



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES January 21, 2025

The Brunswick Community Library provides access to life-long learning, resources, engaging activities, and an inclusive community space for all.

Call to Order: 6:30

Present: Virginia Anderson, Brittany DeWire, Alix Duggan, Therese Goyette, Meredith Lee-Clark, Annie Metzger, Carol Rosbozom, Yusuf Silk, Andrea Wedler, Fred Wobrock, Debra Zaffuts

Approval of November 2024 meeting minutes: Alix motioned to approve; Andrea seconded. All in favor, motion carried unanimously

Treasurer's Report

- Approval of November 2024 Treasurer's Report. The finance committee met prior to the meeting and reviewed the report. The finance committee motioned to approve the November and December 2024 Treasurer's Report; Virginia seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried unanimously.
- 2025 Budget vote. Several questions were raised for Marilyn to clear up about small miscellaneous items and their wording, but nothing to get in the way of a vote. Yusuf moved to adopt the 2025 budget; Deb seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

- We have completed the Program portion of our Equity Challenge and earned a \$500 stipend to support our programs.
- Our website has some minor updates in an attempt to make digital resources easier to find. Please let me know if there is anything you struggle to find on our website and if you have suggestions. We have added some new digital services (Educate Station, America's News, Heritage Hub) and UHLS has provided NYT for all member libraries as of this year.
- Upcoming Special Programs:
 - Kids' Clothing Swap, Jan 24-25
 - Craft Circle, Jan 28
 - Care for Caregivers, Jan 30
 - Intro to Quilling, Feb 3 (full) & Mar 17
 - Kid's Yoga, Feb 4
 - Letter Writing Social, Feb 5
 - Silent Book Club, Feb 6
 - *Graphic Novel Workshop with Marcus Kwame Anderson, Eisner Winner, Feb 10 & 17
 - Nature Play with Miss Heather, Feb 11 & Mar 11
 - *Mystery Writers "Mavens of Mayhem", Feb 22
 - STEAM Roller Coaster Challenge, Feb 26
 - Hart-Cluett "Traveling the Hudson", Mar 4
 - *=special guests!
- Monthly Community Message: The website has so many great digital resources! Check them out! It's free!

Committee Reports:

- Building & Grounds
 - Building Maintenance items: Our work to get a new roadside sign continues. Alix has asked for an estimate for a new sign and hopefully Alix will have images of the potential product next month for us to vote on..
- Fundraising / Annual Appeal
 - Annual appeal review: Our income from the annual appeal for November and December was \$17,000. Our take for the same time period last year was \$12,000. Money still is coming in, including \$200 from the Brunswick Sportsman's Club in January. We are thrilled that the Library has broad appeal and support in the community.
 - The Subaru Share the Love event is still closing out their accounting, so we have not gotten a check yet.
 - Honor Garden update: for 2024, income was \$2900, expenses \$2400, but much of that was the initial set up, so Fred feels that as new bricks roll in, our percentage that is income will continue to rise. We need to start planning a spring appeal, which can focus on the walkway and also memorial benches and trees.
 - Future fundraising events: Brunswick Bake-Off March 10th 6pm. The Fundraising Committee is meeting later this week to hammer out details, with a plan to begin publicity before the end of January.
 - Appeal letters should include examples of things we could have done if we had more money, in addition to the examples of things we were able to do.
- Nominating
 - Committee Rosters for 2025 are as follows:
 - Executive Committee is Alix, Brittany, Andrea, and Annie.
 - Buildings and Grounds: Yusuf is Chair. Annie, Meredith, and Virginia are members.
 - Finance committee: Andrea as Treasurer is Chair. VP Brittany is de facto. Fred is also on the committee.
 - Fundraising/Annual Appeal Committee: Virginia is Chair. Also on the committee is Therese, Annie, and Deb.
 - Personnel & Policy: Meredith Lee-Clark is Chair. Also on the committee is Therese, Annie, Deb and Carol.
 - Nominating Committee: Andrea is Chair. Also on the committee is Virginia and Carol.
- Personnel & Policy:
 - Policy update: Director's annual evaluation - See Exhibit 1. Presented by Jennifer Shatz who compiled the annual evaluation while she was the chair of the committee. We members of the committee are proud to share the evaluation of Sara because we could not be more full throated in our appreciation of her skill and grace. Her evaluation was presented to her this past Friday by Alix.

