**Stoneham Public Library**

**Board of Trustees (Virtual) Meeting**

**December 14, 2020**

**Attending:** Ciccarello, DiPietro, FitzGerald, Fixman, Francis, Killilea, Director Langley. Staff: Maureen Saltzman, Katie Witham, Debbie Cunningham, Rachel Overbeck, Matthew, Bruce.

**Absent**: Fixman

Call to Order: **7:03**

**Approval of Minutes and Statistics:**

Minutes: No discussion.

*Motion to approve: DiPietro, 2nd Francis; Abstain: Fixman. Vote: Unanimous.*

Statistics: The September statistics were shared along with November statistics. November statistics were steady; 2-3% fluctuations. One area of growth in gaming: Tim currently hosts gaming sessions twice a week; right now patrons can view but not play. Minutes watched doubled this month. Library is considering getting their own server so patrons can play as well.

*Motion to accept statistics: Fixman, 2nd DiPietro. Vote: Unanimous.*

**Friends of Library Updates**: Jessica provided an update on the Friends of the Library; she recently met with the co-presidents and treasurer. The board has not felt supported by the town, is facing dwindling membership, and struggles to recruit volunteers for events. Currently the Friends have 40 paying members. They have one remaining checking account with a $200 balance; they gave the library a $30,000 check for their other funds. Jessica has identified 3-4 potential new volunteers via Facebook.

She suggested the Friends need clarification on their role and goals. They previously directed their fundraising efforts to purchasing museum passes; these now come out of the library budget. Nicole reported that when the library took over paying for museum passes, the Friends had discussed funding programs instead. She would like to use the $30,000 to fund programs over the next several years. Staff added that the Friends paid for small renovations and small equipment purchases. Jane said the Friends also purchased video/DVD materials and offered group ticket purchases for events.

Jane asked about the current membership structure and whether the Friends still offer lifetime memberships. Jessica reported that lifetime memberships are still available; the Friends did increase fees to $15/year for individuals, $25 for families, and $100 for lifetime.

Jessica stated that if the library covers programs with the Friends’ funding, there should be a plan to transition that support back to the Friends over a certain number of years. Knowing how much the library plans to spend on programming will give the Friends a fundraising goal to work towards. She added that the Friends did not receive much support from local businesses. She also noted that the Friends had planned to use some of the $30,000 for renovations in the Junior Room.

Jane asked whether information about the Friends is still on the library website. The Director said it is there but it is out of date.

Kathryn suggested crediting the Friends every time their funding is used. Rachel volunteered to put their logo on promotional materials (and/or create a logo for them as needed).

Nicole reported that the Friends have received some new donations in memory of Maxine Schultz, a former reference librarian. Some new memberships have also been purchased. In the library’s strategic plan survey, respondents were asked about their interest in volunteering; one-time events were the most popular volunteer option.

**Youth Services Update, Non-fiction Collection**: Rachel has been evaluating the non-fiction collection and preparing to weed it. She reports that about 60% of the collection is over 10 years old; best practice is for most materials in the collection to be no more than 5-10 years old to reflect current information and new research. Non-fiction makes up 10% of the Junior Room collection but less than 1% of circulation.
Rachel noted that once the collection is weeded, the remaining materials will not make a cohesive collection. For example, if the collection has 140 books on dinosaurs and 20 are kept, those will not necessarily be balanced for content (e.g. there could be multiple books on T. rexes and none on herbivores) nor for reading level.
The materials budget does not allow Rachel to rebuild the collection within a time frame of several years.

Instead, she proposes using a lump sum from State Aid to update the collection at one time. She is meeting with a consultant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and will have a better idea of the cost after that meeting, but her initial estimate is $10,000.

Nicole is supportive of the request.

Rocco asked about the current balance in the State Aid account. Nicole answered that it is about $200,000. Sue asked whether any trust funds would cover children’s book purchases. Jane mentioned the Annie Brown fund. Nicole would prefer to take the whole sum from State Aid rather than piecemeal from multiple sources.

Rachel would also like to refresh the non-fiction space in the library to make it more welcoming.

