

Meeting Acushnet Public Library Board of Trustees

Tuesday, January 4, 2022 (Zoom) at 5 p.m.

In attendance: Jennifer Alves, Chair

Diane Ferreira

Nancy Francis

Danielle Guillemette

Joan Howland

Stephen Reale

Dina St. Pierre, Library Director

Eric Chew, Finance Committee Liaison

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Secretary's Report

A motion was made by Nancy to accept the secretary's report from December 14, 2021. The motion was seconded by Diane. All voted (by roll call) in favor.

Budget Report

This report is not very different from December and 45% is spent at this half year point. All lines are on track with spending. The energy line reflects all bills since December and it appears that energy prices are rising as this year's December bill was 17% more than last years. The telephone line is 21.8% spent. This is paid through a contract with the Town. Town Hall pays the telephone bills and we usually receive reconciliation forms from town hall but with the turnover of Town employees things have fallen a little behind and we have not received any forms since September. The bills are being paid and there is no cause for concern. The operating line is 72% spent as anticipated. A motion was made by Diane to accept the budget report and seconded by Stephen. All voted (by roll call) in favor.

New Budget

For the FY 23 budget, two versions were submitted as requested by the Town Accountant. The level-funded budget should include any contractual obligation increases as well as returning to the pre-COVID budget level for trainings, conferences and travel. There is a decrease in the salary and longevity lines due to staff changeover. For expenses, a recent FINCOM meeting spoke about a 25% increase for Eversource and as this has also been mentioned in the news it has been added to the level funded budget. The tech support increase is due to the contract with SAILS. The increases in the education and travel lines are returning the totals back to pre-COVID as requested. There is an increase in the office supplies line as the demand for ink, paper and supplies for a library is very difficult to sustain on the present \$1,000 amount. The total request is \$284,779.00 for the level funded budget. There is a Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) (a formula which equates to \$286,448 for FY23) from the state that this budget does not meet but Dina is confident that once the adjustments are made on the salary lines by the Board of Selectman for Union Staff and the Union contract negotiations are complete for Non-Union Staff that it will work itself out.

In the additional budget, the library tech line is increased by about \$16,000.00 so that the position of Children's Room Assistant can be increased from 19 to 35 hours. This would mean there would be three full-time positions on staff. This would mean more attention to circulating children's items, enhancing and planning more programs (especially when in person programming returns) and more outreach to the schools. The other supplies also increased back to the pre-COVID amount. This line is what is used to purchase material. It is a state requirement that 16% of the appropriated budget be spent on material for direct patron use. Increasing the other supplies line will relieve the burden of having to use as much from State Aid, Gift Fund, Revolving Account or funds from the Friends of the Library (who have not been able to fundraise at all due to COVID). The total request for this budget is \$304,336 which is an increase of \$19,000.00 from level-funded. Eric said he would support the increase in hours.

The budget is to be presented to the finance committee on January 26, 2022 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall (possibly on zoom). Nancy moved to accept both budgets and Diane seconded. All voted (by roll call) in favor.

Director's Report

The library has launched a Winter Read and Bead program. There are no requirements except to come to the library each week for a bead. The program runs through the end of February. It is linked to Beanstack but not mandatory. Beanstack keeps track of the books you have read. There are also two mystery sticker puzzles. December stats will be provided at the next meeting. The pavilion in the back is almost finished and there are lots of potential uses.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 4 p.m., possibly on Zoom.

Diane moved to adjourn at 5:55 p.m. and Stephen seconded. All voted (by roll call) in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Howland

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