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MANSFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Meeting - April 14 , 2022

Attendance: Deborah Gordy, Kimberly Usselman, Jean Mallon, Leonard Epstein and Director Catherine Coyne. Jean called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM.

Secretary's report. The report for March was reviewed and unanimously approved.

Treasurer's report. The report for March was reviewed. Approval was delayed until Nancy is present to discuss details.

Correspondence. Catherine reported an Instagram posting extolling the virtues of the library. She also noted that Kim has a friend who has similarly posted her enthusiasm for the library.

Librarians reports. The librarians' reports were reviewed and highlights discussed.

September 28, "Welcome to Mansfield. Kevin has asked the selectboard to save the date and to plan tables for all departments. The last such event was in 2019 because of Covid.

Staffing. Catherine reported that there are no viable applicants for the library's open positions. This is consistent with many other libraries in the state that are similarly having difficulties filling staff positions. Mansfield has received only one resume from a working children's librarian, but she lacks an MLS degree which is a requirement for all professional staff. The children's librarian position is especially important given Zeb's plan to move to Ohio. Recruiting efforts were discussed. Jean asked how many students are at Simmons and how many new graduates will potentially be in the market.

Hearing impaired patrons. Catherine and Whitney attended a webinar about library services for hearing impaired patrons. Catherine would like someone to review our equipment and consult concerning possible help for deaf patrons.

Spanish club. Jean is especially interested in the Spanish Club. A resident of Rhode Island asked if she could start such an activity, open to everyone. The first meeting was in March and was very successful. Rather than a teaching resource the purpose is to provide a conversation group for Spanish speakers. A second session has been scheduled for May. Catherine also reported an increase in patrons borrowing books in German.

Council on Aging. There is speculation about razing the former police station and constructing a new building on the site for the Council on Aging. Costs are estimated at \$12-\$14 million dollars. The library would obviously be interested in looking into the feasibility of utilizing the space now occupied by the COA. Interestingly, the Parks and Recreation Department has also expressed interest in that space. There are many possibilities for the library's use of the space including study rooms, small conference/private study rooms, tutoring spaces, and even craft space. The meeting room could be an issue. Currently the COA controls use of the room until 3:00 PM and the library takes over the schedule until the building closes.

OLD BUSINESS

Director's goals update. Catherine's goals update are covered in detail in her monthly report, including expansion of library services, homebound deliveries, the Library of Things, hybrid

programming (the "Owl"), physical plant, security, and updating the staff handbook. Homebound delivery has commenced with extensive publication (on-line application, COA newsletter article, PSA program highlighting the service scheduled for broadcast on March 30, and the April MPL newsletter. One issue that was discussed with some concern was the weakening of the Friends of the Library. One of Catherine's goals has been to attempt to help strengthen the organization which she has been doing. The Friends annual meeting is scheduled for May 5 and, with Catherine's help, the organization is actively seeking new members.

NEW BUSINESS

Director's annual evaluation. The board discussed the evaluation instrument which has been in use for the last three years. Contrary to the board's original approach, meeting in executive session is actually inappropriate for the exercise. Each board member will fill out an evaluation form which will then give to one board member to synthesize. This will presumably be the chairperson (Nancy did it last year). The evaluation should be completed by the end of the fiscal year, June 30. It was agreed that the new members of the board should feel free to abstain from particular criteria if they feel they have insufficient knowledge and experience at this point given their recent appointments. Catherine herself will start the process by sending board members her view of accomplishments and achievements. The evaluation forms distributed should be returned to Jean at the May 11 meeting.

Town meeting. May 19.

Fine free libraries. The board commenced a discussion of making the Mansfield Library fine-free. Discussion points included Norton Library's long history of being fine-free for seniors, other libraries which exempt children and seniors, and the Boyden Library's recent decision to maintain fines except for seniors. Catherine pointed out that Mansfield's current \$1 million deficit, and the Town Manager's comment that "Every dollar counts," likely makes this a poor time to change the current policy. The library has collected and delivered to the town \$3,324 in fines so far this year. As of April 4, \$3,409 in fines were owed by patrons, with 820 library cards blocked. The board unanimously voted to table the issue for further discussion at a later date.

Next meeting. May 11, 5:30 PM. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Leonard Epstein

Leonard Epstein, Secretary

The foregoing minutes were approved at the May 11, 2022 meeting of the Mansfield Board of Library Trustees.