

Great Barrington Libraries Board of Trustees
February 11, 2016
5:30 PM
Mason Library
231 Main Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 5:32 p.m.

A. Attendance: Kathy Plungis, Patrick Hollenbeck, Hilda Banks-Shapiro, Ed Abrahams, Adam Gudeon, Lauren Clark
Amanda DeGiorgis, Director, Talya Leodri, Asst. Director Audience: 3

B. Approval of January minutes : KP stated that there is one correction. K. Plungis motion to approve minutes with one correction, P. Hollenbeck second, Discussion Vote 6 - 0

C. Trustee Announcements: K. Plungis told the Trustees that a letter had been received from a Housatonic resident, stating her disappointment with Ramsdell being open on Sundays, "that Sunday is family time". A short discussion ensued, stating that the Ramsdell Sunday openings is a pilot program that will end March 20th, 2016. KP will reply to the Housatonic resident.

II. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

A. Director's Report – A. DeGiorgis: (see attached report) ADeG stated that Donna Brown has accepted the offer of the Asst. Director's position. A question from the audience asked about how the Ramsdell Sunday patrons and programs were counted in the monthly report.

B. Treasurer's Report – E. Abrahams: (see attached report)

C. Friends' Report: H. Hamer: Stated that there would be a free book give-away at Ramsdell on the 21st. Looking for a volunteer to assist with e-book download assistance on Sundays. Stated that art workshops given during Ramsdell Sundays have proven to be most popular. Discussion ensued about future programs; the right programs will draw participants, suggestion of Saturday afternoon or Wednesday eve programs.

E. Abrahams: Gave a Ramsdell Sunday update (see attached report).

D. Buildings & Grounds Report – K. Plungis handed out the realigned maintenance issues for both libraries. Some items on the lists were discussed. KP stated that the DPW supervisor will seek estimates on the Mason Community Room carpet and main circulation desk carpet replacement. A member of the audience observed that the carpet seemed to be in good condition, why could it not be steam cleaned?

Trustees asked that KP write the DPW Supervisor a letter with a "cc" to the Town Manager, asking that the Supervisor attend the next Trustee meeting to discuss maintenance issues.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Ramsdell mural update – A. Gudeon: Stated that the mural has arrived. L. Clark will make arrangements to have the mural installed. That Adam will be the contact person. EA asked that the Director, etc. begin to make plans for a celebration at Ramsdell re the mural. LC suggested that furniture for the Children's Room not be picked out until the mural is up so that the colors can be coordinated. All agreed.

B. Ramsdell Promotion Report: K. Plungis: (see attached report) KP made a motion to form a subcommittee to review and move forward on the recommendations in the Ramsdell report. P. Hollenbeck seconded. A discussion ensued with a suggestion from the audience to have an Ad-hoc committee. Further discussion including the posting of the meetings. Will be called a subcommittee. Vote: 6 – 0
KP asked for volunteers for the subcommittee. PH, KP, LC, ADeG volunteered.
ADeG will notify KP of a date for the first meeting.

Michelle Loubert, a member of the audience, gave an explanation of the “Oral History of Housatonic” that will be presented on March 20th, the final Sunday opening at Ramsdell. EA asked that the Library Director speak with M. Loubert regarding this.

LC asked about books in Spanish for our libraries. Whether there is a need. ADeG will look into this. KP will check with the middle school and the CHP office in Gt. B.

A member of the audience stated that peer led art classes have been popular, that Saturday afternoons or Wednesdays should be considered. Further discussion.

A member of the audience asked why the issue of parking has come up regarding Ramsdell. That the neighboring churches handle the street parking well and feels that it is not an issue. A discussion ensued.

The Asst. Director suggested that a rug in the Ramsdell Children's room not be installed. A discussion ensued. A discussion ensued as to whether there is a necessity of having a vacuum cleaner at Ramsdell.

IV. New Business:

A. Long Range Plan: (see attached report) KP spoke briefly, stating that our LR Plan will expire later this year. K. Plungis made a motion to form a subcommittee to review and prepare our next Long Range Plan. E. Abrahams seconded. A discussion ensued. Vote: 6 – 0
KP asked for volunteers. KP, PH, AG, Amanda. ADeG will notify KP of a date for the first meeting. Other volunteers will be sought after the first meeting. It was noted by an audience member that in the past, 3 Friends of the Library, 3 Trustees, a Staff volunteer, and the Director were on the committee. The director spoke of the increased use of the library website and that it needs updating. Stated that the weekly ads in the Shoppers Guide have begun. Additional programming is in progress. ADeG stated that over the past weeks with the Asst. Director moving on to a new position in the state, that the Staff is doing their best with filling the void.

