

**Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees**  
**Wed. June 2, 2021 at 7 pm**

**Agenda**

This meeting will be held VIA REMOTE PARTICIPATION and recorded for later broadcast. The public can access the meeting online at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/872472317>

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1. Call to Order/Attendance
2. Vote to Approve Minutes of May 5, 2021
3. Public Comment
4. Reports:
  - A. Chairman
  - B. Library Director
  - C. Assistant Director
  - D. Review of Other Staff Reports or Information in Meeting Packet
  - E. Building & Grounds Committee
  - F. Liaison from Board of Selectmen
5. Correspondence
6. Old Business:
  - A. Resumption of Services
7. New Business
  - A. Vote to Accept Monetary Donations
8. Trustee Reports and Requests for Next Meeting's Agenda
9. Upcoming Meetings/Events
  - A. Library Board of Trustees – 7 pm on July 7, 2021, August 4, 2021
10. Adjournment

Authorized posting officer

Virginia A. Hewitt

Brooks Free Library

Posted by

Town Clerk's Office

Agenda submitted electronically to Town for posting. The full packet - Agenda, Minutes & Reports – will be posted on the Town website, [www.harwich-ma.gov/brooks-free-library-board-of-trustees](http://www.harwich-ma.gov/brooks-free-library-board-of-trustees), and Library website, [www.brooksfreeibrary.org/brooks-free-library-board-of-trustees](http://www.brooksfreeibrary.org/brooks-free-library-board-of-trustees) on the Friday preceding the meeting.

*\* Per the Attorney General's Office: Boards/Commissions may hold an open session for topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting following "New Business." If you are deaf or hard of hearing or are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation, contact the Library at 508-430-7562 or [brooksfreeibrary@clamsnet.org](mailto:brooksfreeibrary@clamsnet.org).*

Library Director's Report for  
June 2, 2021 Board of Trustees Meeting

5.25.21

## ADMINISTRATIVE

Executive Assistant Megan Green and I successfully completed an intensive 3-day Public Contracting Overview course in early May. This course is part of the purchasing and procurement certification program of the Mass. Office of the Inspector General.

## RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON SERVICES

### Return to In-Person Browsing

- The Library returned to in-person browsing on Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> and our first week of reopening went very well.
- Patrons were delighted to come back. They were respectful of the mask requirement and 15-min. time limit.
- A good number of patrons visited the Library but not so large a number at one time that anyone felt crowded or concerned about occupancy levels.
- Social media posts on Friday, May 7 announcing the reopening had an excellent response, with 3900 users reached and close to 568 likes/loves, comments and shares. In-person responses from community members were also very positive.
- I gave a presentation to the Selectmen on our reopening plan on May 17<sup>th</sup>. They were very complimentary about the thoroughness of the plan and the leadership we've shown providing services to the community during the pandemic.
- On Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> the Governor announced a relaxing of restrictions over the next two weeks and an official end to the state of emergency on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Town Administrator Joe Powers held a meeting with department heads on Thursday, May 20 regarding the resumption of Town services. I was unable to reschedule an appointment that morning so Assistant Director Emily Milan attended the meeting and she and I met later in the day to discuss.
- Mr. Powers noted that as of May 29<sup>th</sup> the Governor has lifted ALL sector specific guidelines with a few exceptions that do not affect most Town departments and he gave the following directives:
  - Masks will no longer be required in Town buildings as of May 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - All other in-building restrictions/ provisions can stay until June 15.
  - All remote work will end as of May 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - All town buildings are expected to return to pre-COVID hours and operations on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - All restrictions are lifted. Signage can be removed.

