

**ROCKINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014  
MINUTES**

Present: Doreen Aldrich, Carol Blackwood, Hope Brissette, Karin Fischer, Patricia Fowler, Carolyn Frisa, David Gould, L. Raymond Massucco and Jan Mitchell-Love, Trustees; Celina Houlne, Library Director and Mary VanHartesveldt, Library Employee

Press: FAC TV, Jacob Stradling

Others: Arnold & Elayne Clift, David DeRusha and Joel Love

**Call to Order:** Chairman Gould called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m.

**Approve Minutes of August 12, 2014:** Mitchell-Love advised that under Call to Order, “advised that Massucco would be late”, she would like to add a first name, “Ray”. On Pg. 4, under New Business: Anonymous Letter, under lines 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 & 13, at the end, “which is a direct slam on the Policy Committee”, unless whoever wrote this letter tells you, it is intended as a direct slam, it is conjecture and you don’t put conjectures or opinions in minutes. “The letter emailed to Fowler” is a blow-by-blow of the conversation we had. She wondered if it would be simpler to say, “Attached, David’s letter”. She added that she noticed it was not in the minutes that she had said “It’s a good thing we were not being filmed because she wondered if this was libelous or slanderous. It is unfortunate that this is blow-by-blow and a public record. Her comment was not in the minutes and should be added. Joel Love said it was mentioned that Gould was going to do a letter of response and asked if it was available. Gould replied that it was not available at this time. He did put a response together on paper and read it. Fischer said she thought the board thought just having the verbal discussion was enough. Elayne Clift advised that under Director’s Report, “Elayne Clift advised that Friends of the Library is not on the Director’s Report”. She believes what she said was, “The August meeting of the Friends has been postponed from August to September”. Clift also had a correction on a date, FY2015 should be FY2013; but could not find it. Blackwood said Page 5, Question 4, we should add FY to 2014, add Ray’s first name in front of his last name (Massucco) under Call to Order and said that Jan Mitchell-Love didn’t like the tone; but was there a specific change? Mitchell-Love said she doesn’t think we want that quote in there “which is a direct slam on the policy committee” (Pg. 4, Line 13); it is an opinion. We have no idea whether the person who wrote the letter intended it as a slam on the policy committee or not. Blackwood said that she as chair of the policy committee doesn’t feel offended. It’s not naming any particular person so feels there is low risk of liability coming from it. The point taken is thinking more about our meetings and how we speak and what we do going forward. Those are very valid points she made. She added that these minutes do accurately reflect the meeting. Fowler moved that the board accept the minutes with the correction of the **FY14**, that the Friends of the Library Meeting was postponed and that we need to be careful about libelous slander. Arnold Clift said he had a comment on the substance of the “Anonymous Letter”. Frisa seconded Fowler’s motion. The motion carried

with seven in favor and two opposed. Gould thanked Mitchell-Love for her comment; we do need to be more careful.

**Public Comment on Items not on Agenda:** Gould read a letter from Elayne Clift dated 8/14/14 regarding her dismay at many of the things that occurred then. Gould advised the letter would be entered into the minutes of this meeting.

Arnold Clift said he wanted to reiterate a point that the consideration of the by-laws was in a most transparent fashion. Members of the public, such as he, had ample opportunity to participate.

Joel Love asked the board to consider changing its meeting date so citizens don't have to make a choice between going to this meeting or the village board of trustees meeting or to change the time of this meeting. David DeRusha commented that this board voted at the first meeting to adopt Roberts Rules of Order and they are not being used and in some instances, he thinks that Jan's concerns and other concerns noted here tonight Roberts Rules aren't being followed.

**Items to add to the Agenda:** Jan said she wanted to talk about when they were meeting tonight and not wait until the next meeting which will also be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday (same as Village Trustees). Gould advised that back in June we considered changing the date and time. A survey was sent to all board members to respond. The item was taken up at the July meeting and it was the consensus of the folks present that we continue on the Tuesday evening at 6:15 p.m.

Mitchell-Love said we used to meet on Thursdays. Fowler responded that the meeting was pushed back because several of us have other jobs and cannot be available at 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. We asked for 6:00 p.m. because Carol Blackwood has to commute from Keene. Frisa said the other reason we moved it because several members of the public asked if we could please move our meeting time back to a later hour of the day so people who worked could attend our meetings. Joel Love said it is not the time; it's the day. Motion by Jan Mitchell-Love and seconded, to add meeting, day and time to the agenda tonight. It will go under "New Business". The motion carried with seven in favor, one opposed and one abstention.

