



Stevens Memorial Library
20 Memorial Drive
Ashburnham, MA 01430
978-827-4115 Fax 978-827-4116
stevensmemoriallibrary@gmail.com
www.ashburnhamlibrary.org

Summary of Stevens Memorial Library Board of Trustees
Meeting minutes of September 19, 2013

Present: Paula Dowd, Margaret Donovan, Paula St. Laurent Kuehl, Debra Mercier, Mary Kate Romano, Joseph von Deck, and Cheryl Paul Bradley

Paula Dowd called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M.

Minutes of Trustee meetings of Public Meeting June 4, 2013, Executive Session of June 4, 2013, July 16, 2013, and July 22, 2013 were read. Amendments to June 4th Open Session, June 4th Executive Session, July 16th, and July 22, were made. The Board then approved all previous stated minutes with amendments made. Kate made a motion. Deb seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Paula Dowd stated that she could not give the Trust Fund report, because she had not brought the Edward Jones statements. She said that she would discuss the Trust Fund account at the October 8th meeting.

Joe stated that he would like to see the details of the Trust Funds.

Cheryl stated that the August statement from Edward Jones still had former treasurer Cheryl Audino on it.

Paula Dowd stated that she had spoken with and filled out a form for Edward Jones removing Cheryl Audino's name from the statements in early July. She asked Cheryl Paul Bradley to call Deb at Edward Jones and have it corrected.

Paula Dowd stated that she would like a copy of all the trust funds, who had left them to the Library, and what each was to be used for.

Joe asked if any of the funds had been depleted.

Cheryl Paul Bradley stated that the trust funds had been combined into one fund by the Library Board of Trustees around 1999. When this took place they hired Edward Jones to put the fund into a money market account and manage it for the Library. The Library has only used the Whittemore Fund annual donation through the money market account. All other principles should have remained intact. She said that she would get the list of trust funds that make up the money market account for Paula Dowd.

Margaret stated that Louise Reid would like to use the Community Room for her next book sale. This sale would run from September 30th to October 4th. She would have all unsold books out of the room by Wednesday, October 9th.

Joe made a motion to allow Louise Reid to have her book sale in the Community Room. Deb seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Margaret stated that Cheryl was not being included in town emails. She said that she felt that since Cheryl has returned from administrative leave some town departments have excluded her from important communications. She is unable to do her job as Library Director. She said that Cheryl had not been informed about department head meetings, payroll form changes, and bills payables.

Paula Dowd stated that the trustees would look into the discrepancies in communication.

Margaret presented a letter written by Cheryl to the Board members with a number of issues that were of concern to her. See attached letter.

Paula Dowd stated that Cheryl's first concern was not something the Board had the authority to address.

Deb stated that she did not think that anyone on the Board realized how little authority they had in many areas, until the investigation.

Paula Kuehl asked Cheryl when she earns vacation hours. She asked if each new year started with the fiscal year or with the anniversary of Cheryl's employment. She asked if hours could be rolled over to the next year.

Joe asked if unused hours were lost at the end of the year.

Cheryl stated that time earned is from July 1st to June 30th of the fiscal year. She said that she had always used her time before the end of the year. A few years ago however, due to major issues at the Library, she had had time left at the end of the year. The Board had written a letter to the

town asking that, due to the circumstances, Cheryl not lose her time earned. The town had allowed the time to be rolled over.

Paula Kuehl made a motion that the Board write a letter to the Selectmen about Cheryl's time earned. Deb seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Paula Dowd stated that, on the second issue, she did not think that Cheryl had a personnel file.

Cheryl stated that she did and it was at the Town Hall.

Paula Kuehl asked why it wasn't at the Library.

Cheryl stated that all town employees' personnel files were at Town Hall, as far as she knew.

Paula Kuehl made a motion to add to the letter that all documentation regarding the investigation be removed from Cheryl's personnel file. Deb seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Paula Dowd stated that in regard to issue three, the documentation had gone to all department heads.

Cheryl stated that it had not and provided the Board with documentation. See attached documentation.

Cheryl stated that the new reimbursement policy was not clear.

Paula Dowd stated that Cheryl should contact Town Accountant to get clarification.

Cheryl asked if the Board would write to the Town Accountant for the policy

.

Deb stated that the IRS mileage reimbursement policy is not clear. She had read the policy and found it confusing. She had asked her father, who is a lawyer, to read it. He had also felt that it was ambiguous.

Margaret asked why the Town Accountant was making policy rather than the Town Administrator or Selectmen.

Cheryl stated that she uses a time sheet previously approved by the Library Board of Trustees and that there had never be an issue until her return from administrative leave.

Paula Dowd stated that the memo had gone to everyone.

Paula Kuehl stated that it seemed, from Cheryl's letter back to Barbara Brown, that Cheryl was following the procedure.

Kate stated that the Board had to ask questions about policy.

Margaret stated that she had spoken to Doug Briggs about him coming to the next meeting. He had said that he would be glad to come.

Kate stated that the Board should write a letter inviting Doug as well as making clear their concerns. This would allow him to prepare for the meeting.

Deb stated that she agreed. She said that such a letter would prevent delay in handling the issue.

