

SOUTH BERWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

November 20, 2012

The meeting of the Library Advisory Board came to order at 6:10 pm. Present were: Elaine Pridholm, Peter Howell, Tim Benoit, Al Whitaker, and the Library Director, Karen Eger. Also present was a new member, David Gagnon.

To open the meeting, Ms. Eger presented a report updating the Library project. She reported that library shelving was presently being installed. Also, painting in the area of the altar was being done, and should be completed in a week. The rest of the shelving should be installed around that time. Work also was being done on insulating the outside of the building. Ms. Eger explained that the Town Manager had a little money left over after a settlement with the architect.

Ms. Eger also observed that the Friends had begun to purchase some small items which could be obtained locally. She explained that the Friends are anticipating that they will be unable to raise enough to pay down the bond, so they are making an effort to compensate by purchasing smaller items.

Mr. Howell asked about the purchase of a sign. Ms. Eger said that as recently as earlier in the day, Mr. Ellsworth had indicated that he had no objection to a sign at the Library. Ms. Eger also has a couple of people researching into the issue of a sign on the street. That, she reported, likely will happen early next year. Ms. Eger plans to arrange for the purchase of one of the universal library signs for someplace in the downtown area. A discussion ensued about whether or not the Town would find that acceptable. If necessary, the Board felt it might attend a Town Council meeting to raise the issue and advocate for it.

In the course of this discussion, Mr. Benoit expressed the opinion that we all needed to stress the public investment in the new Library. Mr. Gagnon suggested sending a letter to the Town Council before making a visit. As the next meeting of the Town Council was the coming Tuesday, The Board authorized Ms. Eger to draft and send a letter to the Town Council on behalf of the Board. To conclude, Mr. Howell moved and Ms. Pridham seconded an action authorizing Ms. Eger to send a letter to the Town Council petitioning them for permission to place a universal library sign on Main Street. The motion was adopted unanimously,

The next order of business was the adoption of minutes. Mr. Benoit moved and Mr. Howell seconded an action to accept the minutes of the minutes for October 16, 2012. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Discussion then shifted to old business. The first subject was an extension of previous discussions about the Advisory Board by-laws. Ms. Pridham distributed copies of the by-laws along with some proposed changes. The principal changes involve the number of members constituting the Board, as well as the number making up a quorum. The proposal would reduce the number of Board members to five (5) with three (3) members constituting a quorum. Ms. Pridham also expressed the sentiment that the number of officers was excessive. The Board determined that it would review the information, anticipating taking action on it at the next meeting.

Ms. Pridham also distributed copies of the Town Code relating to the function of the Library Advisory Board. She also provided some bullet-points for changing the Code. All were in agreement that the functions attributed to the Board by the Code need to be adjusted. The question then became can any action be taken to change the by-laws without corresponding changes in the Town Code. Changes in the Code would require action of the Town Council. In sum, the Board agreed to review Ms. Pridham's revisions with the intention of making a decision at the December meeting. The consensus of the members seemed to be to accept Ms. Pridham's suggestions, with an inference to the corresponding problems with the Code. The plan was to take up the subject at the December meeting and thereby bring the matter to the attention of Mr. Ellsworth, allowing him to determine how to carry it forward. Potentially, this would permit the town Manager to address the issue in January, 2013.

At this point, Ms. Eger introduced David Gagnon. Mr. Gagnon is to be a new member of the Board, replacing Sandy Agrafiotis. Discussion also took place over providing some recognition of Ms. Agrafiotis' service on the Board.

Next, Ms. Eger brought up the issue of Library security. She observed that she has no new information on the subject. When asked by a member, she indicated that she had seen no change of point-of-view on the subject at Town Hall. Discussion took place over the integration of a security monitoring program on the current fire alarm system. It seemed to the members of the Board that such an arrangement could be accomplished at a fairly small cost. In light of the fact that the subject has been the focus of discussion at several Board meetings, Mr. Whitaker asked if the Town Manager received the minutes of the Board. The answer being unclear, Mr. Whitaker made a suggestion that the Town Manager be made a part of the distribution of the minutes. Ms. Eger agreed to do so. Mr. Howell also urged that, if there was no additional cost to providing physical security through the fire alarm system, that this idea be presented to Mr. Ellsworth.

Ms. Eger observed that the issue of security is complicated even more by the potential of expanding community use of the Library building. This is something that the officers at Town Hall are anxious to do. Still, managing a security system adds a level of complexity to the arrangement. She also reported that the Friends are not especially interested in the matter of security. When asked, she explained that the Library Advisory Board seemed to be the only group with an active interest in enhanced security.

Ms. Eger then took up the issue of community use. Currently, the building is not available for use by many community groups. This relates to concurrent problems with staffing, insurance, and security. From her point-of-view, the limitations of the use of the Library for community purposes is becoming problematical. She does plan to make a request in her next budget submission for a few staff hours to allow a person to be dedicated for the oversight of groups using the Library.

Under new business, the Board took up the proposed Visitor Behavior Policy. Ms. Eger had submitted a draft of the policy and was looking for suggestions. The Board suggested removing the provision on weapons. The Board also recommended adding the words "is illegal or" to the second bullet on behavior.

On a motion by Mr. Howell, seconded by Mr. Benoit, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.