**Director's Report:** Houlne reported on August programs and stats, buildings & grounds, budget, Director's activities and other. Not on her written report, the front lawn sign. Frank Hawkins gave her a quote for \$4,500 for a double sided sign with concrete tubing in the ground and metal posts. Under Director's Activities, they finished interviewing for the part-time library position and she hired Ann Dempsey. She works in Charlestown and has worked as a school librarian for 12 years. She will begin on Monday. The courses to be taken as asked for by the Personnel Committee. She is looking at Common Good Vermont as Amy Howlett advised they have courses. The Boys & Girls Club will meet here this month while they are waiting for their building to be repaired. Sam Maskell made the offer. There's a Friends trip coming up on the African Heritage Trail and is in conjunction with the Compass School. Students and adults will be attending. The seats are \$40.00 and include a lunch. The date is October 17<sup>th</sup>. Jan asked if the library makes any money and Elayne said yes; the Friends will. Houlne also reported that they have started one-on-one computer training. They are encouraging folks to come in and sign up. Elayne Clift asked if we got any other bids besides Frank Hawkins on the sign. Houlne said she doesn't know; but there are not a lot of people who do this work. Blackwood said she is

inclined to bounce it back to Buildings & Grounds. Massucco asked if we are asking for a quote, do we have some specifications. Brissette said she doesn't know what they are; but will find out.

**Financial Reports:** Houlne advised that we are still early in the year and asked for questions. Jan referred to page 3 of 4 of the Budget Status Report, Supplies are at 20%, Automated Library System is at 97% (Celina said we pay that out once a year). And on page 4, Property Liability Insurance is 82% and we pay twice a year? That is concerning. Grant Expense is at 490% of what we budgeted? Houlne said regarding the grant, we only put in a small amount because we never know what we are going to get so when we expend a lot in that line, it's because we also have all the money coming in up above in the revenue line. Regarding the Property Liability Insurance, when this budget was planned, we put in a figure that had been estimated one and a half years ago. There will be a new bill in January. The building has been evaluated by VLCT so the bill should be going down. They won't know the actual figure because the bill won't arrive until mid-December. Massucco referred to the grants on the revenue side, the grant income is up 1,400% so we have a reciprocal income increase.

**Finance:** Fowler presented the Minutes of Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> at the meeting. The committee has recommendations for the full board. They have two EIN's, one is town and one is library. They discussed the ramification of using the town I.D. and having Doreen Aldrich as a signatory because she's the town treasurer and because she's bonded and Fowler is not. They are thinking of leaving it as is with the two numbers and new things going forward, use the town's, i.e. petty cash account. Brissette asked what the benefits are to putting the library in with the town. Fowler said the benefit is that the town treasurer is bonded and grants we can get if under the town's I.D. that we can't get if we are on our own. Mitchell-Love asked if the library's money would be co-mingled. Fowler said, "No". Mr. Love said he is concerned about co-mingling the funds. He was concerned when the money for the renovation was put into the town's general fund rather than being earmarked into a special account because it was voted for as a bonded item. It was earmarked for a capital improvement project. He suggested setting up a separate account for grants. More discussion ensued. The committee discussed the potential for which funds are restricted, i.e., the Whitcomb Fund - \$10,000 set aside for the children's room furnishings and for furnishings upstairs. There is no solid recommendation for the board regarding the EIN at this time. There was a motion at the committee meeting to sit down with the select board and enter into a written agreement to repay the overage from the renovation over a five year period. Joel Love said this was a bonded project for capital improvement on a facility that is owned by the town. It is not owned by the library. It was an overage of a capital expenditure project. There are financial protocols to follow. Brissette said she believes one of the protocols is that if a bonded project goes over budget, the town comes back to the general public and requests the public to pay back the overage. Jan Mitchell-Love added that at the meeting there was only Ray Massucco and she to make motions and seconds. She asked to do a disclaimer that she is fully in favor of meeting with the select board, she wants to pay zero and the most she wants to pay is \$27,000; but she didn't want to pay anything because the town took over the renovations; we didn't have anything to say about it nor was information shared with the board and it went way over, and the town does own the building. Brissette said there are some costs on that overage that she is opposed to. Joel Love wonders how the money is going to get paid back. It still comes from the taxpayers. The methodology being proposed by the town to give it the money and pay it back over five years is nothing but a back door way of not having to