- o There may be some department-specific variation, with permission, in return to full hours and services

#### Library Plan for the month of June

- We were surprised that the reopening of all Town facilities is occurring faster than anticipated but the Library is in a good place to accomplish these changes since we'd already begun the reopening process.
- We had already decided to expand weekday hours on June 1<sup>st</sup>, when we had been opening at 3 pm. Beginning on June 1<sup>st</sup> our open hours will be Monday through Thursday 1 pm to 7 pm and Friday and Saturday 10 am – 4 pm.
- We will also remove the time limit on patron visits on June 1<sup>st</sup>. We plan to limit the number of daily sessions a patron may have on the public computers, we don't plan to offer inside programming this summer, and no toys will be available in the children's room. We'll add some tables and chairs back to the first and second floor, but at a greatly reduced level. These measures should encourage turnover and help keep occupancy levels down, without the need for time limits, which we hope will ensure that all community members will feel comfortable coming in to use the Library.
- We plan to comply with the Town directive that masks will no longer be required as of May 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - o This is a change for the Library policy but I believe it's necessary. Continuing to require masks without exceptions would have become increasingly difficult given the Governor's lifting of the requirement and now the Town directive.
  - o If the Library was the only Town building requiring masks our staff members would have a challenging time trying to enforce this. I do not want them to be put in that position.
  - o Public expectations have changed with the CDC guidance and the Governor ending the state of emergency.
  - o Plexi-glass will still be in place at our public service desks, staff members can maintain social distance from patrons, and anyone who wants to wear a mask can continue to do so.
  - o Staff members have been vaccinated and the CDC now states masks are no longer necessary to protect vaccinated individuals.

#### Return to Full Pre-COVID Open Hours on July 1<sup>st</sup>:

I am recommending that we delay the return to the pre-COVID hours from June 15 to July 1<sup>st</sup> as several factors affect our readiness and ability to resume the full schedule.

- o The Town is not allowing vacation carry-over this year, which impacts staffing over the next month as full-time staff use their leave.

- o About half of our pre-COVID substitute Library Assistants have resigned during the pandemic or when we contacted them this spring about returning to work. We hope to be able to fill some of those positions.
- o The additional two weeks gives us time to re-train the Library Assistants who are returning but haven't worked in 15 months. By the end of June they should be able to independently perform circulation functions.
- o If no other staffing issues arise we will resume our pre-pandemic schedule and open at 10 am every day, Mon. through Sat., beginning July 1st.
- o The additional two weeks are also needed to accommodate curbside service, which we can't provide during open hours at the current level. As the month goes on we expect the demand for curbside will decline so that by the end of June we will be able to honor the smaller number of requests for curbside pickup while also resuming the full schedule of open hours.

#### Updates to Staff

- I informed staff members of the changes to the reopening plan and timeline on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the day we received the directive from the Town Administrator.
- I assured them that they can continue to wear masks if they prefer to do so.
- We can also encourage unvaccinated patrons to wear masks, but there will be no enforcement if a patron chooses not to wear one and no verification of vaccination status will be required.
- In addition, with the ending of permission for remote work I have informed staff members with children that they will need to make childcare and summer camp arrangements as soon as possible so that spots are not filled.

#### SHARED STREETS GRANT UPDATE

In addition to supporting businesses, which have been hit hard by the pandemic, this Dept. of Transportation grant funded project includes traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements in Harwich Center.

- Several new crosswalks will be added and ADA curb cuts were installed at crosswalks that were not accessible.
- This project will visually narrow the travel lanes and the turn radius at the intersections through the use of pavement markings and striping, which are standard measures that have been demonstrated to reduce the vehicle speed.
- At the same time, the travel lanes and the parking lane will actually be made wider – and meet standards – so that it will not be so dangerous to drive through that congested area and it will be much safer to exit or enter your vehicle when parking in those spaces.
- Painted medians at the east end of Harwich Center, in front of the Library, will provide a pedestrian refuge and help create a sense of “arrival” for those coming into the Center from East Harwich, helping to make motorists aware they're entering a congested area and therefore slowing the speed of vehicles.

