

**MINUTES**  
**BROOKS FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY**  
Wed. July 1, 2020 at 7 pm

**TRUSTEES PARTICIPATING:** Joan McCarty, Williams Crowell, Kathleen Remillard, Bernadette Waystack, and Jeannie Wheeler. Elected on June 30, 2020 and not yet sworn in: JoAnne Brown and Linda Cebula

**ALSO PARTICIPATING:** Library Director Virginia Hewitt

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice Chair Joan McCarty called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Ms. Hewitt read the following:

“Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance by members of the public will be permitted but every effort has been made to ensure the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. Members of the public who would like to join the meeting live may do so using the link or phone number provided on the agenda. This meeting is being recorded and will be shown on Channel 18 and available on demand on Channel 18’s website and YouTube.”

Ms. McCarty announced that the position of Chair is empty since Mary Warde’s term expired yesterday, so she would be running the meeting. She conducted a roll call of meeting participants: Mr. Crowell- Here. Ms. Remillard – Here, Ms. Waystack – Here. Ms. Wheeler: Here. Ms. Brown – present, but has not been sworn in since being re-elected yesterday. Ms. Cebula – present, but has not been sworn in since being elected yesterday. Not having been sworn in yet, Ms. Brown and Ms. Cebula will not be able to vote this evening. Also present: Library Director Virginia Hewitt.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2020 AND JUNE 18, 2020**

Ms. Hewitt stated the draft minutes of March 4, 2020 were not the final version and needed to be corrected. The March and June 2020 Minutes would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

MOTION: Table Approval of the Minutes of March 4 and June 18, 2020 until the Aug. 5 meeting (m: B. Waystack, s: J. Wheeler.) Roll call vote: B. Crowell – in favor, K. Remillard – in favor, B. Waystack – in favor, J. Wheeler – in favor, J. McCarty – in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. McCarty inquired if any members of the public would like to speak. There was no response and it did not appear that any members of the public had joined the meeting online or by phone.

**4. REPORTS**

**A. CHAIR:**

Ms. McCarty reported that the previous Chair, Mary Warde, had compiled the responses from the Trustees and completed the Library Director’s evaluation. She met with Ms. Hewitt on June 29, 2020 to finalize it before her term expired. Copies will be emailed to the Trustees.

**B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR:** Ms. Hewitt reported:

- **CURBSIDE PICKUP:** is going well. We began with more limited service so we could test procedures and have been continually expanding it. We began with 10 patrons per half hour time slot and have increased that to 20. Patrons were originally limited to 5 items per scheduled appointment, that was increased to 10 and is now unlimited. We were originally providing curbside pickup 3 days a week and are now doing all 5 days we are authorized to have staff in the building. At the start of curbside pickup 120 appointments were available per week. We now have 580 slots available. Ms. Hewitt noted that early on appointments quickly filled a week and a half in advance. Now we are able to accommodate same day appointments, if early enough in the day, and patrons do not have long waits for their appointments.
- **DELIVERY SERVICE:** the Mass. Library System re-started the Inter-Library Loan delivery service last week. We had over 60 bins waiting for pickup. It's taking some time for the delivery service to clear the backlog but they are making progress. With delivery back in operation, patrons can now place holds on other libraries' items again and they will be sent here. Like returned items, all items coming in, through delivery will be quarantined for 72 hours before they are handled by staff and checked in.
- **VOLUME OF ACTIVITY:** Brooks Free Library has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest volume of checkouts, just as we do during normal operations. 6,276 of our items were checked out in June and 1,620 patrons were served for curbside pickup.
- **SUMMER READING PROGRAM** is now underway. Young readers can log their reading online and then stop by the curbside pickup tables for prizes.
- **HISTORIC NEWSPAPERS NOW ONLINE** - The Cape Cod Republican, Harwich Independent and Central Cape Press are all now online, with links from our website. The Cape Cod Five Savings Bank digitized the Cape Cod Republican years ago and Community Preservation Act funds were used to digitize the other two newspapers in recent years, but patrons had to come in to the Library to access them. In December we contracted with a company to create one unified search interface to make it easier for patrons to search. The project was finished recently and we are paying a nominal fee for the vendor to host those files. Links have been added to our website.
- **ONLINE USE OF ANNUAL TOWN REPORTS** - We had the entire run of Annual Town Reports digitized by the Digital Commonwealth last year at no cost to the Town. The Reference Librarian estimated approximately 20 people per year would come in to look at these reports in years' past. Now that the content is available online, many more people have access. In FY20 there were 4478 views of the Harwich Town Reports. In the 18 months since they've been available online they have been viewed 7406 times.
- **WEBSITE VIEWS** - Our website was accessed 60,812 times in FY20.

