

Northwood Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting

Date: 11/14/2025.

Final

In attendance: Betty Smith, Chair; Pat Vaillancourt, Treasurer; David R Coursin, Secretary; Dana Hochgraf, Alternate; Donna Bunker, Library Director.

Absent: Pat Savage, Alternate.

Update from Town Administrator Neil Irvine

- Mr. Irvine reviewed recent decisions to limit further discretionary spending by all departments for the remainder of the calendar year.

Minutes Review

- Misspellings were corrected and the minutes for last meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

- Available reports were reviewed and discussed.
- The board requested that the secretary deposit the Alfred Parsons Trust Fund reimbursement check for music books.

Director's Report Highlights

- See Solar Project Update for the brightest of highlights.
- Kathryn Swain Williams estate planning seminar.
 - 17 attendees, well received
 - Donated additional \$50 with no restrictions.
- Historically, the library has the lowest utilization during the Fourth of July holiday week and Christmas week. It's most economical for staff to take vacations together when possible. Taking those vacations together over these holidays has the least impact on library services. With that in mind the board unanimously approved the following closures:
 - Thanksgiving Holiday closures: 11/26-27 and 11/29/25.
 - Christmas Holiday closures: 12/24-25 and 12/27/25.
 - New Year's Holiday closures: 12/31/25 and 1/1/26.

Budget & Expenditure Analysis

- Seventy-two percent of our budget was expended through October.
 - The director has worked to do the most with the least discretionary spending all year.
- Discretionary spending was frozen on November 10, and we are no longer able to purchase books, despite YTD purchases being well within the 2025 default budget restrictions.
- The Wish Tree Program may help with donations for some items.

Solar Project Update

- Project was approved as part of recently released Congressional expenditures.
 - There are still a number of critical steps to be done before 12/31/25, including RFPs and subsequent contracting negotiations with an installer, review and acceptance by the BOS, and confirmation of the town's commitment to its contribution.
 - The trustees will contribute as much as \$5,000 from trustees' funds. The Friends of the Library are committed to a contribution of up to \$4,000.

- Mr. Irvine indicated that the town and the BOS support the grant implementation and will work with the director and consultant to submit a satisfactory application by the 12/31/25 deadline.
- The town will save the funds it would spend on a generator once the battery system is installed.
- The town will save significant future expenses for electricity.
- Important roof repairs and window work are included.
- The director will continue to work with Katrin Kasper to shepherd this through the remaining steps.

Budget Committee Preparation

- The BOS has asked us to take our budget proposal directly to the budget committee.
- Meeting: December 4th, 7:30 PM at Town Hall.
 - The director and all trustees will attend
 - Third item on agenda.
- As directed, our budget proposal asks for what we need, not what we think will pass, and focuses in particular on the negative consequences of insufficient full-time staffing.

Historical Society Building Agreement

- Trina Carlson, president, and Sandy Priolo, secretary, attended.
- They agreed that biweekly building checks can work for them.
- They will keep a log of the following:
 - Interior temperature.
 - Confirm HVAC is functioning as expected.
 - Any signs of moisture problems.
- They estimate that they have 50-75 visitors annually (April-October). They will explore ways to get an accurate count which can be hard because people will come in and out.
- We reviewed our plans for the preservation consultant assessment planned for the spring with May Williams.
- Their primary safety concern are the front granite steps settling and water damage.

Operational Updates

- Technology Librarian position filled
 - Paige Campos started Monday
 - She has past experience working with a solar energy company in Texas and may have knowledge that will come in handy with planned solar installation.
- Book ordering challenges
 - Baker & Taylor disbanded without notice.
 - Orders with Ingram have been delayed.
 - Amazon Business Prime now free through MHEC consortium and Amazon is now offering libraries discounts of 35-45% with rapid delivery when ordering through them.

Lift Installation Progress

- Lift shipped as of November 13.
- 5-day library closure required.
 - 2 days demolition, 2-3 days installation.
- Preferred timing: Second week of December.

Trustee Fund Decisions

- Alfred Parsons Trust Fund reimbursement to be deposited as described above.

- The trustees confirmed their decision to pay \$5,600 for the preservation consultants work, scheduled in the spring.
- The trustees unanimously voted to contract with Jeff Markee to complete the interior painting work and will pay the estimated cost of \$1,824.
 - Work to be scheduled after lift installation.
 - Mr. Makree will work at night to avoid business hours disruption.

Library of Things Program Changes

- Shared collection is dissolved with three of four libraries signing an agreement to do so.
- Carpet cleaner replacement needed at a cost of \$269.99, but we do not have the funds to replace it given current budget constraints and present commitments.
- This may find a place in the Wish Tree Program, but the expense is greater than the usual items included in the program.

A motion to adjourn was unanimously passed at 12:10pm