

James Blackstone Memorial Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Location: Library Auditorium, 758 Main Street

Trustees (Present): Chad Edgar, Paul Gavejian, Larry Greenberg, Cheryl Kaiden, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Andy Melnick, Sue Wharfe, Lisa Zwack

Trustees (Absent): Michelle Blank, Liz Alcorn, Nancy Goldstein, Shahida Soomro, Jack Thompson

Friends of the Library: Barbara Barrett

Staff: Katy McNicol, Library Director, Kathy Oxsalida, Business Manager

Yale SOM Fellow: Brianna Hoelting

Public: none

Janice Kochanowski called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

President's Remarks – Janice thanked the Trustees for all the work they did on committees and events over the past few months. She also reminded Trustees that the Blackstone bylaws require that voting at official meetings take place either in person or virtually. She asked Sue Wharfe to have the Governance Committee consider other voting options if Trustees are unable to attend virtually or in person.

Additions to the Agenda – none

Approval of Minutes—A correction to the November minutes was noted to change the spelling of Michele to Michelle. Andy Melnick moved to approve the minutes. Cheryl Kaiden seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director's Report – Katy McNicol reported that she and Kathy Oxsalida reinstated the search for a Development Coordinator and have a strong candidate under consideration. The Fall Appeal has gone out and Katy thanked Trustees for contributing personal notes and the library staff for their extra effort to get the letters out. Follow up emails will be sent throughout December. A staff inservice program was held in November and Katy received interesting and new ideas from a follow up survey, including creating opportunities for staff to gather and have conversations. The website team has moved into the revision phase of the project, migrating content, creating pages and identifying bugs. The website developers' team will now work out the bugs and continue to add content. The Snuggles for Seniors initiative, started by Amy Rosen, is in its second year and the collection box continues to fill up regularly. The Blackstone is participating in the Community Dining Room Adopt A Family Program for the holidays and was able to fill their wish list through contributions from staff and Trustees, as well as contribute to the Branford Counseling Center's Secret Santa program.

Friends of the Library – Barbara Barrett reported that the Friends Gift Basket Raffle begins Thursday, December 12. Barbara also announced that since donations have been lower this year she did not anticipate that the goal of generating enough revenue to pay warehouse rent for two months would be

met. There is a possibility that the Branford Green will not be available for next year's Book Sale because of ongoing road work that will begin on Main Street next spring. Barbara will meet with Jamie Cosgrove to discuss possible alternatives.

Treasurer's Report – Larry Greenberg reported that the main endowment account stood at \$4,403m, an increase of about \$75,000 or 1.7%. The Creative-in-Residence account stood at \$564,000, an increase of about \$14,000 or 2.5%.

Kathy Oxsalida presented the October variance report and stated that this month the notable changes were on the income side. Contributions from the Susan Barnes bequest increased by over \$100,000. There was an issue with the check and the lawyer for the estate is working to resolve it. Development contributions of \$6,500 from the Spirits event will increase by about \$4,600 in November.

Committee Reports—

Finance Committee— Larry reported that the committee discussed the FY 2024 financial statements received from the accountants Bailey Scarano. There were no surprises in the statements and everything looked as expected in terms of the library's finances. The committee voted to recommend that the Board approve the financial statements and will meet with the accountants in the near future for further discussions. Janice Kochanowski moved that the Board accept the FY 2024 Financial Statements. Paul Gavejian seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Katy reported that Michelle Blank is working on establishing dates in January when a group of the building and grounds team can do an in person walk through and have a meeting. With respect to the balcony project the grant contract has been signed and the committee will now get ready to seek bids and get architect drawings. In preparation they will meet with Town Engineer John Hoefflerle to discuss how best to navigate this process.

Development Committee – Katy reported that the Spirits fundraiser was a success. It was budgeted to raise \$7,000 and raised \$9,000. The Fall Appeal is in the mail and donations are coming in. The committee also discussed additional fundraising opportunities.

Governance Committee – Sue Wharfe reported that the committee will meet next week to interview two trustee candidates. The committee will also consider amending the bylaws to include voting by email.

Adjournment –Mary-Rita Killelea made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cheryl Kaiden seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm.

Next regular meeting will be held on January 8, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary-Rita Killelea
Secretary

Note: minutes are provisional until approved by the Board of Trustees.