

**GT. BARRINGTON LIBRARIES**

231 Main Street  
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Great Barrington Libraries' Board of Trustees

October 13, 2011

5:30 P.M.

Mason Library

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

A. Attendance: Karin Beebe, Holly Hamer, Thomas Blauvelt, Veronica Cunningham, Hilda Banks Shapiro and Louis J. Stark were all present. Mr. Ron Blumenthal of the Friends Committee and Jessica Magelaner, Interim Director were also present.

B. Minutes of the September Meeting:

**MOTION:** Veronica Cunningham to approve with the correction of Ron Walple's name.

**SECOND:** Hilda Banks Shapiro

**VOTE:** 6-0

II. Report of Officers, Boards and Standing Committees

A. Presidents Report – Karin Beebe – Nothing to Report.

B. Treasurer's Report – Tom Blauvelt – he noted that as of September 30, 20% of the appropriated funds have been spent. Tom said that Lauren Sartori provided him with a breakdown of the accounts. Tom said he would give the budget grant fund account up date at the next meeting.

C. Interim Director's Report – Jessica Megelaner – Jessica said that as a result of being short staffed recently, many volunteers made themselves available to fill in. The new part time employee, Kate Fuller, will be starting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October. She had her pre-employment physical and CORI check yesterday. Jessica said she was advised not to attend the interviews. Holly, Jim, Karen and Hilda said they were upset about Jessica not being included in the interview process. Ronnie, Jim, Dawn and Jonathan Williams, representing the Town Manager were on the committee. Jessica said she spoke to the Board of Selectmen about the request that she not attend the interviews. The Mason Library participated in the summer reading program and had a great on line turnout and as a result the Mason Library was chosen to receive a visit from Brian Leaf for the summer reading program of 2012. Mason Library was chosen out of a group of 10 libraries. Jessica said that the Town Manager sent Laurie, the Children's Librarian, a letter of congratulations. Holly said we should publicize this through the Berkshire Record. Jessica said an unpaid CW Mars CAD Express Invoice in the amount of

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TOWN CLERK

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\$812.79 from 2010-2011 was found by the auditors. She said we do need CAD Express as it is used to catalog books that are not available on the standard mark records. The invoice can't be paid out of the book funds or appropriated funds but it could be paid out of state aid or donations. It was discovered that the Commonwealth never billed the Town.

**MOTION:** Tom Blauvelt to pay the invoice out of State Aid Funds.

**SECOND:** Jim Stark

**VOTE:** 2-4

Holly said that the payment needs to be delayed a month to investigate other possibilities for paying. Jessica said she would call CAD Express and request that they wait another month for payment.

D. Building and Grounds Committee – Holly Hamer & Hilda Banks Shapiro

Rebecca will go ahead on the trees. They are going to come as soon as they can. She and Hilda are going to present to the Historic District next Thursday the fence proposal. It is a steel rod iron fence. There was discussion about the design of the children's reading garden to be behind the library on the east side. It would encompass seating and possibly a small structure that is inviting to children and adults. Holly decided to have a contest and ask people to come up with creative solutions. The results will be displayed where the Main Street reconstruction banner is. This will happen in the spring. Holly said she was all set to purchase a television for the Ramsdell from Tune Street but they only would give her \$20.00 off on a \$4,000 deal. Holly noted that the TV type was incorrect. A wide angle TV is necessary and with a LED TV the angle starts to deteriorate at 25%. The purchase of a Wii was discussed and Jessica thought that would be more attractive than I pads. Dawn is looking at chairs and Jessica is researching rugs. Holly said that Lauren Sartori told her that they don't have to obtain bids because it is donation money. On July 20<sup>th</sup>, Anne Just said Joe Sokul sent her a draft of items that need to be fixed for each library and she should be receiving the revised final version shortly. It was noted that most of the repairs would come out of the regular building maintenance, but if you have a specific list, meet with Lauren Sartori. Holly said that she wants the list and would like follow-up on it. Changes at the Mason: We are at the 5 year mark for renovations. There is money left for fixtures, equipment, modifications to the pantry, so the door can be left open and we can have fresh air and sun, and that could be used as a multi use room now that CW Mars isn't taking up as much space. Jessica is looking into the money from the Wheeler money to do shades upstairs and chairs. We are also talking about opening up the reading room.