Old Business:

- Better World Books Drop Box is in place. So far so good.
- Smart Program Risk Management Webinar Review: Alix and Sara were panelists for this program in mid-December 2024, and they presented about our award-winning LASNNY program. Alix felt that she and Sara presented a very positive experience where we had good policies that resulted in an incredibly positive outcome that earned us an award and a large amount of community recognition.

New Business:

- Google Drive accounts for new Board Members will be set up by Sara when she is able.

- Legislative Grant Award: Scott Bendett had a legislative grant to disburse among all of the libraries in his district. Divided over his 20 libraries, we received \$1538.46. Alix will send a thank you and invite him to attend the Brunswick Bake-Off in March, and we hope he will join us so we can thank him in person!

Next Brunswick Town Council meeting: February 13, 2025 at 7pm (*Deb attending*)

Next Library Board of Trustees meeting: Stay Tuned in case of changes. February 18, 2025 at 6 pm (UHLS CORE Trustee Training)

Adjourn: Alix motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:38, Virginia seconded. All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Exhibit 1

Library Director Evaluation 2024

Pursuant to our bylaws, the Personnel and Policy Committee conducts a formal annual evaluation of the Library Director. The director evaluated her own performance using a self-evaluation form. The members of the committee each evaluated the director's performance by completing the same evaluation form. The evaluation tool provides a comprehensive view of the library's operations, including (1) financial management, (2) administration and staff management, (3) professional awareness, (4) board of trustee relationship, (5) community relations, and (6) organizational growth. The purpose of the evaluation is to (1) provide the director with a clear understanding of the board's expectations; (2) ensure the director and the board are aware of how well those expectations are being met; (3) identify concerns so that appropriate action can be taken; (4) demonstrate sound management practices and accountability to the board and the community; and (5) engage the director in a conversation about the library's strengths and weaknesses. After sharing our respective evaluations and reviewing the director's self-evaluation, the committee agrees that Sara's performance is exceptional in comparison to expectations.

Managing the budget has always been Sara's superpower. She wisely uses funds and actively seeks out grant opportunities to develop an array of programs to address patron needs and make the library more accessible. Services are effectively communicated to the public. We encourage Sara to spend her budget on programs and to discuss unique events with the board that may exceed her discretionary budget.

The committee unanimously recognized Sara's zealous advocacy on behalf of her staff. She consistently ensures that policies and procedures are up-to-date and appropriate safeguards are in place for their benefit. She sees how staff members fit within the library's vision and uses their strengths to accomplish the library's goals. This strong concern for the staff's wellbeing creates a positive working environment and prevents unnecessary turnover. Sara also does an excellent job cultivating volunteers, despite the lack of a formal "Friends" group, including a new "teen" group.

Sara's working relationship with the board is commendable. She attends and participates in board meetings and her reports are clear and appropriately detailed. She advises the board about relevant local and national developments and maintains communication with other area libraries and the Upper Hudson Library System. She also regularly reviews building needs and advises the board in its planning for future expansion or development. We encourage Sara to maintain open lines of communication with the board to ensure a clear understanding of their respective positions.

Through our committee's collaborative work with Sara to develop a collection development policy, she demonstrated a thorough knowledge of new services the library can provide based on community interest and trends in patron usage that either justify costs or discontinuing services. New offerings include subscriptions to Educate Station and the New York Times. The collection is maintained and weeded in a

systematic manner, consistent with established policy. She is currently overseeing a labor-intensive diversity audit, providing valuable insight into the collection.

In light of the unprecedented challenges libraries face across the country, Sara has expanded her role as director to include policy analyst and constitutional scholar. She informed the board about First Amendment incidents at other libraries, which were collaboratively evaluated and mitigated with more direct policy language and guidance from the board. She has implemented these policies with an objective focus on facts, law, and de-escalating conflict. Her efforts to offer and promote a name change clinic were recognized by The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY) with "The Community Partner Award," given to "an outstanding community partner who exemplifies the goals and values of LASNNY through their exceptional efforts to support and promote civil legal services."

Sara understands that directors are accountable to varied and sometimes conflicting constituencies. She represents the Library in a non-partisan manner while maintaining good working relationships with Town officials and community organizations. The committee would be remiss if it did not highlight the strength and fortitude Sara demonstrated in the face of extreme negativity and invective this year. She marshals the facts and deploys them with grace. Her public face is unfailingly positive, yet firm in her public defense of the library and its sanctity as a community space for all.

In sum, we find Sara to be an excellent director who meets or exceeds all areas of the performance evaluation.