

Nahant Public Library
Board of Trustees
June 16, 2021

Board Members Present: Chris Stevens, Anne Spirn, Daniel Munnelly

Others Present: Sharon Hawkes, Carolyn Ziering

Convened: 6:41 PM

Acceptance of the Minutes of May 11, 2021. Tabled until the next meeting.

Director's Report.

FY2021 budget. The budget for this year is on track for the end of the year. There is extra money in the Library Assistant line because of the missing Children's Librarian. There are still outstanding expenses against the Materials budget, mainly books. Sharon will look into purchasing a computer that will replace the Director's computer a year from now, in keeping with the Library's technology plan.

Annual Town Meeting. The Trustees Proposed Budget for FY2021-22 was approved at the Annual Town Meeting on May 15, by a vote of 427 to 148 in favor. Sharon expressed gratitude to the Trustees for their advocacy, as all three of them spoke extremely well and informatively at the Town Meeting.

There were two changes to the Report and Recommendations of the Advisory and Finance Committee book, which is how the residents get to see the warrant expressed in full. In the Classification and Salary Plan (the list of salaries, on which the residents vote), the listing for Children's Librarian was missing. After Trustee Dan Munnelly pointed out the error to the Town Administrator Tony Barletta on May 11, Tony said it was an "administrative error" that he didn't see until he read the print edition. But at what was to be a rehearsal meeting with the Fin Com and the Moderator two days later, Tony moved the classification to what he thought was the part-time positions chart, saying that he felt that the Children's Librarian should be a part-time position.

The second change was in the omnibus budget listing for the Library. In the past, the Library budget has always been expressed as a single, total budget number, allowing the Director to adjust budget lines as needed. A few days before Town Meeting, Sharon noticed a change to expressing the budget in two lines, and suspected it meant that monies could not be moved from Salaries to General Expenses or vice versa. Even more confusing, the first line read "Salaries/Wages/Gen. Expense" as in the past, and the second line read, redundantly, "General Expenses." After Town Meeting, she confirmed that, in fact, this was the case. Neither the Trustees nor Sharon had been informed of the change nor its impact prior to Town Meeting.

Sadly, there has since been disagreement as to how the voted budget would be apportioned, in that the Town Administrator and Town Accountant feel the additional \$14,238 should be spent on Salaries only, not the entire budget. Moreover, the Town Administrator, in an email exchange this past week, asked for an explanation as to why the Library would then actually spend that extra money on salaries in order to mitigate possibly level-funding salaries in FY2023.

As to where the additional funds should be apportioned, the proposed Motion was read by Chair Christine Stevens at the Annual Town Meeting as follows:

I would like to amend the Library's budget to add \$14,238, and I would propose that it come from the Unemployment, Life Insurance, Health Insurance, Medicare, Tax, Essex Retirement and Annuity line, which has \$2,056,760 in it. And I would ask that the town also vote the bottom line budget for the Library as it has for the past 30 years.

Tony concurred in a recent email that Chris' Motion made clear that the budget increase was for the whole budget, not just salaries.

During Chris' speech, the Town Administrator was speaking to the Moderator. After her speech (which was applauded), the Moderator asked for a copy of the motion, which Chris provided. Then the Moderator discussed confusion with the motion, saying that "so what you want to do is change the omnibus budget." Chris explained that continued flexibility in the budget was necessary to help shift funding to maintain state requirements, if needed. Responding to questions from the Town Administrator, Sharon said that some of the \$14,238 would be applied to budget lines that had been level-funded on the Expenses side, including to the Materials budget lines. More than half of the voters then assembled had access to a copy of the Trustees' line-by-line budget, so they would know what they were voting on.

The Moderator mentioned that the residents would be voting on increased salaries, and that the Motion should be addressed in two parts. Then, when it was time to address the second part, he refused to allow it to be heard. He effectively changed the Motion against Robert's Rules of Order, which states that, "Although a question is complicated, and capable of being made into several questions, no one member can insist upon it being divided; his resource is to move that the question be divided." [1978, Crown Publishers, p. 30] No motion and no vote was held to divide the Amendment or to change it, and when it was shown on a screen for the vote it was voted as funding to the entire Library budget, not just to salaries.

FY2022 and FY2023 budgets. [handout] If it is upheld that the full \$14,238 be applied to Salaries only and not to the entire budget, there will be a deficit in the Materials budget of \$4,848.84 compared to the Materials Budget Requirement. Sharon proposes the following:

- That the additional monies being added to the “Salaries/Wages/Gen. Expense” line be apportioned to the Director, Children’s Librarian and Reference Librarian as an additional 2% increase above the Trustees Proposed Budget for FY2022;
- That for FY2023, the above 3 positions be level funded to the FY2022 amounts, that the Custodian be fully funded according to contract and that the Page be fully funded according to minimum wage;
- That a reasonable budget increase, not less than 2% of the entire Library budget, be apportioned primarily to General Expenses; and
- That monies to balance the FY2022 budget be taken from various non-appropriated income lines

This would allow the Library budget to “catch up” its Expenses lines in FY2023 while being reasonable to the staff, by giving them a larger salary increase in FY2022 and no increase in FY2023.

