

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

January 13, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

Trustees present were: Chair Jim Walsh, Matthew Bruun, Rob Favini, Mary Rice Hurley, Joanne Huse, Cynthia Jones, Jacalyn Kremer, and Michael Phaneuf. Others present were Director Sharon Bernard and Assistant Director Jean Tenander.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of November 18, 2020

The minutes of the November 18, 2020, meeting were approved by acclimation after being amended to change the name Jim Hohman to Jim Walsh under the Finance Committee report heading.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Walsh asked Dir. Bernard to let the Trustees know who is up for re-appointment this year. Re-appointment happens every 3 years. He also reminded the Trustees the Board was short four Trustees. He asked them to think about possible candidates and to use the recruitment letter drafted by Rob Favini for talking points and as an introduction to a candidate.

Chair Walsh repeated his thanks to Director Bernard and the staff, praising their hard work and resourcefulness.

Joanne Huse said she wanted to thank Director Bernard on behalf of ALFA, for making news about ALFA a permanent feature of the Library's web page. She gave a brief history of ALFA (Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area) at Michael Phaneuf's request.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Director Bernard said she was exploring the use of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) in libraries, i.e. self-check-out and inventory.

She said the MBLC has loosened its restrictions somewhat this year on material expenditures. She would like to use some of the money, thus made available, for the purchase of new computers.

The Director said she had been in touch with the director of Green Acres Village after reading that it will be renovated and adding a Community Center. She said she believed the Library could be a part of the Community Center in several ways that could be worked out. One idea would be to have a rotating collection in situ serviced at least once a week by library staff. The new Green Acres director wants to offer classes in English, finance and various subjects. Dir. Bernard said she would like the Library to be a part of this initiative. She feels the Library should have a presence in a new Community Center.

The Director has met several times with the City's new Facilities Director, Russ Karlstad. They have discussed possible solutions for the continual problems with the aged library furnace.

She mentioned that the next major program scheduled virtually for the public is a 3 part Diabetes Seminar which the Library is hosting with a grant from the University of Massachusetts Health Alliance.

COMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee-The Trustees were emailed a year's summary sheet of the Library's investments from Jim Hohman at First Financial. Jim Hohman met with the Director and the Finance Committee prior to tonight's meeting to discuss the report.

Chair Walsh said the Trustees needed to move ahead to create a foundation, a 501 (c) (3) for fundraising, however one of the purposes of the foundation will be its ability to own property in order to apply for New Market Tax Credits. He said we will need an attorney to establish it.

Legislative Committee-Chair Walsh said there is a proposal to tack some funding for libraries on the wait list for building to a Federal infrastructure bill. There is concern that cities and towns will be unable to move forward with their projects given the uncertainty of their future budgets.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Walsh said the Trustees need to create a search committee to begin the work of hiring a new Library Director since Director Bernard will be retiring in December of this year. Rob Favini, Jacalyn Kremer, and Mathew Bruun volunteered to be on the committee. It was suggested a staff member should also have a seat on the search committee which would also include Susan Davis, Human Resource Director for the City of Fitchburg.

Chair Walsh turned the meeting over to Director Bernard to report on the boiler. It has been determined that one of the two boilers is cracked on the inside and cannot be repaired. The Director spoke with our architect who contacted the technical person involved with our new design. Questions arose—should both be taken out and two new ones installed, should the new ones be of an appropriate size to heat our proposed new building, should we only replace the broken one. The proposed new boilers would possibly be gas fired rather than oil fired. The oil tank buried in the ground cannot remain there if it isn't in use. It would have to be removed if we switch to gas.

Some rules and regulations have changed since the heating system was installed. If significant changes are made code issues would need to be addressed.

OLD BUSINESS

Director Bernard said she will check to see which Trustees will come up for re-appointment this year. Rob Favini emailed the Trustees a letter he had written which he suggested could be handed to anyone interested in becoming a Trustee. It briefly outlines the job, mentions the new building project and sets out the steps for application. Applications should go to Chair Walsh or Director Bernard first and then they will be forwarded to the Mayor.

Director Bernard said the window project was almost complete. There are a four windows with rotted sills that need to be replaced.

Director Bernard said, although nothing is certain, the re-opening plan will not take effect until Fitchburg is in the appropriate category in terms of covid cases. When that happens, we will let people in just for computer use and one family at a time in the Youth for the first two weeks on a limited basis. Assuming the statistics do not change, we will then allow a limited number of patrons in for browsing for a limited time period probably by appointment. Everything depends on lowering the cases of the virus in Fitchburg.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m. by acclimation.

Respectfully submitted
by Jean Tenander

for Cynthia Jones

Fitchburg Public Library
Investment Performance
1/1/2020-12/31/2020

Investment Objectives **The investments comprising the Fitchburg Public Library shall be managed prudently with a primary emphasis on growth oriented securities that yield a reasonable rate of return.**

Alice & Rodney Wallace Funds Stocks-74% Bonds-24% Money Market-2%

Market Value 12/31/19	Market Value 12/31/20	Percent Change	Estimated Annual Income	Annual %Income
\$1,223,837	\$1,334,104	+ 9.01%	\$31,308	2.35%

Other Funds Stocks-22% Bonds-66% Money Market-12%

Market Value 12/31/19	Market Value 12/31/20	Percent Change	Estimated Annual Income	Annual %Income
\$ 792,538	\$ 833,684	+ 5.19%	\$18,558	2.22%

TOTAL				
\$2,016,375	\$2,167,788	+ 7.51%	\$49,866	2.30%

	12/31/2019	12/31/2020	Income Balance as of 12/31/2020
Restricted	\$349,114.55	\$362,234.57	\$ 47,945.43
Unrestricted	\$443,423.34	\$471,449.62	\$ 36,259.83
Total	\$792,537.89	\$833,684.19	\$ 84,205.26

Dear Community Leader,

The Fitchburg Public Library Board of Trustees is currently accepting applications to fill several open positions. I am reaching out to you to introduce you to the work of the board in the hope that you or someone within your network would be interested in becoming involved.

The Fitchburg Public Library Board of Trustees consists of 12 community members that have oversight of the custody and management of the library. Trustees work closely with the library director on issues relating to the management of trust funds, the approval of library policies, the submission of the library budget to City Hall, and most importantly the promotion and advocacy of the library to municipal stakeholders and community members.

Now is a particularly exciting time for the Fitchburg Public Library as we are working to capitalize on a significant state construction grant recently awarded to reinvasion the library building to better serve library users for decades to come.

Fitchburg Public Library Trustees are appointed by the Mayor to serve a three-year term. Board members attend a monthly meeting that is open to the public. Note: for the duration of the current COVID-19 restrictions all Board meetings are held by video conference.

The Fitchburg Public Library Board of Trustees values diversity and encourages applicants with diverse backgrounds including, but not limited to, people of color, LGBTQ+, gender, people with disabilities, ethnicity and religious affiliation.

If you, or someone you know, would like to be considered for a Board opening please send a current resume and statement outlining your interest to Fitchburg Public Library Board Chair, Jim Walsh (Jim's email).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the Fitchburg Public Library, the Board of Trustees, or the Board application process. I am more than happy to talk with you at your convenience.

Regards