- On May 17 work began on handicap ramps to the crosswalks. Work must be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Some of the businesses and residents in Harwich Center objected to the elimination of parking on the north side of Main St as well as the use of several parking spaces for shared use public picnic and patio tables and seating.
- After the concerns were raised at their May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting the Selectmen scheduled a discussion of the project at their May 24<sup>th</sup> meeting to determine whether work should proceed.
- I participated in this meeting to advocate for the traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements.
- The Town has revised the project plans to reduce the number of parking spaces to be used for public picnic and patio tables and chairs.
- The Selectmen ultimately decided to move ahead with the project and work on striping and painting of the pavement began on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### FINANCIAL

- Since your last meeting, Town Meeting approved the FY22 budget without any amendments to the Library budget.
- The voters also approved the article providing funding for the Chase and Harwich Port libraries, which means the Town will meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement and retain state library certification for FY22.
- A year-to-date report on the balances for FY21 is included in your packet.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia A. Hewitt  
Library Director

## FY21 Budget Balances

6/1/2021

AREA OF EXPENDITURE	Appropriated Amt	Spent	Remaining Balance	Percent Spent
Advertising	\$180.00	\$0.00	\$180.00	0%
Dues, Subs & Travel	\$3,845.00	\$2,503.20	\$1,341.80	65%
Library Materials	\$157,660.06	\$111,586.75	\$46,073.31	71%
Electric	\$25,741.00	\$17,885.18	\$7,855.82	69%
Employee Fringe Benefits	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	0%
Gas	\$10,601.00	\$6,981.90	\$3,619.10	66%
Library Supplies	\$13,000.00	\$13,659.95	-\$659.95	105%
Maintenance & Repair	\$5,700.00	\$2,368.31	\$3,331.69	42%
Office Supplies	\$5,750.00	\$4,890.97	\$859.03	85%
Professional & Tech	\$50,725.00	\$48,842.69	\$1,882.31	96%
Water	\$1,315.00	\$853.82	\$461.18	65%
Total Library Expenses	\$274,817.06	\$209,572.77	\$65,244.29	76%
Wages & Salaries	\$730,884.71	\$639,338.33	\$91,546.38	87%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,005,701.77</b>	<b>\$848,911.10</b>	<b>\$156,790.67</b>	<b>84%</b>

Assistant Director's Report  
May 25, 2021

Preparation for reopening: In preparation for reopening on May 17th, several changes were made to the physical space of the library in the weeks prior. With the assistance of our custodian Robin Smith and other staff members, the holdshelf, new large print, Library of Things and several staff workstations were relocated. Many thanks to Robin and staff for their help in this endeavor.

Return of Inside Hours: We were excited to welcome patrons back for inside browsing on Monday, May 17th. During the first week of browsing we served 476 people. In light of recent changes to Covid related restrictions, the library will expand hours of operation in two phases. In June library hours will expand to 1-7pm Monday through Thursday and 10am-4pm Friday and Saturday. In July we will resume our pre-pandemic schedule of 10am-7pm Monday through Thursday and 10am-4pm on Friday and Saturday.

Library Assistants: As you are already aware, many of our library assistants elected not to renew their appointments in light of the pandemic. However, this past month we were able to welcome back two library assistants. I met with both employees to review current operations and retrain on circulation procedures. We look forward to welcoming back a third library assistant next month.

Volunteers: In April I distributed a survey to all library volunteers to determine interest in returning to volunteer as Covid restrictions were lifted. I was able to identify a core group of volunteers who will begin providing coverage on June 1st. Currently all volunteer shifts have been filled and we are well positioned for the summer months. After reviewing all volunteer related documentation, forms, and training materials I scheduled an orientation session with volunteers on May 19th. We are looking forward to welcoming back our volunteers and are grateful for their assistance.