E. Friends Committee – Ron Blumenthal

Ron said he met with Kevin O'Donnell in regard to the donation boxes. Kevin was concerned about the possibility of library employees handling money. Ron noted the boxes are sealed and he goes in every week to empty them out and put the money into the bank account. Ron said he has one bank account but keeps track of the donations on a spread sheet. The Friends of the Library were approached to host a Mystery Lovers Book Club. Their first meeting was last night. It will be self lead and self supported after the first three months. He said they had their film last week and have had a lot of interest in the topic of emerging agriculture. Next month's film is – Farm Again. The third

Thursday, October 20, 2011 there will be a panel discussion on civil engagement and activism. There will be a book sale in December on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The preview is December 2<sup>nd</sup> which is a fund raiser. There is a \$10.00 fee unless you are a trustee, staff person or volunteer for the early buyer party. The blog will be live on Monday.  
Bylaw revision: Ron discussed this with Kevin and made some revisions and will present it to the Boards of the Friends of the Library and vote on it.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Constant Contact purchase: Ron said that he looked at all of the choices and they are all about the same. Constant Contact is the most expensive. He suggested going ahead with the Constant Contact purchase because it has already been set up. We just need to reactivate it. The cost is approximately \$400.00 a year. We need to develop a P.R. Program on how it is going to be used before we begin again. Holly said that we could send out an e-mail once a month.

**MOTION:** Holly that we appropriate money from State Aid to pay for a years subscription to Constant Contact.

**SECOND:** Hilda

**VOTE:** 6-0

B. Computer Committee – Jessica Megelaner:

Jessica noted that there is nothing official but they are getting unofficial stuff done. She said she is in favor of still having the towers rather than the laptops because laptops don't take as much abuse as the towers do. Jessica said she would like to look into getting net books for computer classes. Jessica said she has been looking into I Pads for the staff. They could be used for keeping track of the collection and keeping in touch with the different branches. There has been no official meeting yet. It has been postponed until the end of November or December to do anything about the computers. Jessica noted that the Nooks are popular. People are taking them out to see if they would like to purchase one themselves. Jessica said we are looking into having magazines on them.

C. Donation designations follow-up – Ron Blumenthal, Jessica Megelaner, Holly Hammer.

Already discussed

D. Discussion: Treasurer's Responsibilities:

Karen Beebe said that Tom, as Treasurer has not come to the last two meetings because of conflicts. There has been discussion in his absence about him signing warrants to essentially bail Anne out of her bad budget handling. Tom said he executed the duties of the Treasurer as every other Treasurer before him has done. No board has ever asked to see the warrants from appropriated or un-appropriated amounts. He advised that he signs them, the director signs them, Lauren Sartori signs them and Kevin O'Donnell signs them. If you want to review the warrants from un-appropriated funds, he is o.k. with that. Holly said that un-appropriated funds are in the charge of the trustees according to the Town Code. Tom responded that they very well may be. Holly said why we bother to vote on them, for instance we just voted on appropriating money... Tom said that he wondered why the Trustees had an agenda that he has done something inappropriate.