*Motion to use up to $10,000 in State Aid to redevelop the children’s non-fiction collection: Francis; 2nd: DiPietro. Vote: Unanimous.*

**Youth Services Update, Pilot Floating Non-Fiction Collection with Middle School:** Rachel has been working with the middle school librarian to pilot a floating non-fiction collection, through which the library would check out a number of non-fiction books to send to the middle school. The middle school library would report circulation statistics back to the Junior Room. Based on the Trustees’ feedback from the November meeting, Rachel proposes a shorter loan period based around non-fiction project assignments, typically in Q2 and Q3. She also hopes that the program will lead to increased foot traffic. She added that she wants to collaborate with the middle school librarian on a library card registration drive next fall, which would allow him to help students find and request materials from the public library.

Jane noted that working with the schools helps underscore the library’s importance to the town.

Rachel thinks if the pilot is successful it could be expanded to other schools in town, including private/parochial schools.

Rocco requested that Nicole and/or Rachel present to the school board about the pilot to gain their support.

Tricia is concerned schools will see more collaboration with the public library as an excuse to cut their own library budgets. She stressed positioning our resources as a supplement, not a replacement.

Rachel added that her overall goal is to reposition how the town sees both the public and school libraries.

 **Action items**: Nicole and Rachel to present to the school board.

**Certification Updates**: The Director reported that the MBLC will be basing requirements for FY22 on FY21 numbers and will have no hours requirement. The MBLC has also revised their definition of a disproportionate cut from 5% to 10% of the budget; Stoneham’s budget was cut 11% so the library is closer to meeting that requirement. However, only 7 other communities in the state were in the same position, including Peabody. Stoneham has applied for a waiver and has a hearing in February; the Town Administrator and Town Accountant will attend. The Director will also attend but most questions will be directed to the town representatives. If the waiver is denied the library can appeal; we might not know the outcome until May. The Director added that no budget meetings have been scheduled to plan for FY22 yet; she is waiting for the town to schedule those.

**Reopening Updates**: The Director reported that the library is ready to launch mobile printing services. The library has also set up remote administrator software to allow reference staff to remote into library workstations and help patrons. The library will be ready to start accepting book donations again as there will be space to quarantine materials. The library is still waiting for large capacity air filters, but has small air purifiers onsite. All Plexiglass has been delivered but is not yet all installed. Rolling white boards are being used to partition the staff workroom.

The Director noted that some libraries have eliminated their in-person appointments due to rising COVID-19 case numbers.

Jane noted that Melrose and Reading are open for appointments. She requested that the library stagger pickup hours to allow for evening pickups of materials. Jane and Jessica both urged the library to move more quickly towards offering appointments. Rocco added that if the library does not open the town will see it as non-essential. The Director reports that the main roadblock now is installing all the Plexiglass. Tricia requested that the Director ask the Town Adminstrator how the town can support the library’s reopening. Rocco suggested setting a target date of January 4, 2021.

Tricia asked whether the library will be able to resume regular hours for appointments. The Director was hesitant based on staffing levels and custodial availability. Debbie added that the library has multiple open positions right now. Rocco asked whether the library will need to be staffed at normal levels if access will be by appointment only. Rocco asked the Director and Debbie to draft a schedule for the end of the following week.

*Motion that the library reopens to the public by appointment only Monday, January 4, 2021, following state public health guidelines, with the final schedule to be determined: Fixman, 2nd: Killilea. Vote: Unanimous.*

Discussion of holiday hours. December 25 and January 1 are holidays; December 24 is a half holiday.

*Motion that the library: close for a full day December 24, with staff using a half day of personal time for additional half day closure; close for December 25; close at 1 PM on December 31; and close January 1, consistent with past practice: Killilea; 2nd: DiPietro. Vote: Unanimous.*

**Action items**: Nicole and Debbie to revisit front-door service hours to offer some evening pickups. Nicole and Debbie to draft appointment schedule by December 23. Nicole to request assistance from the town to ensure that the January 4 reopening date will be met.

**New/Other Business**: The Director reported that there is an unexpected vacancy in the Junior Room, in addition to other staff vacancies.

Tricia requested photos of the changes to the library building. Jessica suggested sharing them online as well. Rachel volunteered to create a video tour of the changes in the Junior Room.

**Next Meeting:** January 11 at 7pm. Virtual.

**Adjournment:** 8:55. *Motion to adjourn: Killilea, 2nd Fixman. Unanimous.*