**C. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:**

Ms. Brown reported that the recent improvements to the HVAC have made a big difference. The new energy management system makes it more energy efficient and temperatures around the building are consistent and appropriate.

Ms. Wheeler reported that a large leak in clean water pipes in between the men's and women's restrooms in the basement is still being repaired by the Department of Public Works (DPW) but since the building is not open to the public, having those restrooms closed hasn't been a problem.



Ms. Wheeler also reported that Dana DeCosta and another crew member from DPW did an extensive amount of trimming of bushes and trees on the property few days ago, clearing out where they were touching the building and overhanging the driveway to the upper parking lot. They were here for most of the day and did an excellent job.

D. LIAISON FROM THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Mr. Ford was not present.

5. CORRESPONDENCE: None.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. JULY, AUGUST AND SEPT. MONTHLY BUDGETS (1/12<sup>TH</sup> BUDGETS)

Ms. Hewitt reported the Library has received the July budget. We expect to be able to expend funds on the collection and pay the normal expenses we pay this time of year. She noted that, as discussed at the June meeting, if we are unable to expend funds on the collection she will notify the Trustees so the Board can take action. We are required to spend 16% of our appropriation on materials for the public as one of the provisions to maintain state library certification so we should be able to expend a conservative amount on the collection.

Ms. Hewitt noted that since the fiscal year ended yesterday she doesn't have the final FY20 balances to provide to the Board. Some invoices have yet to come in. Because of the spending freeze at the end of March we expect to return approximately \$50,000 to the general fund.

B. FY21 BUDGET:

Ms. Hewitt reported that we have not yet received any specific information on the FY21 budget or requests to reduce our budget lines. This should be forthcoming as the Town prepares for the Sept. Town Meeting.

C. STATUS REPORT ON ABILITY TO PROVIDE CURBSIDE PICKUP SERVICE ON SATURDAYS

Ms. Hewitt reported we have not yet received authorization from the Health Director to have staff members in the building on Saturday. The Governor's order requires daily disinfection of workplaces in order to have staff in the building and the Town is unable to provide that on weekends. The Town recently contracted with a firm for additional disinfection but that was for outside restrooms at beaches and parks only; not inside Town buildings. The Trustees concurred that is important for the Library to be able to provide services on Saturday,

D. UPDATES ON PHASED RESUMPTION OF SERVICE - Ms. Hewitt reported:

INSIDE ACCESS FOR PATRONS:

There has been a great deal of interest about when the Library will be able to allow patrons in the building to browse the shelves and select materials. That is prohibited under the Governor's orders for Phase 2 Part 2. Libraries may allow patrons inside during this phase but only to pick up materials that are on hold and have already been checked out to them. It is meant to be a quick transaction. Patrons are not allowed to browse the shelves or to discuss what books are interested in - that's all supposed to happen by phone. The purpose of allowing the inside access in this phase is to accommodate libraries that are not able to provide curbside service or can't do so in inclement weather. Brooks Library is fortunate to have a large overhang by the parking lot entrance that easily accommodates curbside pickup even in inclement

weather. Ms. Hewitt noted that the current phase also prohibits any use of public computers or other shared technology. With these restrictions she noted that there is no advantage for patrons in switching to inside pickup and for staff, it increases the amount of disinfection required.

