention of the Board then moved to the issue of security. Ms. Eger reported that she has asked the people who installed the fire alarm system what it would cost to expand the system to include perimeter security. She plans to follow this up. Ms. Pridham raised a question about the front door locks which have been problematical. Ms. Eger said that no action has been taken. Considering that the subject of security has been raised at several

meetings of the Board, a question was raised about who gets the minutes. In particular, it was asked if the Town Manager receives them. Ms. Eger explained that she submits them to the Town Clerk, but does not know if Mr. Ellsworth receives them. The sense of the Board was that it would be well if he did.

*New Business*

Karen reported that the Friends are prompting discussions about how the library programs might change in lieu of the new building. Ms. Eger observed that this would call for strategies to seek new resources from the Town to expand the uses of the Library. One possibility she noted involves the use of volunteers to oversee non-library meetings at the Library. Ms. Eger also has thought of having a staff person who might be engaged for five hours a week expressly to oversee meetings of outside groups. Apparently, one of the stumbling blocks in making arrangements for use of the Library by outside groups involves insurance. The Board encouraged Ms. Eger to see if a “staff” person, paid on an attenuated basis, could be used to cover non-library groups. Mr. Benoit encouraged Ms. Eger to try to develop specific conditions outside groups could use the Library from Town authorities.

Ms. Eger handed out copies of a survey on the Library which is to be distributed with the Friends’ annual appeal next month. The survey also will be on the web site of the Town.

Ms. Eger also reported on a \$15,000 grant on which she is working which has a literary aspect.

Mr. Benoit raised a point about people not being clear about the location of the new Library. He felt that a better job needed to be done of signage for the Library. Ms. Eger explained that the policy of the Town on signs is very strict and that signs are not, generally, permitted. Mr. Benoit expressed the sentiment that the Board should address the matter. Ms. Pridham indicated that she would send an email to the Town asking that signage be permitted. She will copy the Board with her email.

At 7:10 pm, Ms. Pridham moved and Mr. Benoit seconded a motion to adjourn.

The motion was adopted unanimously