Tom said he takes exception to that and if you want him to step down as Treasurer he will. Holly said we authorize the expenditures. Tom said no other board has ever done that with any other treasurer. Holly questioned if this has been happening from day one. Tom responded absolutely. Holly said if the Town Code says you have to have authorization in order to sign warrants... Holly read from the Town Code - the Treasurer shall have charge of the official library funds and incomes outside of the appropriations and the Town Treasurer shall sign warrants upon the authorization of the Board and shall report at each meeting. Karen said that Tom signed warrants to bail Anne out and didn't tell the board and we assumed that it was funds we had control of. That was a very small amount. Tom said he gives the Board the update of the funds. The Board said there are no line items noted and no list of expenditures. Tom said he is just following past practices and if you want to change that, he is o.k. with that. Karen said we did modify it in the sense of co-signing because you weren't here... Tom said one regular meeting and one special meeting. Holly said she wrote him a letter explaining in detail what she was concerned about. She said Tom didn't agree with her but didn't give any explanation. Tom said he doesn't feel he needs to explain himself. Holly accused Tom of feeling no remorse. He said none whatsoever. She asked if he understood the article in the Town Code. Tom responded that "of course he understood". Holly said how do you rationalize it then? Holly said you did do it. Tom said he did sign the warrants and will continue to sign them. Tom said he didn't understand the issue. Holly said he didn't get the authorization of the Board. Tom said in his mind being voted in as treasurer gives him permission because it has been the practice of the Board of Trustees. Holly said that Karen Smith never did that. Tom said she absolutely did. Holly said she found it hard to believe. Tom asked the Board what he wanted them to do going forward? Holly said the other thing that is written in the Town Code is that the Treasurer, Chairman and Library Director shall attend all meetings with the Finance Committee. Holly said this is something she brought up when Tom accepted the nomination is that you can't be the head of the Finance Board and the Treasurer of the Library and attend those meeting in both roles. She said it is against the Town code as written. Tom said he didn't agree with that interpretation. She said you have two different masters that you are dealing with when you do that and it is clear to her that it is a conflict. Holly said the other thing that really bothers her is that after she brought this up to him that he went ahead and signed the warrant enabling the creation of a petty cash fund from donations. That is not what donations are intended for. She said after she brought this up to him he did the same thing and didn't bring it before the Trustees. Tom said what language would you like him to follow. Holly said you can sign any warrant and spend any money you want? Holly said she will have to ask for Tom to resign because that is not within the Town code which he told them is in effect unless we change it at a Town meeting. She said the bylaws within the code have to be change and it is in violation of that aspect. Holly said it is in violation of the spirit in which this group is organized. Tom said what is in violation of the spirit has been her behavior and conduct and if you want us to start going back to old e-mails he is happy to do that but he would rather not. He said if the Board doesn't want him to continue as Treasurer, he would step down. Karen said she thought that would be the best thing. She said the other board members expressed concern at the last two meetings. Jim said he thought we could give Tom a different direction or a different way of handling it.

Tom stepped down as treasurer. Karen said she would inform Lauren that she will be signing appropriated and non-appropriated warrants. Karen said she would talk to Kevin O'Donnell about finding another source for petty cash rather than donations. Holly said the former director was purchasing items and then getting reimbursed. There are warrants to reimburse Anne Just which didn't look right. She said when we talked about having the donations going through the Friends; we offered to be able to set up a petty cash fund for the staff. Kevin made parameters about the petty cash which Jessica has started using, which is very helpful, but instead of taking it out of a fund that would reflect what it is being used for which is basically supplies, it was taken out of donations without the appropriation being brought before the Trustees. Even if it had been approved by the Trustees, donations are not given in the spirit of paper towels and postage. There is a need for a petty cash fund and all the money has to be accounted for. Holly said it has to come out of one of the appropriations.

### New Business

#### A. Summation of charter changes that concern the library – Holly Hamer

Holly said this is the plan that we have been working on all this time. At the Board of Selectmen's meeting Monday night there was even more encouragement especially from Sean about having the library become self governing. At this meeting there was a lot of discussion whether to amend or revise the charter. The simple difference is that amendments could be put on the warrant in May and they can affect the charter in every way except for the area where how boards are appointed, the term and the number of people in them. Everything else can be amended. She said that issue has to be done in a revisal and it takes about two years. It includes an elected Board and a separate board to review everything. There were people speaking for both ways of doing things and Sean said afterwards that he had thought amendment and then he thought the whole charter needed to be revised. What they came up with at the end of the meeting was they are going to invite every board president and his or her appointees to come to the next meeting on November 1, 2011 to present possible amendments for instance if the senior center wants to go to an elected board rather than an appointed board and the possibility of us. Holly said she wants to suggest as a possibility – it is complicated because within the Town Code – there is a second on the libraries, Article 1 and 3 through 7 which are policies of the library many of which are wrong and outdated. She noted that in the Town Code it says the fines should only be five cents. This is part of the code that has to be adhered to. All those articles need to be changed and can be changed by a vote at a regular meeting of the Trustees. That wasn't included when the bylaws were done. Article 2 – can only be changed or amended at a Town Meeting. It needs to be put on the warrant with the Board of Selectmen's approval and you need a majority vote of the people at the meeting in order to change that. If we were to stay with the bylaws we voted on months ago, all we would have to do to enforce them... within the code is the special charter which enables the use of the Town Manager in that. Chapter C is the Charter, Section 6, Item D, Number 1, there is a section – the Town Manager shall submit to the Board of Selectmen a written proposal for Town government for the ensuing fiscal year including the budget as proposed by the school committee. If we add the words, "and the Library Trustees" we would have control over the budget. The Town Manager shall supervise all Town Departments except the School Dept. If we added the line "and

