

**Nahant Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
September 22, 2020**

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

**Others Present:** Sharon Hawkes, Carolyn Ziering, Emily Potts – Friends of the Library, public

**Convened:** 6:34 PM

**Acceptance of the Minutes of August 18, 2020.** Board President Chris Stevens requested a Motion for acceptance of the Minutes of August 18, 2020. Motion made by Anne Spirn, seconded by Daniel Munnelly, and Approved unanimously.

**October Expense Plan.**

Sharon Hawkes requested a Motion to accept the October Expense Plan, in line with the plans' prior months, in the event that Town Meeting is delayed or does not reconcile the omnibus budget. Motion made by Chris Stevens, seconded by Daniel Munnelly, and Approved by roll call vote.

Chris Stevens - Aye

Anne Spirn – Aye

Daniel Munnelly - Aye

**Budget 2021.**

Anne Spirn recounts her phone call with selectman Mark Cullinan. She reviewed with him the Trustees' history of requests for staff/salaries and a promise made by a former Town Administrator regarding the addition of a Children's Librarian. Mark conveyed that the Board of Selectmen are supportive of the Library and that the Library will be a priority of the Board in the coming year.

The Trustees and Sharon reviewed the 3 options that have been proposed over the last several months. Option 1 – Request from the Town a budget increase in FY2021 of \$20,000 in order to increase the wages of the Reference and Adult Services Librarian and the Children's Librarian positions by \$10,000 each. Option 2 – Request from the Town a budget increase in FY2021 of \$10,000 to increase the wages of the Reference and Adult Services Librarian. In FY2022, the Trustees would request another increase of \$10,000 to increase the wages of the Children's Librarian. This would allow the Library to bring on a new Children's Librarian around November 2020. Option 3 – Request no budget increase from the Town in FY2021. In order to increase the wages of the Reference and Adult Services Librarian, money will be re-allocated from the salary line for the currently unfilled Children's Librarian. This will further delay the hiring of a Children's Librarian.

The Trustees determined that an adjustment needs to be made to the Chart of Classification and Salaries that is set by the Advisory and Finance Committee (FinComm) as there is currently no

entry for a Reference or Adult Services Librarian. This discussion should begin with the selectmen and FinComm immediately.

There was discussion about whether money for the salary increase could be deducted from the amount proposed to be added to the Town's reserve fund, but no determination was reached. Chris Stevens believed that requesting the funds from free cash would not be considered sustainable. The Trustees seemed interested in pursuing Option 1, with Option 2 as a fallback. Sharon Hawkes confirmed that the Library and the Trustees have never asked for a budget increase nor to dip into the reserve funds. In fact, at the end of FY2020, the Library returned a balance of about \$9,700 to the Town.

Daniel Munnelly expressed interest in hiring a Children's Librarian soon and wanted to discuss how that would be accomplished if the amendment was not accepted at Town Meeting.

Chris Stevens requested a Motion to transfer money from the Children's Librarian salary into that of the Library Assistant, begin work to amend the Chart of Classification and Salaries to represent the Library accurately, and work with the selectmen and FinComm for the full increase in FY2022. Motion made by Daniel Munnelly, seconded by Anne Spirn, and Approved by roll call vote.

Chris Stevens - Aye

Anne Spirn - Aye

Daniel Munnelly - Aye

This agreement should be relayed at Town Meeting. Emily Potts suggests transparency about delaying the hire of a Children's Librarian and Sharon Hawkes reiterates the importance of delineating between capital expenditures (special building projects) and the regular operating budget (salary, materials, upkeep) when seeking support from the public.

### **Director's Report.**

**Financials and Budget 2021.** August closed with \$16,444.79 expended from \$19,795.14 budgeted by the Trustees under the expenditure plan for the month. The town administrator requested a similar expense plan for October in case the town meeting did not take place or did not reconcile its omnibus budget, so Sharon will ask for a vote to ratify it.

The town annual report will include the library building on its cover, celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the municipal library collection in 1819.

Christine's letter concerning the budget proposal was sent to the Library email newsletter list on September 11, and it was repeated in the first Wowbrary newsletter a week later. Both were shared through Facebook. There has been a lot of positive feedback.