Deb made a motion to draft and send a letter to Doug. Kate seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Paula Dowd stated that this could be resolved if Cheryl would contact the Town Accountant. She then moved issue number four to the next meeting.

Paula Dowd stated that she took issue with number five. The Board had followed the advice of the Town Counsel. She said that Cheryl should request the town pay her legal fees.

Margaret stated that the Board should pay the Director's legal fees. She said that rather than an investigation, the Trustees should have handled the issue.

Paula Dowd stated that the Board had done what it was told it had had to do. It had been Cheryl's choice to hire a lawyer. She said that she felt Cheryl should ask the town for reimbursement.

Cheryl stated that on March 11th Paula Dowd had walked her out to her car and told her to get a good lawyer.

Paula Kuehl stated that she did not take it personally and she did not feel that Cheryl was pointing fingers. She said that if it had been handled in house, there would have been no need for lawyers.

Joe asked if it would be appropriate to use trust funds.

Paula Dowd stated that she didn't think that the Board could use trust funds.

Cheryl stated that the Whittemore Fund could be use at the discretion of the Board. It was a non-restricted trust.

Kate stated that she was not sure and that it would be in the best interest of everyone to research the matter before making a decision.

Deb stated that the investigation had been dragged out longer than it needed to be, which had increased the cost.

Paula Dowd stated that she wanted to talk to the head of the trust. She then moved to discuss it further at the next meeting.

Paula Dowd stated that she wanted a legal decision on how the trust could be used.

Cheryl asked if at any time the board had tried to end the investigation.

Joe stated that they had.

Margaret stated that on several occasions the Board had asked for answers. The Board had sent a letter to the investigator in May and the Town Counsel in June.

Kate stated that they had not gotten any information until the investigation was completed.

Paula Dowd stated that she had been told it was taking so long because of the lawyers.

Deb stated that the Board had been strung along without answers.

Margaret made a motion to move question five to the next meeting, so the use of trust funds could be looked into by Paula Dowd. Kate seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Margaret presented the Board with a Slate of Officers, asking the Board if they had any nominees.

Joe nominated: Margaret Donovan as Chairman
Mary Kate Romano as Secretary
Paula Dowd as Treasurer

Joe stated that Margaret was best informed as to the workings of the Library. Kate took excellent minutes. Paula Dowd had been handling the checkbook for months and seemed very capable.

Kate declined the nomination stating that she had just been given new responsibilities at school.

Paula Dowd declined the nomination as Treasurer stating that she wanted to remain Chairman of the Board.

Margaret stated that she never wanted to be Chair but felt at this time she would except if voted in. Many patrons and residence had stated to her that they were not happy with the Chair or the Board. They felt a change in the Chairman was need.

Deb nominated: Paula Dowd as Chairman
Paula St. Laurent Kuehl as Treasurer
Margaret Donovan as Secretary

Deb stated that Paula Dowd has done an excellent job as chairman. She said that it had not been easy during the investigation and Paula Dowd had taken a lot of the blame. She said that Paula Kuehl, with her background in accounting, would do a good job as Treasurer. She also said that Margaret did a good job as secretary and should continue.

Kate seconded the nominations that Deb made.

Paula Kuehl stated that, if voted in, would accept the position.

Paula Dowd stated that it was unfair for her to be blamed for everything that had gone on. She stated that whoever had been Chair would have handled it the same way.

Kate stated that she agreed with Paula Dowd. That it was the town who put the Board in the position. Paula had done what she had been told she had to do by Town Counsel.

Deb stated she agreed with Kate.

Joe stated that his concern was that Paula Dowd and Cheryl did not get along. He said that it caused a lot of friction and that he was thinking of what was best for the Library.

Margaret stated that the Board had not been a cohesive unit. She stated that there was a lot of animosity among Board members and the patrons.

Paula Kuehl asked if prior to Cheryl being put on administrative leave there was a feeling of animosity.

Deb stated she never felt that there had been any problem before or now.

Paula Dowd stated that she didn't feel that she controlled the Board. She stated that she had done the honorable thing. She had had the investigation so the Board could keep it under their control. She stated that she resented being punished and was tired of taking the blame.

Deb made a motion to vote for officers. Kate seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Margaret handed the Board members ballots.

The results were:

Chairman:
Paula Dowd 3 votes
Margaret Donovan 2 votes
Joseph von Deck 1 vote
Treasurer:
Paula St. Laurent Kuehl 5 votes
Secretary:
Margaret Donovan 3 votes
Volunteer:
1 vote

The Secretary presented the Slate of Officers to the Board.

Deb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kate seconded the motion.

Cheryl stated that the Board had to first make a motion to accept the officers as presented in order for the election to be valid.

Deb amended her motion to adjourn. Kate withdrew her second.

Paula Kuehl made a motion to accept the Slate of Officers as presented by the Secretary. Deb seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Deb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kate seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Minutes amended and approved by the Board of Trustees on October 8, 2013

Attachment A: Louise Reid's letter to the Board of Trustees

Attachment B: Cheryl Paul-Bradley's letter to the Board of Trustees

Attachment C: Correspondence between Barbara Brown and Cheryl Paul-Bradley

Attachment D: Letter to Selectmen from Board of Trustees

Attachment E: Letter to Town Administrator from Board of Trustees