

**AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**September 10, 2008**

**Call to Order: 7:07 pm**

**Members Present:** Sydney Baily-Gould, Laura Buckley, Mary Dunford, Ann Iacobucci, Christine Johnson, Johanna Kimball, David Oxtan, Jane Ward, Sue Zielinski

**Absent: None**

**Library Staff Present:** Katie McDonough

**Visitors:** Steven Dunford

**Communications:** None

**Secretary's Minutes:** Minutes of the June 11 and July 17, 2008 meetings accepted on a motion by Dunford, second by Kimball.

**Budget Report (FY 08 year end report and FY 08 - Aug 21, 2008):** McDonough informed the Board that the year end report shows a remainder of \$1700.00 in the library's budget. She added that they were pleased to have achieved their goal of no negative balance. Dunford asked for an explanation of the category "Automation." McDonough answered that this item is the consortium membership fee.

**Gift Report :** None

**New Book List (July, August, September 2008):** Accepted on a motion by Kimball, second by Buckley

**Director's Report:** Report on file.

**Committee Reports:**

**Long Range Planning:** Buckley stated that the committee has not met yet but should meet soon to participate in the long range planning process. McDonough added that the Long Range Plan is good for another couple of years although the action plan should be reviewed yearly. She added that she is not sure when that is due but will inform the committee when their input is needed.

Zielinski commented that in the past the committee met in the fall because the action plan was due in the winter. She added that the committee looked at the progress goals, what had been

accomplished, what remained to be accomplished and thus what would be carried over in to the new action plan. Buckley summarized for new committee members that the group would meet to review the plan in place and look at where we are now with meeting objectives.

**Finance Committee:** Nothing to report.

**Historic Preservation:** Nothing to report.

**House Maintenance:** Drinking fountain has been removed and replacement options of either water dispenser or handicapped accessible fountain are being reviewed.

**Building Study Committee:** Iacobucci reported that this committee has not met. She proposed a series of brainstorming sessions perhaps over the course of the next three Board meetings. During these sessions, she explained, trustees could bring in all ideas related to a potential building project and put these on the table. She said she believes open discussion and newspaper coverage of all discussion is key to public interest and understanding. Johnson agreed that consensus building is a great idea.

Baily-Gould stated that Sunny Vandermark's update to the 2000 Building Study should come first to instruct us as to what the community needs from its library. Johnson added that the Vandermark update is the first step in a series of steps that trustees need to take moving forward with any building study discussion. McDonough stated that Vandermark will visit Amesbury and perhaps meet with focus groups to create the update that will serve as a blueprint for future action.

Iacobucci stressed the need for getting information out early so that townspeople start thinking positively about a potential project. Zielinski agreed that this was a very important point but doubted that the project was ready for a community-wide group yet. She said she believes we need the basis of the study first because we don't yet know what Vandermark will recommend. She added that a good progression might be: Vandermark gathers information about the community needs; the Board reads and digests the information from the study; the Board meets to discuss our thoughts about the plan; the Board begins to look for community representation on a building committee.

Iacobucci added that site visits to other libraries that have undertaken building projects had been helpful to her and could be very helpful to the Board as a whole moving forward. Zielinski suggested scheduling a workshop dedicated to looking at the information Iacobucci has gathered about other building projects. All agreed this would be a helpful workshop.

Johnson stated that any new building committee formed in the future would be look different and have a much broader mission than the current building study committee. McDonough agreed. She said she believes that a building committee will grow out of community members participating in focus groups during the building study update process.

McDonough reminded the Board that first funding must be released for the updated study. Iacobucci asked for an idea of the time frame for finding such funding. McDonough said that the

Municipal Council will soon begin to look at free cash in the budget. The Council will then look at the groups that need portions of this money. The Mayor will make recommendations to the Council, but the Council will decide how to appropriate free cash.

In summary, Zielinski suggested keeping the items of 1)an update on the Vandermark study and 2)a future trustee workshop on the calendar of unfinished business.

Baily-Gould agreed and as chairperson she disbanded the current ad hoc Building Study Committee.

### **Unfinished Business:**

**Staff Appreciation:** Baily-Gould suggested a Thursday afternoon for the proposed appreciation event. Buckley reported on a similiar event held recently for the staff of the Merrimac Library. For that occasion, Buckley said, trustees presented staff with a restaurant gift certificate and staff went out and enjoyed lunch together. She stated that a joint event with trustees and staff would be appropriate if the goal is bonding between the two groups. But, she added, if the goal is purely showing appreciation then perhaps it is more appropriate for trustees to give an event that staff could enjoy just for themselves.