V. Citizen Speak: A member of the audience asked about the promotion of the Ramsdell Sundays by the library. KP summarized the promotions. The Director responded, stating the places the Sunday hours could be found. EA spoke of ways the library could further promote the remaining Ramsdell Sunday dates. He had additional ideas for the promotion and would forward them to the Director.

Michelle Loubert of Housatonic volunteered for the Ramsdell Promotion subcommittee.

VI. Adjournment: Hilda Banks-Shapiro motion to adjourn at 6:42 p.m., P. Hollenbeck seconded, Vote 6 – 0

Next Trustee meeting: March 10, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Plungis". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Plungis
Chairman

Director's report for January 2016

February 10, 2016

Statistics: January

	Total Patrons	Adult programs	Children's programs	Computer use +iPad	Quiet/ study	Meeting room	Items added
Ramsdell	567 (normal hours) 232 (Sundays) Total: 799	7 programs 43 attending	7 programs 35 attending	63	0	-	97
Mason	7,805	5 programs 49 attending	16 programs 214 attending	1390 (233 kids)	137	22	326

News, Projects and Proposals:

- ❖ **Long Range Plan Update:** In reviewing the current long range plan, I have comments on the following that have been recently completed/started:
 - Increase usage – website. Having started to work on the website in Jessica's absence, it is clear we need to do some work here. It is clunky, hard to update and very temperamental.
 - Increase usage – advertising. The weekly ad in the Shopper's Guide has started.
 - Programming. The computer courses are currently on hold until we are able to offer them again. Patrons are still able to approach all staff for assistance and we provide this support daily. We are reaching out to the staff to help us with programming ideas while also pursuing some that Talya has been working on (i.e. an upcoming music performance, reading challenges and Blind Date with a Book)
 - Buildings. See below for update on this. Work has been happening at both libraries.
 - Volunteers. We welcomed four new volunteers this month, two in the Children's Room, one upstairs at Mason and hopefully one at Ramsdell. We did celebrate our volunteers at the holidays with a gift card to The Bookloft.
 - Technology. Mason is hosting a Massachusetts Library System course on Digital Literacy and the Internet. Donna, Jim and I will be attending and we will then disseminate the information we gather to the staff.

- ❖ **Mason:** Baseboards are back up and finished. Work is ongoing on the sink in the downstairs women's restroom. The January book display of Berkshire Authors was quite popular and Talya also put together an extensive one for the Friend's Film "Inhabit".

- ❖ **Ramsdell:** Mural arrived and is currently sitting in my office. DPW has been working on the wall in the Art Room. Investigation into the heating is ongoing.

- ❖ **Staffing:** Donna Brown has been promoted to the position of Assistant Director. We will need to wait three months per the Union Contract before we can start the process of hiring her replacement. The reality is we will probably be short staffed for at least six months. The staff and I are trying to find ways to help alleviate this pressure. There are some funds available to offer extra hours to part timers but we must be careful to not exceed our

budget. We must also still accommodate vacations/time off and sickness. We are doing our best to keep our services as robust as normal but things may take more time than usual. I thank you all for your patience and support.

❖ **Staff Ideas/Projects in Process:**

- The Ramsdell Book Club is in the process of being formed. Their first organizational meeting is February 13 with their regular meeting TBD. It is evolving out of the Saturday knitting group, which will continue.
- Leslie is working on a *Frozen* week during the February school break. There will be several crafts and a showing of the still popular movie.
- Molly has suggested a foreign language section with fiction and non-fiction in other languages. Talya has contacted the BPL and we are able to borrow these from them and offer them to our patrons. This is in progress. It will be based at Mason for now.

❖ **Request:** Talya has been looking into display areas for both libraries and has a couple of ideas to present. One is a table top display board, a flier/brochure display and tiered book displays. Photos will be provided at the meeting as well as costs.

❖ **Job Highlight:** In an effort to shine light on what we do at the library, I am going to highlight a different position each month. There is more to the library than just checking books in and out!

This month I will start with the position of Circulation Technician. We have one full time circulation tech, Cheryl, and five part time circulation techs: Ed, Jane, Jim, Molly and Mary Lou. These men and women are the faces you see at the desk and, more often than not, are the ones who first answer the phones. They check books in and out for patrons who come into the library, explain library policies and procedures, shelve materials, work with overdue material and answer reference questions of all sorts. They help patrons navigate the card catalog, order materials and find what they are looking for. They provide computer support to our computer users helping them to print things, create documents, view videos and trouble shoot a host of computer questions. They help patrons use the microfilm reader and materials in the Local History Room. They process books, DVDs and audiobooks to make them shelf ready. They handle situations with fines and lost materials, often searching the stacks and calling other libraries to track things down. They communicate with patrons when their material ordered from other libraries comes in. They help to clean and repair both books and DVD/CDs.

