

GREAT BARRINGTON LIBRARIES
231 Main St.
Great Barrington, Ma. 01230

Great Barrington Libraries' Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
July 5, 2011
5:30 P.M.
Mason Library

PRESENT: KARIN BEEBE
TOM BLAUVELT
RONNIE CUNNINGHAM
HOLLY HAMER
HILDA BANKS SHAPIRO
JIM STARK

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Karin Beebe at 5:35 P.M.

2. Plan for the resignation of Anne Just

Karin Beebe said, with the resignation of Anne Just, the trustees should have an opinion and resolution as to what they think the appropriate move as a Board should be, given they are going through a struggle in terms of who has the power to hire and fire.

Karin Beebe presented a document in which she wrote down her thoughts to be used as a talking off point for discussion. She asked the Board for their opinion about this document.

Tom Blauvelt said that he is very pleased to see that the Board is softening their approach to the Board of Selectmen. He said that their original approach created an adversarial relationship with Kevin O'Donnell and the Selectboard. He added that he doesn't think that they should hold off and suggested that, being governed by the current charter, they let Kevin proceed with the candidate interviewing for a Director..

He said that he doesn't agree with the paragraphs beginning with "Until the charter" and after. He feels that there shouldn't be an interim person because it is a very important position.

Hilda Banks Shapiro said she feels that Kevin O'Donnell shouldn't be involved at all and it should be the trustees that decide. She suggested that they go with the option of having Jessica Magelaner continued to be trained.

Jim Stark said that he doesn't see how the Board can by-pass the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen. He said that this wouldn't work. He also said that the sentence about 'current charter' opens up a lot of questions.

Karin Beebe said that the big issue is that Anne Just is retiring and they need a strong candidate. She said that Jessica Magelaner would be up to the challenge. She feels that this option will keep the Board from looking 'power hungry.' She said that it is not unusual to have an interim Director.

Holly Hamer said that she researched interim Directors and found that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners stated that the Library can appoint an acting temporary Director for up to three years. The library will be eligible to receive State aid to public library awards as long as a permanent Director is appointed within 3 years. She added that this interim period may be as long as it takes to amend the charter, if need be. Holly said that Jessica Magelaner has great qualifications and is tech. savvy.

Ronnie Cunningham said that she is strongly in favor of Jessica Magelaner being appointed as the interim. She said that this can be presented without 'locking horns'. She agrees that the Board will have to work within the current charter.

Karin Beebe said that the Library has always been understaffed so it won't be any worse. She said that there may be a need for more volunteers but she would like to keep it positive for the Library.

Tom Blauvelt suggested that the Board recommend to Kevin O'Donnell an interim Director without naming the person so as to adhere to how the library has been run up to now.

Jim Stark responded that only one person would qualify. (Jessica Magelaner)

Tom asked what would happen to Jessica's position.

Karin Beebe said that the staff will rise to the occasion.

Holly Hamer said that this doesn't force the issue of who is in charge if they recommend Jessica. Tom Blauvelt suggested that they draft a statement saying 'from within the ranks.' instead of naming a particular person.

Holly Hamer said that she feels that this would sound weak and said that the Board wants to work together and to do what they were chosen to do. She said that she would like to give Jessica Magelaner the honor of being named.

Ronnie Cunningham said that Jessica has created a great system for schedules.

Karin Beebe said that this is only for the interim Director position and it is important for the 'smoothness of the library'. She would like to encourage Kevin to consider Jessica.

MOTION: Holly Hamer that the Trustees recommend to the Town Manager that Jessica Magelaner be appointed as an interim Director for a period not to exceed 3 years.

SECOND: Hilda Banks Shapiro

VOTE: 5-1 Tom Blauvelt against

There was discussion about how to present the document.

Tom Blauvelt suggested that it be sent via E-mail

The document was amended by the Board as a whole. (See attached)

MOTION: Ronnie Cunningham to accept the letter as amended

SECOND: Holly Hamer

VOTE: 6-0

It was decided that the letter would be sent as an E-mail to the Board of Trustees, the Board of Selectmen, Kevin O'Donnell, Jessica Magelaner, Anne Just and the entire staff.

- 3. Adjournment** - On a motion by Tom Blauvelt, seconded by Jim Stark, the Board adjourned their meeting at 6:21.

Respectfully submitted,

Cara Becker
Recording Secretary

STATEMENT OF THE LIBRARY TRUSTEES

We of the Board of Trustees of the Great Barrington Libraries are of the unanimous opinion that the ultimate resolution of the issue of the control of the library lies in the political, not the legal realm. That is to say, it is the people in the town who will decide, not the town's legal counsel.

Whatever ambiguities or contradictions that the 1992 Charter contains about the designated powers of the Town Manager over specific departments, wherein his control over the library is omitted, must stand on its merits. Whether this omission was purposeful or just an error is moot. The intentions of the committee in 1992 are irrelevant. The charter says what it says. If it needs to be changed, it must be done at either a special town meeting or the annual town meeting. The townspeople must be the final arbiters of the debate. The resolution of this problem must be political.

Until the Charter is amended, the Board of Trustees of the Great Barrington Libraries maintains that we abide by the current charter.

We recommend by majority vote that an interim library director be moved up from within the present staff. Accordingly, the present assistant director at Mason, Jessica Magelaner, who is experienced and highly qualified, should become the interim library director until the town decides who has the power to appoint a new library director.