Collection development: Prior to reopening staff completed a de-selection (or weeding) project focused on the adult fiction collection. We also relocated the Library of Things (LOT) collection to a more visible location on the second floor in the reading area at the top of the stairs. In order to more efficiently display the collection, Staff Librarian Suzanne Martell created a display representing each item in the collection. The actual items are now stored in the circulation area. Patrons interested in checking out a LOT item can bring the representative display to the circulation desk to check out and retrieve the physical item.

Library Insight replacement: With the assistance of Executive Assistant Megan Green and Senior Library Technician Joanne Clingan, we are in the process of replacing our event calendar and museum pass platform. Ms. Green and Ms. Clingan have been evaluating the potential replacement products and we are meeting in June to select the final two candidates before

scheduling demonstrations with vendors. I am disappointed to have to report that our current vendor has begun to rollback support of our existing product ahead of the end of our contract date. As a result, our previous timeline for replacement, originally intended to be December of 2021, may need to be moved forward to as early as September of 2021. The current vendor's unwillingness to provide the same level of support is in direct contradiction to the statements made when the company announced their closure. We are currently in discussions with the vendor to ensure that adequate support of the current product remains in place throughout the terms of our contract.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Milan  
Assistant Director



Reference Librarian's Report  
May 26, 2021

The second floor of the library opened this month after a very long year plus break. I was able to fit 3 public computers that are approximately 6 feet apart from each other (and from the printer) in our previous computer space (that is now surrounded by 2 new office spaces). It took some time to get everything up and running again after not being touched for so long. Lots of updates and troubleshooting had to be done but everything is up and running now and slowly folks are coming upstairs again. Helpful tip - if you own Windows computers, turn them on and let them do updates every once in a while!

"Reference Refresher"

I gave each staff member that might be working up at the Reference desk an individual 'refresher' training on the changes that were made and a review on how the public printing system works. Each person had the chance to ask questions and discuss anything they were unfamiliar with.

There are a lot of unknowns about how much use the computers and printers will get this summer. The coin box that is attached to the public printer only takes coins and one dollar bills and that is a concern as so many people don't carry cash anymore. A lot of folks don't have printers at home anymore and a common use of our printer is for a return label- often Amazon or Walmart - to return something that has been bought online. This seemingly simple task can sometimes present a challenge for our patrons who don't know the passwords to get into their accounts. When more patrons come into the library, it will be interesting to see if these common problems persist or if the kinds of questions folks ask who are here in person will have changed at all. I am anticipating less of a need for print resources and possibly more help needed to direct patrons to the best digital resources as we have done a significant amount of this over the past year.

So far we have not had more than one person at a time using the computers, and total use has been low, but this is something that could change as we get much busier this summer. By the end of September we should have a better idea of how our resources on the second floor are being used and how Reference staff can best support the needs of the folks who are coming up here and asking questions so stay tuned for Reference updates!

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Pickett  
Reference Librarian

Staff Librarian  
May 27, 2021  
Report to the Trustees of Brooks Free Library

Social Media/PR: Edited website and social media with information on Inside hours, as well as what to expect during limited service. I also posted about the winners to our annual Knit Lit Literary challenge on social media, and updated the website to reflect this year's winners and honorable mentions.

Technology: I purchased two new computers, replacing the office catalog computer and set up the other as a backup for reference, which will likely be replaced in the next week or so. Additionally, I created a backup workstation for circulation staff in the VITAL office on the second floor. I set up three OPACs (Computers to browse the catalog) and created a new self-check station. I also made instructions for the copier, and set up staff guidelines for lending chromebooks. I also solved issues with printing lists from circulation computers and set up a backup printer to minimize future printing issues.

Professional Development: I attended Pub Serv and connected with representatives of other CLAMS libraries. We discussed reopening, policy and procedure changes, as well as updates to the Innovative Sierra software.

*Future work*

I intend to complete mapping our network and updating it to the new layout of our technology, set up new software for a label maker, and be trained on Zoom Text to be of better service for the VITAL coordinator.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jamie Thornton  
Staff Librarian