Materials budget. The Mass Board of Library Commissioners has stated that the Materials Expenditure Requirement, which was suspended during COVID-19, will apply in FY2022. The Requirement amount for FY2022 will be \$50,048.

Children’s Librarian job search. Want ads for the Children’s Librarian position were posted on the Library website, the MBLC job board, and a consortium of universities affiliated with the job posting website Handshake.

<https://www.nahantlibrary.org/help-wanted>

https://mblc.state.ma.us/jobs/find_jobs/display_jobs.php?job_id=17800

<https://cocis-jobline.simmons.edu/2021/06/03/childrens-librarian-nahant-public-library-nahant-ma/>

Thirteen applications were received and seven interviews were conducted. As predicted, a salary of \$40,000 returned newly-minted “library school” Master’s graduates or people who are working professionally in libraries but do not have the degree. Sharon looked for a candidate with a solid understanding of and experience in librarianship, with or without the degree, and she was encouraged by the strong response, which was a clear difference from when the Library tried to hire at \$30K.

Sharon has offered the job, pending acceptance of terms and clearance of a background check, and is waiting to hear from the candidate.

Job descriptions. The current job descriptions for the four staff positions – Director, Reference and Adult Services Librarian, Children’s Librarian, and Page – were given to the Trustees. Two descriptions, Children’s Librarian and Reference and Adult Services

Librarian, have been updated according to recent changes in classification and salary. They were submitted to town hall to be filed.

COVID-19. The Library relaxed most of its COVID-19 protocols on June 1, in keeping with the Governor's rescinding of such protocols and yesterday's end of a state of emergency. According to state statistics, there have been only nine confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nahant since April 1. The Library was open by appointment a total of 47 weeks, for a total of 1,957 visits, 291 curbside pickups, and 99 home deliveries. It is nice to see many familiar faces returning to the Library again.

Building. There was a brief roof leak over the stacks area on May 14 because of a rainstorm. The CPC article for repairs (to the building's roof, drainage, window frames, and a few other exterior items) was affirmed at the annual town meeting's continuance on May 16. Matching funding from the Massachusetts Historical Commission will be announced next month.

Friends of the Library. The Friends will meet for an organizational meeting on Saturday, June 19 at 1:00 at the library. They will discuss the general organization of the Friends, and its current and future activities.

Johnson Elementary School Agreement. The School Committee unanimously voted in favor of the amended Agreement drafted between the Library and the School for FY2022. Sharon suggested that the program not begin until January 1, to give the School and the Library time to settle in with new students, new staff, and new post-COVID protocols.

Internet policy. Carolyn has drafted a policy statement for the use of the Internet in the Library.

Sharon Hawkes requested a Motion to accept the Internet Use Policy drafted by Carolyn Ziering. Motion made by Daniel Munnelly, seconded by Anne Spirn, and Approved/Denied by roll call vote:

Anne Spirn – Aye
Chris Stevens – Aye
Daniel Munnelly – Aye

Programs. Lynn Public School Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (story time providers) will have professional actress Carole Finn-Weidman presenting stories at the Flash Road Playground on June 17 at 2:30, to help the Library kick off the Summer Reading Program. The Summer Reading Program already has 20 early registrants and will begin July 1.

Remote Meetings. The Governor announced that Open Meeting Law would continue to allow remote meetings through April 1, 2022.

New Business.

Annual Town Meeting Vote. Sharon reported on the controversy that followed the Town Meeting vote as detailed above and emphasized that this argument is over \$3,555. She also proposed a plan for expending the extra salary money and covering the shortfall in the expenses line. Anne Spirn expressed interest in consulting with Mark Cullinan who stated that there was a simple solution that could be taken care of at the next Town Meeting. Other trustees were reluctant and unwilling to wait that long for a resolution. It was decided that Mark Cullinan would be consulted and discussion would resume at the next meeting with the information/advice provided by Mark Cullinan.

Johnson Elementary School Agreement. Daniel Munnely expressed that with no budget assistance coming from the school, the Trustees are hesitant to proceed with the current agreement. They are fully committed to collaborating with the school to provide some library service and will revisit the matter later in the fall.

Library Open Hours. Daniel Munnely pushed to reopen the library for weekend hours on both Saturday and Sunday this summer. Sharon Hawkes advised that the state regulations only require weekend hours 38 weeks out of the year. Anne Spirn agreed with Daniel Munnely's proposal for more open hours, but argued that the staff of 2 has been working hard and deserves more time to recover and onboard a new member of staff. At the next meeting, Trustees will consider a few options for new fall hours.

Budget Planning Anne Spirn began discussion about how the Board of Trustees could work one-on-one with members of the FinCom and the Board of Selectman to create better channels of communication.

Adjourned: 8:22 PM