These people work hard and have developed relationships with our patrons. They are the backbone to the services we provide and we would not be able to offer the services we do without their willingness to pitch in. Since they are the front line they deal with all kinds of patrons. They must keep cool heads and be respectful. Thankfully Cheryl, Ed, Jane, Jim, Molly and Mary Lou do all of this and more with smiles and good humor.

Feb. 2016

Appropriated Account	Date	Mason				LP				YA				Child				Contin.				Ramsdell				Start	Balance	total spent		
		Adult		Start		End		Start		End		Start		End		Start		End		Start		End		LP Start	LP End				Ramsdell Start	Ramsdell End
		Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End									
Books/Subscriptions	2/11/2016	\$30,100	\$19,995.21	\$6,000	\$2,064.10	\$3,050	\$495.36	\$17,250	\$8,855.70	\$2,000	\$15,100	\$7,661.18	\$1,500	\$660.70	\$75,000	\$41,722.25	\$40,002.66													
Dues	2/11/2016	\$410	\$18.01												\$410	\$18.01	\$391.99													
Equipment Repairs	2/11/2016	\$1,255	-\$25.88												\$2,000	\$189.41	\$1,810.59													
Non-Print	2/11/2016	\$16,500	\$8,304.12			\$2,500	\$1,921.61	\$7,000	\$3,898.67		\$8,000	\$4,824.23		\$34,000	\$18,948.63	\$15,051.37														
Office Supplies	2/11/2016	\$6,300	\$2,253.70							\$1,000	\$2,500	\$1,297.82		\$8,800	\$4,551.52	\$4,248.48														
Program Supplies	2/11/2016	\$1,000	\$778.54			\$200	\$200.00	\$1,300	\$380.25		\$500	\$330.59		\$3,000	\$1,689.38	\$1,310.62														
Water/Sewer	2/11/2016	\$1,500	\$772.12								\$1,000	\$438.93		\$2,500	\$1,211.05	\$1,288.95														

Added \$6724.91 to Books/Subscriptions from FY15 July 2
 Added \$3891.38 to Non-Print from FY15 July 28

Non-Appropriated in-Library Account	Date	Balance	Mason	Ramsdell
Out of State Fees	2/11/2016	\$100.00	\$25.00	
Copier Fees	2/11/2016	\$3,275.95	\$134.60	
Fines	2/11/2016	\$8,502.58	\$863.82	
Donations	2/11/2016	\$12,004.64	\$12,795.20	

Non-Appropriated Trusts Account	Date	Balance
Mason Trust	2/11/2016	\$160.08
Ramsdell Trust	2/11/2016	\$2,539.77
Chesanow	2/11/2016	\$599.22
Wheeler	2/11/2016	\$272.95
Hollenbeck	2/11/2016	\$137.72
Dewey	2/11/2016	\$166.29
McKinley	2/11/2016	\$4,226.90
Smith	2/11/2016	\$1,155.85
Ramsdell Improvements	2/11/2016	\$12,026.11

Capitol Accounts	Date	Balance
M Capitol Donations	2/11/2016	\$2,189.06
R Capitol Donations	2/11/2016	\$5,118.00

We have used up the balance of unallocated funds.

State Aid Account	Date	Balance	Current
Mason Adult	2/11/2016	\$950.00	\$950.00
Mason Children's	2/11/2016	\$2,300.00	\$2,260.00
Ramsdell	2/11/2016	\$1,250.00	\$1,000.00
Other	2/11/2016	\$500.00	\$104.00
Total Allotted	2/11/2016	\$5,000.00	\$4,314.00
Total in Account	2/11/2016		\$39,364.02
Total Available after allocation			\$35,050.02

Trustees Allotted \$5,000 1/1/2016 through 6/30/2016

Ramsdell Sunday Report: Week 3
Ed Abrahams 2/9/16

Yesterday was our most successful Sunday at Ramsdell yet, by every measure. There were 64 patrons through the door! About 32 watched the short film programs. Unlike past Sundays, most of the program participants came well in advance of the films or stayed long after which means that far more than 40 came to use the library for reasons other than a special program.

I don't have a formal count but there were at least 10 children there and we haven't done any specific outreach to families with children. (Although there was program aimed at children, only two children there came for that reason.)

At one point I counted the patrons in the various reading rooms and there were 25 people reading newspapers, talking with neighbors, checking out books, browsing the collection, reading to children and using computers. It looked like the press release Holly sends out every week. It was like that most of the day.

5 people this week, all local, said they had never been in the Ramsdell before. Two of them, not together, had lived here over 25 years! I've heard that in past weeks.

