

**SPECIAL SELECTBOARD & LIBRARY MEETING**  
**September 19, 2024**  
**Minutes**

Present:	Bill Cleary	Holly Delisle
	Wendy Doane	Bree Drapa
	Casey Mathieu	Vicky Ross
	Helen Sterling	Pat Haller
	Pat Hechmer	Becky Roy
	Niquette Bergeron	

Guests: Lynn Gauthier.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**WESTFORD LIBRARY OVERVIEW**

Helen Sterling introduced the trustees, Bree Drapa and Niquette Bergeron, and the library subs Charles Cavanaugh and Tina Scanlon. Helen thanked Pat Hechmer who was a trustee for over 10 years and was chair for 5 years.

Pat Hechmer recalls that the library services have expanded over the years from books to things like a telescope, LEGO robotics kits and tables & chairs. There are also a lot of digital offerings like language learning software and tech services now. They have their new website, Facebook and YouTube pages. The library's hours make it an ideal collection place for the community. It provides a meeting space for town groups and other community groups and hosts community events like coffee & cards and tabletop game nights. Becky Roy added that the library provides a workspace for people when their power is out during storms. Wendy Doane thanked them for hosting the charging station which she used when her power was out. Bree added that Niquette is a notary for nights and weekends.

Becky Roy shared about after school clubs and community events like hosting art shows and candidate forums. The library participates in Winterfest and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. They partner with the Westford Conservation Commission, Westford Recreation Committee, Historical Society, Food Shelf and Schools. Wendy asked how many students use the library after school. Bree noted that there is a policy that students 9 and up can get off the bus at the library. They read, play games, use the computers, go to the Country Store for snacks, etc. There are also sign-up activities that are more like a class. After school programs run by the school end at 5<sup>th</sup> grade, so the library picks up from there. Sometimes up to 10 students use the library after school. The library, while open, is an official Vermont warming and cooling location which is a service used often in the winter months.

Helen highlighted new offerings like Biblio+ and Mango Languages which were funded by grants for their pilot programs. Bree demoed a "Wonder Book" which replaces books on tape or books on CD. The voice narrator is built into the book itself and reads through the book as you turn the pages. Helen noted that act 150 allows students 12 and over to check out any book they like without permission. It also protects the library workers from threats, especially when it comes to banned books. Bree was at a conference where she learned that some libraries don't even allow kids into their buildings or could be faced with fines.

Helen applauded Bree's knack for getting grants. She has received every grant she has applied for so far. The library got a brief update about their large grant application for ADA and building updates. The state has selected the recipients but hasn't said who they are yet.

Vicky went over how the library works. The library director reports to the board of trustees and the staff reports to the library director. They have their own unique policies unless they point back to the Town's policies. Town office staff support pay, benefits and financial reporting and the library has capital budget reserves under the Town's capital plan. There are 5 elected trustees each with 5-year terms. The library trustees collect donations to augment the allocation from the Town budget. Pat Haller asked whether the library must come to the selectboard before they spend a certain amount of money. Vicky used the example of the library furnace which needed emergency repairs. The library came to the selectboard for that. Bree noted that the library building is a town asset. She appreciates the closer working relationship between the Selectboard and the library than there had been in the past. Bree feels like there is a good relationship between herself and the rest of the town staff too.

Bree explained what consortiums are. Our library card can be used at other libraries in the county. The library is also part of the Green Mountain consortium which gives purchasing power like a collective bargaining agreement. Bree explained that library copies of the same online services that can be purchased at the store are multiple times as expensive for the library to purchase, so the consortium helps bring that cost down.

Vicky stated that the library is thrifty. They use strategies to keep costs down. They also rely on some volunteer time. Bree and Niquette do a lot of the IT work that would otherwise cost the library/town money. The trustees serve without stipend and fundraise to help with expenses. Bree noted that fundraising and grants do not pay operating expenses. Vicky shared highlighted that discretionary spending is the smallest amount in the budget. She noted the grant income totals and the volunteer hours that are donated to the library. Fundraising totals are high the last couple of years because of a resident who donated generously.

Bree said that the library wanted to share their pride in their work and to make sure that the Selectboard is updated about the library like all the other town departments. Bill looks forward to seeing the library budget request. Vicky doesn't foresee any surprises in the library's budget request because they have settled into things. Bree noted that staffing is a new piece. She was the only one for a long time and now there are other staff members. Vicky noted that Bree the library operates on the equivalent of one full-time position.

Pat Haller noted that he knows it costs money for big things or repairs. How is that budgeted for? Bree and Holly explained that the library has a capital reserve fund that is managed in the Town's capital plan.

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:19p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Cleary, Chair  
Selectboard

Holly Delisle  
Town Administrator

ADOPTED THIS 26 DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2024.

**WESTFORD SELECTBOARD**



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William Cleary, Chair



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Patrick Haller



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Casey Mathieu

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Deb Sawyer Jorschick



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Wendy Doane