ask for the money in one lump sum. He asked where the money is going to come from; from the annuity funds? It has to be voted as part of the budget or they need to come out of existing finances. Fowler said what's important is that we start a discussion with the Select Board. She moved that the Finance Committee recommends that the Library Trustees meet with the Select Board and proposes that the Library enter into a written agreement with the town to repay the overage from the renovation over a five year period at \$27,065 per year and that the net recovery will be returned to the library after the court case with SMP. Massucco seconded the motion. Blackwood added, it's a friendly suggestion to Fowler to accept or not to change the motion to empower the Finance Committee to set up negotiations with the Select Board to discuss the overage and come back to the Library Board of Trustees to accept or not. Massucco said he would accept that. He has been approached by folks asking what the library board is doing to address the deficit. His concern is that at some point they will dictate, to the extent that they can, that the library makes repayment to the town or makes it a department of the town. There are at least two Select Board members who want to do that now. We're talking about taking out of one pocket into the other. It all comes out of Rockingham taxpayer funds. His question is which budget does it come from, more important to the library; but a conversation that we have to start with. Jan Mitchell-Love said if we are going to meet with the Select Board, we don't send a committee; it should be board to board. There are folks on this board who want to go to the meeting that are not on the finance committee. People have slammed her for this assumption that we owe this money when they heard her for six months say the library board had heard nothing from the town while they ran the bills up. Gould asked where the motion stood at this time. Massucco made the suggestion to withdraw the current motion as amended and make a new motion that this board meet with the Select Board. Fowler withdrew her motion and Massucco withdrew his second. Jan Mitchell-Love made the motion that the Rockingham Library Board of Trustees meet with the Rockingham Select Board to discuss the renovation costs at a time to be determined and Chairman Gould will set it up to discuss the renovation overage. Brissette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The other motion made with Mitchell-Love & Massucco was that the Finance Committee recommends that the Library Trustees open a money market account with River Valley Credit Union using the library EIN, with Celina, Pat & Doreen as signatories. Fowler moved, seconded by Frisa that the Finance Committee opens a money market account with River Valley Credit Union using the library EIN with Celina, Pat and Doreen Aldrich as signatories and Mary VanHartesveldt to have access to information only. The motion passed unanimously.

Fowler said she recommends to the trustees that the library make changes to the TD Bank petty cash account to have Celina, Pat and Emily as signatories and made that as a motion. This is the account for emergency funds for buying computer software, etc. That account can only have \$2,000 and will have a debit card. Frisa seconded the motion. VanHaartesveldt asked for access to information only and Fowler and Frisa agreed to add it. The motion carried unanimously.

Fowler advised that she has talked with Chip Stearns and with the Select Board going to one meeting a month, he will have a couple of Tuesdays free to meet with the Library Trustees to go through the budget. That would be the budget training. Fowler will set that up.

**At 7:54 p.m., the chairman declared an eight minute break before continuing with business.**

**Finance Cont'd.:** Request for Whitcomb Fund Expenditure for Youth Dept. Houlne spoke of the Whitcomb donation that was a designated donation to the youth dept. Samantha Maskell devised a plan and spoke about purchases for the young adult section. She would like to buy café tables & chairs, a rug, a vinyl sofa and chair set, general use tables, and high grade vinyl graphics with a low-tack adhesive (safe for marmoleum) that will provide fun decoration in the YA section while not damaging the floor or presenting an obstruction to access. The Whitcomb money totals \$10,000 and they have spent \$500-\$600. The cost would be \$4,170. After some discussion, Frisa moved that the trustees allow \$4,170 from the Whitcomb fund to be used to purchase the furniture presented to the board of trustees, Blackwood seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Houlne asked for additional funds from the \$15,000 donation for the main library to buy cabinets so as to give back the shelving for moving back the historical collection to the library. Fowler said it isn't on the agenda. Fischer moved to add the item under "New Business" seconded by Blackwood. Mitchell-Love said she thinks it is illegal. Blackwood withdrew her second.