We keep adding names to our mailing list and we keep getting offers to volunteer.

Use of library materials was way up. I don't have circulation numbers but Michelle (who is amazing, by the way) was often busy. One patron said to me, not complaining, "I've never waited in line here before."

The only complaint continues to be the lack of computers. I loaned mine out 5 times. 4 for internet searches and once to a woman who was anxious to contact her pregnant daughter-in-law in Europe. She didn't own a computer, something all of the volunteers have heard at Ramsdell.

On that subject, three different patrons at three different times suggested we have computers at Ramsdell like we do at Mason. Two of them were talking about the children's room where kids can be seen lined up to use them and working (playing) together.

Donations to the Friends were also higher than usual.

We were a volunteer short so we didn't hand out too many surveys but I spoke with everyone as they came in and I asked most people when I greeted them how they heard about Sunday hours. Not surprisingly we had more repeat users than before. The most common answer was that they saw it in the Record or the Edge or on Facebook or heard from a friend. A few saw the sign outside of Ramsdell during the week and a few saw the activity when they drove by. Word of mouth is beginning to spread. Notably, not one patron has said, either in the survey or in person, that they saw a poster inside the library, saw it on the library website, or was told about it by a librarian. Maybe we need a more formal in-house marketing plan?

I want to end by stressing the overall mood. People (patrons, volunteers, staff and trustees) had a great time. In addition to making the library available, attracting supporters, volunteers and potential donors, we are building community connections. Two illustrators who had never met spent over an hour talking together. People lit up and smiled when neighbors they haven't seen in a while walked in. Parents of toddlers met and made plans to get together in the future, and two knitters, one expert and one novice looking for help, made a connection. That kind of interaction went on all day.

Ramsdell Sunday Hours Update: Week 5

Sundays continue to be popular and joyous. At any moment people are reading papers, talking with neighbors, participating in programs, playing with or reading to children, and taking out and returning library materials.

67 people used the library during the 3 hours we were open. (Last week, our lowest census yet, had 48 people). 9 attended the workshop and 18 attended the movie. Some of the workshop attendees also went to the movie. As of the start of the movie, 24 people had come, which means that **43 people came to use the library and not for the special programs.**

For the past two weeks I have been asking most people how they heard about Sunday hours and the numbers have been similar. A few heard through the shoppers guide, the three newspapers and The Newsletter. A few saw the sign during the week or noticed the "Open" sign on Sunday. About a dozen heard from friends. About 1/3 of those present had been there on previous Sundays. For a number of people it is now part of their Sunday routine.

I've also asked people about 40 people where they are from. (We have been short one volunteer so it is hard to talk with everyone as they enter). 20 were from Housatonic, 10 from GB and the rest from elsewhere.

Friends' Report Jan./Feb. 2016

Starting to get applications for museum passes and are considering adding one to two sites.

Discussing book give-away possibilities as back room is overcrowded. May do one at Ramsdell if another warm Sunday is forecast.

Request to offer more permaculture films being considered as the screening of Inhabit on February 4th drew 46 attendees.

Sundays at Ramsdell are going better than expected with attendance building from the high forties and low fifties to last week's high of 66 participants. Art workshops taught by volunteers have been very popular with 8-15 participants who arrive before 1pm to get a spot around the table. Adam has generously volunteered to do a workshop on March 6th titled "How To Tell A Story In Pictures: create a multi-paneled storyboard." Each week people donate around \$30 to help offset the cost of refreshments. The films are a big draw with 10 to 25 viewers but the biggest draw is the library itself with about two thirds of the attendees reading, talking quietly, playing with children, checking items in and out.

A ceiling mounted, more convenient projector set-up with raised light fixtures would be very helpful. It may be possible to exchange the upstairs screen with the one in the art room. Although the radiator in the back room was fixed, the art room gets very cold in the late afternoon with the shades drawn. Zoned heating should be considered when the furnace is replaced.

Holly Hamer
Feb. 7, 2015

Great Barrington News,

I am a regular patron of the Ramsdell library in Housatonic. At times over the past decade I have also frequented Mason library on occasion. As such, as well as a tax paying resident, I am disappointed to see the Sunday hours pilot program in effect in our town.

Sundays should be a day of rest, family relaxation, home! Our librarians are stellar, both professionally + personally. Six days is more than enough for the entire community to access Ramsdell's services. The very values that made Housatonic an inviting town to move to are trying to be eroded by our own "trustees".

Juggle the hours any way that makes sense Monday thru Saturday, and please discontinue these Sunday hours - respect + honor our librarians and their families!

Sincerely

(413) 274-5058

Arion C. Blanchard