

Minutes of Gorham Public Library Trustees Meeting: October 22, 2015

Trustees Present:

Aaron Gorban, Gail Wigler, Clint Emmett, David Graham

Staff / Others Present:

Elizabeth Thompson, Director; Paul Robitaille, former Selectman & current Planning Board Member

The meeting was called to order by Chair Aaron Gorban at 6:00PM.

After review of the minutes of the meeting of September 22, 2015 a motion to accept the minutes was made by Aaron Gorban and seconded by Gail Wigler. Motion passed unanimously.

Appointments:

Chairman Gorban welcomed Paul Robitaille, former Selectman & current Planning Board Member. Paul had asked to speak to the trustees about the history of the Gorham Public Library. He also served as a trustee for 25 years and was involved with the establishment of the library at its current site.

Paul Robitaille is a lifelong resident of Gorham and his family is one of the oldest families in the community. Given his experience, Paul is in a unique position to discuss the library's history.

The first library in Gorham was established in the 1880's as a private library on Exchange Street. A second private library was established shortly thereafter. Around 1890 these libraries merged and donated their collections to the Town of Gorham. The town library was established on the second floor of Gorham Town Hall and remained there through the 1970's and 1980's. In the mid 1980's the community began discussing the idea of building a library. The Rotary Club and Steve Tassely led this discussion, along with other community leaders including Paul. At that time the King family had purchased the Bishop house next to the Royalty Inn. There was proposal to demolish it but a plan emerged for the building to be moved and become the new library. This was a very complex plan involving coordination on many levels and raising funds to pay for this move and complete construction. Through the efforts of the community the plan was successful. The building was moved from its original site to the current site on land formerly owned by the railroad. Architect Tim Sappington was involved in the design process. The location of the library was carefully planned to provide a sight line from Main Street to encourage pedestrian traffic to the library. Two wings were added and the library has been in operation at this site since.

Paul mentioned that the library had a number of original rare and valuable items such as "Among the Clouds", a collection of newspapers, Judge Marble's book on the International Paper strike. Judge Marble was from Gorham. Another is Dr. Johnson's book "Lost Boundaries". Dr. Johnson was a well known resident of Gorham and later Keene. In addition, there are other documents and works that belong to the library. Paul also spoke about the support of David Murphy and his generous bequest to GPL. The Board thanked Paul for his interesting and informative presentation.

Treasurer's Report:

Gail and Elizabeth provided copies of the financial reports to all members. These included alternative budget projections for the 2016 budget.

Elizabeth mentioned that she has spoken to Denise Vallee about the format of our budget document. In previous years the library had its own reports in a different format. It would be possible to submit this year's budget request in the same town format. This is consistent with the way other departments present theirs and should be easily understood by those reviewing it. After a brief discussion it was decided that we would use the town format.

Budget alternatives were discussed. After discussion, a motion was made by David Graham to approve our budget request in amount of \$ 159,955. Motion passed unanimously. It should be noted that \$ 7,433 (about 80%) of the increase is a result of mandated health insurance costs which the library is legally required to pay.

In previous years the library delegated the presentation process to one person. It was agreed that this year we will all participate to some extent with Aaron taking the lead as Chair.

Budget discussion continued on the possibility of establishing a Capital Reserve Fund for future maintenance such as roof, furnace, etc. The Murphy fund has been used for this in the past nine years. The concern is that there is a need to plan for future projects rather than responding to a crisis when something happens. After discussion, a motion was made by Dave Graham to request establishment of a capital reserve of between \$ 5,000 & \$ 10,000. Gail Wigler seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Board also decided to put together a schedule of repairs and anticipated need for future reference.

Director's Report:

Director Elizabeth Thompson reported on a number of items:

- The “History of the Abenakis” series ended on 10-21. It was very successful and the turnout was excellent.
- Dave Govatski’s presentation on “The Inside Passage” had 35 people in attendance. He is planning another presentation in December on Iceland. Details to come.
- The “Songs of World War II” presentation was also well attended.
- A basket weaving workshop had 6 participants.
- Storyteller Rebecca Rule will present “Spooky Stories” on October 30.
- Elizabeth is attending the New England Library Association meeting next week.
- Elizabeth recommended Thanksgiving schedule to coincide with Town – closed from Thursday to Monday. Board voted to approve.
- Elizabeth has begun staff evaluations and shared the process with Board for their input.
- Elizabeth & Meg Rajala have become Certified Marketplace Assisters for the Health Insurance Marketplace. They completed a curriculum and obtained this certification. This is part of the community outreach process and another valuable service the GPL will offer.

Other Business:

None.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, November 24, 2015 at 6:00PM

A Motion to Adjourn passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.