the Library Dept. and direct the operations of the Town that would be all that would be needed for our bylaws to be in effect. We would keep in tack the other sections which were the contradictory things that you could not take away the powers of the elected officials. In terms of that, we would have to work that out. Sean said publically that he would like us to have the responsibilities. Because it is a Town building, the Town would provide maintenance, cost of fuel, etc. That is done separately by the school system. We need to decide if we want to do this. The Board of Selectmen workshop meeting is November 1, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. Holly stated that she would go with the amendment because that would give the Trustees two years. At the end of the two years, the Charter would probably be completely revised and at that point we could be overturned if it is not working out. Jim said he wants to take the time to review the suggestion. Holly said this would remove the library from being a Town Department.

**MOTION:** Holly – to approve the amendments to the charter as stated - “and the Library Trustees in Section 6, B1, and Section C and the Library Department”.

**SECOND:** Veronica

**VOTE** 5-0-1

Holy noted that this is in addition to what the school committee has in the Charter.

B. Establishment of Mason Centennial Committee:

Hilda volunteered to be on the committee. Holly said she would do one event. Hilda will be the board representative. Jessica said she would send out a notice when she sends out the weekly schedule asking for volunteers.

C. Establishment of Policy Manual Committee:

It was decided to table this until the Charter is set. A volunteer handbook is needed. Holly said she would try to put something together. Some of the policy is within the Town Code. Holly noted that there was a letter from Kevin O'Donnell in regard to fines. Jessica had concerns about that. Holly said that according to the code, the fines are determined by the Trustees. There was a meeting reviewing fines and fees, etc. Holly said she would e-mail Jessica the section in the code. In terms of the fines for the museum passes were setup on the computer by the library in Lenox. All of the passes are done on line. They issue a throw away paper pass that is only good for one day.

D. Director Search Committee – Tom Blauvelt:

Tom said 14 responses were received. Invitations were sent out to 5 of the responses for an interview which will occur on October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> beginning at 5:15. He said the committee will submit between 2 to 4 names to the Town Manager. The committee will meet next week to finalize the interview questions. Jim said with the position at Ramsdell, some candidates seemed to be given preference if they spoke Spanish but that was not listed in the job description. Veronica said that candidates were asked if they spoke Spanish because Ramsdell has a large Spanish speaking usage. It wasn't a requirement. The Search Committee will meet at the Mason Library, Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in executive session.

Holly said that Kevin O'Donnell asked what qualities the new Library Director should possess. She said she has one criteria is that those people who have current MLIS or MLS have learned a whole different set of facts and information from those who were in school in the 70's 80's especially in the area of technology and helping to transform the libraries into community centers. Karen agreed with the up-to-date MLIS or MLS.

Karen said it would be time to have a party at the library and have a reception for the interim director. The suggested date was Saturday, November 12, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the library and invite staff, volunteers, friends and spouses. It was suggested to contact the Board of Selectmen's office about obtaining a one day liquor license. Holly and Karen will work on the details.

Holly said she would talk to Jessica separately about the CIP.

Jim noted that the Wednesday hours at the Ramsdell need to be rearranged as no one comes in. This is to be included on the November agenda.

Jim said he would write a letter thanking Anne Just for all her years of service. This is to be an agenda item for November.

The next meeting will be November 10, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. Mason Library.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn Wichmann  
Substitute Secretary