#### NEXT PHASE OF RE-OPENING MASS.:

Phase 3 of Reopening Mass. is expected to start July 6<sup>th</sup> but no information has been provided by the state on what that entails for libraries. Even when inside access is allowed, we will have to proceed cautiously. Patrons will initially be allowed access to some areas of the building while other areas remain closed. A small number of patrons will be allowed in at one time and time limits on how long patrons may stay. There will be limited use of public computers, likely by appointment.

#### BUILDING PREPARATIONS:

In terms of building preparations, Ms. Hewitt noted that the Library has received four acrylic panels for public service desks from the Town but will need twice that many for the public service desks and additional barriers for public computers. She has spread staff out, creating workstations in the public floor of the building for staff members who would normally share the same workstation and states we believe we are in compliance with all directives for workplaces. The Town has not yet done any site visits to assess the building for compliance with regulations needed for the staff working in the building. We will need that and will then need them to advise us on occupancy limits, etc., for having the public in the building.

#### CAPE LIBRARIES' PLANS:

Ms. Hewitt reported that many CLAMS libraries are planning to stay with curbside pickup for most if not all of the summer. It will be difficult to manage patron's behavior and ensure compliance with the restrictions of where patrons can go and what they can do, particularly during the busy summer period when use of the Library doubles. She stated that providing some inside access has not been ruled out this summer but it is unlikely for at least the next month.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### A. REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Ms. McCarty stated that the Board of Trustees typically reorganizes at this meeting but since two newly elected members had not yet been sworn in she suggested waiting until the next meeting, so that all Board members could participate in those votes. Ms. Waystack concurred, stating newly elected members should have the opportunity to serve as officers.

MOTION: To table the reorganization of the Board to the next meeting. (motion: B. Waystack, second: J. Wheeler) Roll call vote: K. Remillard – in favor, J. Wheeler – in favor, B. Crowell – aye, B. Waystack – aye, and J. McCarty – in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed the practice of designating four Trustees to share responsibility for signing invoices, personnel actions and payroll, with the understanding that if any of the four are not available any Trustee is authorized to sign.

MOTION: To designate Kathleen Remillard, Jeannie Wheeler, Joan McCarty and JoAnne Brown to share responsibility for signing of invoices, personnel actions and payroll. (Motion: B. Waystack, second: B. Crowell). Roll call vote: K. Remillard – aye, J.



Wheeler – aye, B. Crowell – aye, B. Waystack – aye, J. McCarty – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hewitt noted that the Town suspended the requirement to have Trustees sign invoices, personnel actions and payroll during the pandemic. Her signature is still required. Documents are scanned and submitted to the Finance Dept. electronically for now. She stated that when we are able to resume having documents signed it is a good practice to resume. The Trustees do have operational authority for the Library and signing invoices, personnel actions and payroll makes that clear.

B. ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS: There were no donations this month.

#### 8. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND REQUESTS FOR NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

Ms. McCarty asked if there were any items the Trustees would like to discuss or request for agenda items or information at next month's meeting.

She reminded the Board that they voted in March to meet on the first Wed. evening of the month at 7 pm. This depend the Town's ability to accommodate the requested meeting time using GoToMeeting. The tentative date for the next meeting is Wed. August 5th at 7 pm.

Mr. Crowell noted that the new fence enclosure around the chiller, which was constructed by DPW, is a big improvement and looks great.

Ms. McCarty once again asked if any members of the public had joined the meeting and wished to make any comments. There was no response.

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn. (motion: J. Wheeler, second: B. Waystack). Roll Call vote: B. Waystack – who noted a point of order and thanked the Vice Chair for running the meeting and doing a wonderful job. Other Trustees concurred. In favor of adjournment: B. Waystack – yes, B. Crowell – in favor, K. Remillard – aye, J. Wheeler – aye, J. McCarty – aye. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 and the recording was stopped.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Virginia A. Hewitt

Library Director

Approved by the Board of Trustees 8.5.20