

**Portland Library Board of Directors
Special Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2022**

Note: This meeting was conducted via Zoom due to Coronavirus-19 Pandemic

Board Present: Margot Chapman, Don Eiler, Betsy Graziano, Laurel Steinhauser, Myra Finkelstein, Jade Richardson, Melissa Woodward

Absent: None

Others Present: Jan Nocek (Library Director); Maureen Muir (President, Friends of the Library), Ralph Zampano

Margot Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

1. Budget Request to the Town Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget

Janet Nocek said suggestions that were made last month have been incorporated into the document. More dollars were put in; almost a 4% increase overall. We need to make sure we have adequate staffing and get back the position that hadn't been filled which will be necessary when we get back to normal. There is not a big increase in the staff line; the "full time" had a modest increase to cover raises, probably about 3.3%. Jan explained that without adequate staffing, they would have to call people in to assist when someone is out. Hiring another person would be at a lower rate.

Laurel Steinhauser clarified that the position for which they are talking is the one for 16 hours a week and asked if it includes benefits. Jan responded that it includes some benefits, i.e., prorated sick time after working "x" amount of hours. It doesn't include health care. It was suggested to add that statement or have a list of bullet points that addresses what happens when staff members take a leave or need to be out.

Jan continued saying that they could use a regular maintenance person assigned to the library. The maintenance comes out of public works. When meetings are being held, it gets to be a burden to keep the library properly maintained and it may not be as nice as it should be. Don Eiler said when public works cut their spending, they took it away from the library. Margot added that since the renovation has been done, it is important to keep things up and not let things get behind.

Regarding databases, Jan said there are a lot of free databases through the State and we try to get things that are not available through the State.

Data Processing includes things for services like Library Connection that provides software that allows us to share with more than 30 libraries. Their assessment went down this year. Jan told of a new library that was added, Middletown.

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Don Eiler said Jan's summary is excellent for detailing; it is especially important for the new administration. Hopefully people will read it. March 16 is the date for the library's workshop.

Discussion ensued as follows: Since there are mostly new selectmen, should an email be sent to them showing statistically how many people use the library and equating it to tax dollars? Margot suggested that programs and activities that the library provides could also be included. She also thinks the pandemic should be covered and state how the library served the public during that time and the services that were provided. Jan and her staff have been there when other facilities have been closed.

When to submit the supporting documentation was discussed. Margot asked if it would be better to wait for Ryan to submit the formal budget and then we can see what has been cut. Ralph thinks this might be better. We may get more bang for the buck when we are closer to the date and it is on their minds. Jan thinks it doesn't hurt to start early and often. The BOS will have a lot of things on their minds; so start early with a few thoughts and bring it to their attention. Ralph thought it might be good to make a point to Tom and Ryan because that is the first phase; the second phase is the workshops. Don said it is important to touch on the salient points; here is the rationale of what you are asking for and what you may have to defend later. Margot asked when Ryan and Tom will be looking at this and when would we need to send letters. The response was that the request needs to go in next week and they have until the end of February to look at the budget. Laurel suggested a letter be crafted to Ryan on behalf of the entire library board saying we looked at Jan's budget and state the two areas that show an increase and then defend the increases. Don will do a rough draft; email it to Laurel and Margot for distribution to all board members; with comments going back to Don. Don expressed concern that most people won't read it; however, he thinks it is a gem of a document.

Jade Richardson made a motion, seconded by Don Eiler, to approve the 2023 Library Operating Budget; all were in favor; none opposed; no abstentions; motion unanimously carried.

2. Discuss capital request:

Janet said she still needs to add a couple of things. The security cameras are the main thing to try to get this year.

Laurel asked about bollards and why or if they are needed. Jan said this area could be thought to be a driveway. It isn't likely that a car would drive in there but it is an area of concern.

Margot asked about overhead protection. Jan said it is something we should start to look at. It would protect people if they were waiting to be picked up or meeting with someone. Or if the library wasn't open, they could use the wireless. It would be good to have protection over the bench that was paid for by the American Rescue Program. Margot asked if we would want to

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include it in the letter addressing the security cameras. Margot thinks Jan prioritized the list very well as to what is needed.

Laurel Steinhauser made a motion to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Melissa Woodward; all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Hoy, Recording Clerk