Johnson suggested a pot luck lunch. Baily-Gould proposed a Thursday and McDonough offered to check for a best date and report back to the Board. Dunford stated that if the lunch could be set for Thursday, October 9, then trustees could visit the library after the scheduled October 8 meeting to set up for the next day's lunch. Ward circulated a pot luck sign up sheet for trustees and everyone pledged to bring a dish or paper/plastic ware.

**NMRLS :** List of FY '09 trustee priorities created during the meeting with Greg Pronevitz was included in this month's Board packet.

**Automated phone v. live person:** McDonough reported that the automated system with an option to speak to a staff member is working well. There has been positive feedback from staff and patrons. She added that the newly implemented revised cell phone policy has been widely accepted as well.

### **New Business:**

**Programs and ADA:** McDonough asked to postpone discussion of this issue until October's meeting. She stated that in light of recently awarded Equal Access and Mother Goose grants she wants to find the written policy and make sure she is fully informed before she brings discussion to the table.

**Friends' mtg. 9/8/08:** Dunford attended and reported that the Friends plan to hold a fundraiser at Flatbread on October 14. The group hopes to get their newsletter out well in advance of the event and asks for help folding the flyer at an informal gathering on September 24 at 6 pm in the library's reading room.

Baily-Gould proposed scheduling more trustee representatives to attend upcoming Friends' meetings. Ward suggested scheduling these three months out which would take the Board to the end of the year. Johnson will be the representative at the 10/6 meeting, Kimball will attend the 11/3 meeting, and Oxtan will cover 12/1.

**Evaluating our library director and our board:** Baily-Gould reminded the Board that Greg Pronevitz asked the Board during our NMRLS training session who evaluates the Director. Johnson stated that in the case of prior director Lankin, the Board set up an informal evaluation committee after a year. She added that for the process, staff was consulted for input, the committee discussed director's strengths and weaknesses, and then a report was written. She noted that as a Board, we are responsible to the public and as such are evaluated through the election or re-election process. She also noted that the points developed during NMRLS training points our course for the year.

Zielinski suggested that the long range plan could be put on the agenda for a future meeting and at that time we can evaluate how the Board did at meeting those goals. Buckley agreed, adding that we can format NMRLS points into goals to be accomplished. She offered to write out the goals for review at October's meeting and proposed this item be kept on the agenda as unfinished business. This way, she said, we can evaluate our progress.

Zielinski asked to return to the topic of Director's evaluation. She asked if this evaluation needed to be done at a certain time. Baily-Gould said that policy in the Massachusetts Public Library Trustees Handbook points to an evaluation happening within the first six months of a Director's hiring. Buckley pointed out that a written evaluation will be a document the director can keep on file to bring to any future position.

#### **Other Business:**

McDonough called attention to other items in this month's Board packet: a Trustees Information Kit checklist; a copy of the 2008 Annual Report Information Survey; information about two upcoming seminars; and Detective Wile's report entitled "Town Hall Employees and the Public."

Trustee Dunford noted that District 3 Councilor Steven Dunford was present, and asked if he would address the previously discussed issue of free cash and how it relates to the Board's needs for funding the Vandermark building study update.

Councilor Dunford explained that free cash is the amount of money left over in the budget once revenue collected has been spent as authorized. He added that it is money that can be used but has not been allocated for any specific purpose. Free cash must be used by the end of a fiscal year and expenditures are approved by the Municipal Council. The Mayor makes recommendations to the Council; the Council then refers the recommendations to the Finance Committee; the Finance Committee submits its recommendations to the Council; and the Council then votes on how to appropriate the free cash.

Dunford recommended finding a councilor to help shepherd the Board's request for using

some of the free cash to fund the Vandermark building study update through the process. He suggested either at large Councilors Ferguson or Neale, or District 6 (the library's district) Councilor Sherwood. McDonough asked who should approach one of the councilors, the library director or a trustee. Dunford replied a trustee.

Ward proposed that trustees might like to partner with Our Neighbors' Table to sponsor one of their weekly community dinners as a group. She explained that as sponsors of a meal, trustees would be responsible for serving the meal on a designated Wednesday evening and not for funding the meal. She added that she would approach the program's director, Rosemary Werner, and bring more information about the volunteer opportunity to October's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Ward  
Secretary