The Library's proposed budget increase became a topic at the September 16 selectmen meeting, when it was brought up by Bonnie D'Orlando unexpectedly during the citizen's open forum portion of the meeting. Tony Barletta mentioned that the budget would not

allow for an increase this year, and that the total Library budget is voted on, meaning that the librarian can reassign the budget lines as she wishes. Mark Cullinan said that it could be discussed at town meeting by declaring “pass” when the line item is read. Gene Canty said that he had had many people come to him about this issue and was interested in providing the increase. All agreed that Carolyn has been doing an exemplary job.

Sharon also suggests getting up during Article 1 of the warrant, to revise the Chart of Classification and Salaries to include a Reference Librarian with the same salary range as a Children’s Librarian, \$16,500-\$56,430.

**Building.** Construction work continues, with a goal of completion by the end of October. On September 17, the entry was moved to the front door by way of a bridge while the work near the side entrance is being performed. The concrete is to be poured on Friday.

**Library services.** Sharon and Carolyn have completed Week Eleven of limited opening to the public.

**Catalog systems.** The statewide catalog system, ComCat, resumed operation on September 21. Some libraries are still not back in operation, but this will open up more opportunities for our patrons to get the materials they want and need.

**Statistics.** The ARIS report to the Commonwealth is complete and submitted. The circulations of this past year were negatively impacted by the three and a half month’s closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we can anticipate that the same impact will be felt this year. However, some highlights included an increase of over 1,000 circulations of electronic materials, meaning that the Library’s campaign to get people using OverDrive and hoopla was successful. There was also an increased viewing of the summer music series and some of the Summer Reading Program attendances when they were featured online. The Library is continuing efforts to offer online programming this year.

**Library Card Sign-Up Month.** September is Library Card Signup Month, and we have been reminding people through social media to sign up for a library card. Sharon also sent a letter to the school to encourage teachers, students and families to do likewise.

**Hours Open.** Sharon would like to discuss the future possibility of needing to hold evening and weekend hours in keeping with state mandates for certified public libraries. Currently, the 32 hours open per week meets the Hours Open requirement and the Library Commission has not yet indicated that it would again require evening and weekend hours, which had been suspended last fiscal year due to the pandemic.

**Wowbrary.** The Library has instituted the use of Wowbrary for its email newsletters as a way to streamline telling the public about new acquisitions. Until now, Carolyn had been doing this by hand. Wowbrary adds new titles to the newsletter as they are catalogued. We can also continue to use the MailChimp platform when needed.

**Nature in Nahant Project.** Sharon created a video talk about the herbarium at the request of the Nahant Garden Club on August 22, and this has been playing on local cable and is hosted on YouTube. The Florence Johnson Herbarium went live online at Digital Commonwealth on August 26. An exhibit pairing some poster-sized enlargement of several specimens with photographs of the live plants growing in Nahant opened on September 17 and will be available by appointment through the end of November. The Lynn Item published an article about the exhibit on September 21. Thanks go to town hall for permission to film the talk, to Robert Wilson for his help enlarging the herbarium photos, John Benson for the live plant photos, and the Lynn Item for the coverage.

**Cheerio at Nahant Historical Society.** Cheerio, the duck of local and Internet fame, was in”duck”ted into the Nahant Historical Society in a brief but fun ceremony. The Library was asked to display books about ducks in support of that event.

**Filming.** Theresa Peterson, a prospective student to the NYU Graduate Film program, was in the library with a small group to film an audition tape for submission to the program. They worked for about 5 hours on Saturday, September 12, and were respectful of the space. Sharon had Tom deep clean the areas where they had worked before the building reopened.

**Kanopy.** Sharon is looking into incorporating Kanopy, a platform of award-winning, artistic, and educational films and videos to the Library’s electronic holdings. Like hoopla, the platform operates on a pay-per-use basis, and also includes performance rights for many of its offerings, which can help with programming when the library is open for in-house programs once again.

**Virtual Story Time.** Kathy Westin, the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement person who has delivered story times for the Library, will try out a virtual program on the first Wednesday of the month, beginning October 7 at 10:30.

**Nahant Reads Together.** Sharon is instituting a mini-program to read the Boston Book Festival’s One City, One Story title, “The Book of Life and Death.” The discussion will ask, What sustains you? Virtual activities will include a favored poetry presentation on September 24 called “Evening of Inspired Leaders;” a Zoom discussion with Sharon on October 4; and an online interview with the author, Grace Talusan, on October 16.

**Adjourned:** 7:36 PM