**Historical Collection:** Frisa advised that they have not met; but their first order of business will be starting to move items currently stored downtown back to the library. A while ago, a number of metal rolling carts were purchased for historical collections and they have been temporarily taken over for other library items. Without the shelves, they have no place to put the collections. She asked for a special meeting to approve the money so they can have their shelves back. After some discussion, Aldrich moved to call a Special Meeting for Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m., in the Youth Program Room for the purpose of approval of funds for storage, seconded by Mitchell-Love. The motion carried with eight in favor and one abstention.

The chairman asked if the trustees wanted to table the Personnel Committee, recommended changes to the personnel policy and the Policy Committee, recommended changes to By-Laws. Blackwood didn't want to table By-Laws because she wanted to go on record that it was officially presented and people had the option to review it at this meeting so we don't have to have a full discussion; but that people have a chance to see it so at the next meeting it is clear it has been presented twice and then we can have a vote. Frisa moved to table the Personnel Committee Report until our next regularly scheduled meeting, second by Brisette. The motion carried with five in favor and four opposed.

**Policy Committee:** Blackwood reported that the committee has put together a complete revision of the By-Laws. It was done with the hope of clarifying any ambiguities in the prior By-Laws and because there were enough areas that needed correction, it is a complete revision. Love made a point of order, if you are going to split it you have to recess to a time definite to discuss. He has multiple comments as there are many ambiguities and many contradictions. Mitchell-Love moved to table the By-Laws until the next meeting of October 14<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Brisette. The motion to table passed with five in favor and four opposed.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Discussion on Changing Library Trustee Meeting Days & Times

Blackwood said considering we don't know what the Select Board is going to do, it is silly to waste time plotting another night tonight. Brissette agreed. Mitchell-Love would like it in open meeting and suggested Thursdays. Massucco can't. Frisa suggested leaving it on Tuesdays; but a different Tuesday from the Village Trustees. The chair will follow-up and check with the Trustees as to what they decided tonight; if they are going to a single meeting a month and which Tuesdays would be open and check with Karin Fischer as to what her Monday schedule is. Gould advised that he is appointing Fischer to the Buildings & Grounds Committee.

**Review Tasks:** The Chair passed over.

**Review Agenda Items:** The Chair passed over.

**Review and Approve Warrants:** Warrants were reviewed.

**Other Business:** Brissette advised that Labor Day Weekend the lights were on all weekend long. Houlne will pass the information on to the staff.

Carolyn Frisa advised that she no longer uses e-mail.

**Executive Session:** None needed.

**Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. by Brissette, seconded by Frisa.

Submitted \_\_\_\_\_ September 12, 2014

Doreen Aldrich

Dear RFPL Board of Trustees:

8/14/14

Having attended the Trustees meeting of 8/12/14, and as a former Trustee myself, I would like to share with you my dismay at many of the things that occurred then.

It was distressing to see tensions arise among Trustees – “déjà vu all over again” – over a number of issues relating to budget, committee business, and staff issues. It was astounding, for example, to see some Trustees, who have served for an appreciable time now, raise questions regarding the budget (e.g., what constitutes a “petty cash” account). It seems fair to say that one would expect them to understand budgetary matters at this stage, or to accept the explanations of the professional staff. It was upsetting to bear witness to accusations that a committee had acted inappropriately, indeed secretly, when in fact they functioned with all possible transparency. And it was deeply distressing to have the library director’s discretion, authority and judgment questioned with regard to staff salaries. The absence of support and appreciation for our outstanding staff, who as Celina said, carried burdens larger than anyone realizes in her absence, was inexplicable.

So too was the amount of time spent discussing two letters received by Trustees. In one case, the letter was anonymous. Were I still a Trustee, I would have moved that no unsigned correspondence be considered by the Board. Similarly, I would have moved that a letter of complaint and unfounded accusation such as the one sent by Deborah Wright not be considered without the letter’s author being present to discuss the matters raised with the full board and in open meeting. I am left to wonder: Is the tail still wagging the dog?

On the matter of repairing the sign, why not a straight up/down vote? Why another layer of bureaucracy (sending it to the Grounds committee)? We are talking about an important upgrade that costs a mere \$300 – something I’m sure the FOL would be happy to fund. Why drag out such a simple decision? Can’t such issues be voted on, thus streamlining the work of the Board?

I do not wish to be contentious. I simply need to be on record that what I observed was troubling, unnecessary, inefficient, and in some cases regressive. I sincerely hope this Board can go forward acting efficiently, courteously, and wisely in all matters – a hope that will require less contention and more “voice” from within your ranks.

Thank you.

Elayne Clift