

*Town of Hubbardston*  
***Board of Library Trustees***  
***Meeting Minutes February 1, 2024***

**Members present:** Morgan Brinker, Connie Strittmatter, Krista Goguen, Tom Robinson

**Also present:** Christine Barbera, Library Director and Nate Boudreaux, Town Administrator

**Members absent:** Bob Cronin and Lucinda Oates

Meeting called to order by Chair Connie Strittmatter at 7:03 pm at the Slade Building.  
The meeting was made available on Google Meet but there were no virtual participants.

**AGENDA:**

- **CERT/MRC Emergency kiosks** - Guest Judie O'Donnell  
Postponed to a future meeting when Judie O'Donnell can attend.

Chair Connie Strittmatter reordering agenda items to discuss the Green Energy grant and Strategic planning earlier in the meeting.

- **Green Energy Grant for Heat Pumps**  
Town Administrator Nate Boudreaux summarized the \$188,000 Green Energy Grant from the MA Dept of Energy Resources. Connie thanked the TA for his hard work on securing this grant. The Select Board will review the contract for approval at their next meeting. The Select Board will also review the FY 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan already endorsed by the Finance Committee and Capital Improvement Committee. This plan includes funding the \$12,000 to upgrade the library electrical panel required by the grant. The Library had planned to cover that cost but the cost of the emergency replacement of the boiler last month was funded by the library instead. Nate commended the extra efforts of the library director and Trustee chair to handle the emergency situation with the boiler failure.

The installation of the heat pumps will probably take 8 months. Nate will coordinate with Chris and Connie. ECI will be doing the installation. MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission) will manage the reporting for the grant. Connie stated the library is listed on the National Register of Historic Places [since 1998] so changes to the building may require approval. Chris will contact the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Register of Historic Places to get approval. Connie will coordinate with Building Preservation Consultant Wendy Frontiero to make sure the installation matches her recommendations. ECI has some experience working with historical buildings.

Nate shared a copy of the Town Capital Improvement plan and also described the Town planning efforts at the Board and Department level. Hubbardston will be participating in a survey and study of Efficiency and emerging Technology to assist Town staff through the Collins Center

at UMASS. Follow up Public discussions will be held in March- April Agricultural Bylaw revisions will be brought to June or fall town meeting.

- **Strategic Planning**
  - **Draft Strategic Planning Timeline**

Connie shared the timeline for the library's Strategic Planning.

January: formed a working group of Connie, Morgan and Krista to develop the timeline to submit the 5 year strategic plan to MBLC by October 2024.

February: Develop survey question and communications/marketing plan; Identify groups to target for survey; Consider multiple surveys for target groups.; Develop survey in Google Forms; Develop and schedule focus group sessions

March: data collection: surveys and focus groups

April: Evaluate data; Meet with Select board to share data and as focus group to get their views on the library

May: Identify goals and strategies

June-July: Draft strategic plan

August: Discuss Draft Plan; Make final adjustments to plan

September: Vote to approval strategic plan at September 5 Library Trustees meeting

September - October: Submit strategic plan to MBLC

- **Draft [Community Survey](#)**

Nate offered his support and offered help distributing and advertising the survey through Town announcements and communications. He suggested consulting with the Town Clerk to find out if we can have the survey available at the upcoming election in March.

Trustees reviewed the community survey drafted by the subcommittee and discussed several revisions to make the survey more effective. Trustees goal is to cast a wide net with the survey to get feedback from users and non-users about the physical library, library collections, existing library programs and services, and gaps in our current offerings. The survey and focus group findings will help guide the goals and objectives of the 5 year strategic plan.

- [2019-2024 Plan](#)
- 2019-2024 [Progress Report](#)

- **Boiler Update and Payment**

Connie thanked Chris for handling the challenging emergency situation caused by the furnace boiler outage and for keeping the building heated while the boiler could be replaced. She purchased multiple electric heaters which kept the building from freezing, but the library was closed Jan. 20-29. The Royal Steam Heating company was able to install a new boiler but they are still working on adjusting the system and additional system repairs still needed.. Chris described the details of the repairs and noted any additional parts can be funded from the Library Services account. We don't have an invoice yet, but the quote is \$23,780. Connie and Chris proposed paying with a combination of accounts (State, Donations, Freetown Trust). The

State Account can't be used to fully fund the cost because the furnace also heats the Town Offices. Chris contacted the Town accountant who approved use of the Freetown account for this purpose. The Town will now cover the \$12K for the upgrade to the electrical required for the Heat pump that the library had been asked to pay. Specifically, Connie proposed using this combination to pay for the boiler: \$15,000 from State, \$5,000 from Donations, \$5,000 from Freetown. Trustees discussed the merits of use of the different types of funds. Chris explained that State funds can be used for repairs, staffing, programs. Tom pointed out that the balances of the various Trust fund accounts are being diminished by account management fees. He proposed depleting Freetown, using State Account or Services as needed to cover the balance and conserving the Donations account for future needs.

Morgan made a motion to use the available Freetown account to cover the cost of the boiler with any additional funds needed taken from the State and/or Services Account. Connie 2nd. All in favor 4-0-0

**Action Item:** Morgan suggested Trustees draft a public thank you and appreciation for the Freetown Trust fund for the library.

- **Review Scholarship Rubric**

Morgan made a motion to postpone the rubric discussion to the March meeting and also review the other scholarship materials at that time. Tom 2nd. All approved.

- **Library Director's report**

Chris presented the [January Library Director's Report](#). She noted the Facebook numbers are up-to-date and should be labeled January. She later provided the number of website visits as 551. She explained the emergency procurement procedure for the furnace was approved by the State due to the emergency situation.

- **Approval of Meeting minutes for [January 2024](#)**

Morgan motioned to approve with correction to the Strategic plan timeline - it is due in October not July. All approve.

- **Items not reasonably anticipated by chair**

Chris presented the Library Department portion of the 2023 Town report and asked Trustees for feedback before the submission date of Feb. 29.

Tom announced he arranged for a site visit from Bella Masonry on Feb 9.

**Action Item:** Contact Historic preservation regarding removal of an iron railing, brick repointing, electrical upgrades and heat pump installations.

Motion to adjourn made by Connie 2nd Morgan. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Next meeting Thursday March 7, 2024 at the Slade Building.

Respectfully submitted by Krista Goguen