

Portland Library Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
Van Beynum Room  
February 15, 2024

Board Members Present: Olenka Castelli, Don Eiler, Betsy Graziano, Melissa Kelley, Laurel Steinhauser, Myra Finkelstein, Jade Richardson

Absent: Shaun Manning (BOS), Sharon Hoy (Board Clerk)

Others Present: Jennifer Billingsley (Library Director), Maureen Muir (President of the Friends), Tom Ladny (Meshomasic Hiking Club), Ralph Zampano.

Laurel Steinhauser called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

### **1. Public & Staff Comment**

Appreciation was expressed by Myra Finkelstein to Don and Maria Eiler for being such wonderful hosts of the joint Library Board of Directors and Friends of the Library party in January.

### **2. Additions and Approval of the Agenda**

A motion was made to approve the agenda with no changes by Myra Finkelstein, seconded by Melissa Kelley, to approve the February 15, 2024 agenda, all were in favor, motion carried.

### **3. Review Minutes:**

#### **a. Action on the Minutes of the January 18, 2024 Meeting**

Betsy Graziano made a motion to approve the January 18, 2024 meeting minutes, seconded by Jade Richardson, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

### **5. Corresponding Secretary's Report**

Betsy Graziano shared that several additional donations have come in to the endowment fund since the last week: one from Staff in honor of Dave Kuzminski retirement from the Town, and others in honor of Madalyn M. "Sue" (Clark) Gouin, and she plans to take the leaves to be engraved this month.

### **6. Old Business**

#### **a. LRCIC request update**

The board discussed the library request and reviewed the documentation submitted to the Town's Long-Range Capital Improvement Commission by Jennifer Billingsley and expressed

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their support. The library's meeting with this Commission has been rescheduled for Tuesday 2/20/24 due to the snow storm on Tuesday.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. Discussion of request from Meshomasic Hiking Club**

Tom Ladny shared of the history of the "Golden Boot Award" and construction of the plaque, as well as and the Meshomasic Hiking Club. The decision was made by the Library Director to add the plaque to the library's local history collection, where it will remain on display.

### **b. Meeting Room Policy**

After evaluating other local policies, additional edits were suggested for this document, Library Director will be sharing with Ryan and asking for feedback from town hall. Deferred to the March meeting.

### **c. Tutoring Policy**

During discussion additional policy edits to clarify changes were suggested as well as clarifying average length of time needed for Portland Public School tutors working with students. Deferred to the March meeting.

## **8. Friends of the Portland Library**

Maureen Muir provided the following updates:

- \$800 from the Special Project Fund was approved for the CUBE project. Thank you to Don Eiler for creating this wonderful structure for far less than the library was quoted for a similar item, and to Jenn B for requesting it.
- \$800 from the Special Project Fund was approved for the Reading is Fundamental grant. Jenn B reported that there was a tight application deadline. The Library is applying for this grant that will allow it to purchase 400 children's books from Scholastic @\$4/book: The grant covers \$2/book while the FPL will cover the other \$2/book. The books will be purchased with Halloween and/or Christmas baskets. Jenn Renk has already graciously agreed to select the books should we be awarded the grant.
- The current Art Show is by Jennifer Hart. Her work is aptly called Snowpaintings. The Friends hosted a successful reception on February 10.
- The plaque honoring our recently retired director, Jan Nocek was installed under the clock.

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**9. Chair's Report**

Laurel Steinhauser reminded board that the ACLB (The Association of Connecticut Library Boards) ACLB webinar on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Public Libraries was coming up on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm on Zoom and also reminded directors to sign and return town Code of Ethics paperwork.

**10. Director's Report**

In addition to Jenn's report, they reported that on Wednesday 2/14/24 there were plumbing issues which necessitated water being shut off for public restrooms. Public works staff moved quickly to repair and replace pipes and library staff were gracious and flexible. Issues were resolved by Thursday 2/15.

Jenn R and Jenn B submitted our application to the State Library for their Summer Enrichment Grant on 2/15/24, for \$2,000 to create circulating sensory overwhelm supply kits (noise cancelling headphones, sunglasses, weighted lap pads, etc), to host a performance from Turtle Dance Music, and to work with facilitator Sarah Spear on hosting two facilitated conversations for caregivers of neurodivergent children. Jade Richardson requested a copy of the Grant paperwork be sent to her.

Melissa Kelly will be running two Seed Library Volunteer sessions March 2 & March 9 at 12:30-2:30pm, signups are live on the library's event calendar online. We will also be launching a "One Seed, One Community" project for Portland with "basic green bean" seeds thanks to a generous donation from Fire Ring Farms.

**11. Other Discussion**

No other discussion.

**12. Adjournment**

Melissa Kelley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Don Eiler, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, with appreciation to Betsy Graziano and Jade Richardson for their assistance.

Jennifer Billingsley  
Library Director