

Freetown Board of Library Trustees
Minutes of the Tuesday, March 17, 2015 Meeting
James White Memorial Library, East Freetown, Mass.



Present: Irene Ashley, Vince Kyne, Mike McCue, Christine Paiva, Lucille Rosa, and Joe Zinni.

Call to order: Chairman Lucille Rosa called the meeting to order at 7:08p.

Approval of Minutes, Review of Payroll and Bills

The minutes of February 20th were reviewed and approved. Bills and payroll were reviewed.

Library Director's Report

Mrs. Stanley-Ballard left shortly before the start of the meeting due to illness, so her report was given by Mrs. Rosa. Mrs. Rosa stated that she and the Director had attended a budget review meeting with the selectmen and Finance Committee. There were no issues raised with the library budget as presented.

Library Design and Planning Report

Mrs. Rosa reported that the Library Planning Committee had met the previous Friday to resume the planning process. She reviewed the grant and the work to be done to bring all current trustees up to speed.

Old Business

Mr. McCue reported that he had contacted two firms regarding the windows at the Hathaway Library and had no response. Mr. Kyne volunteered to give it a try, and he will take time between now and the next meeting to try and make progress.

Discussion resumed on the heating system at the White Library. Mrs. Stanley-Ballard had left prior to the meeting due to feeling ill from odors in the building. Althea Brady and Casey Pittsley had also complained of fumes and odors, all believed to be attributable to the furnace leaking and otherwise acting up. Trustees viewed the furnace and circulated in the library room, noting that things did not look or smell right. Also by this time in the meeting, several had sensations of burning eyes or scratchy throats.

It was noted that these concerns were raised by the staff to the folks at town hall and they did not feel they were being listened to. Two staff members had considered resigning in protest due to what they felt were unsafe working conditions and a failure to take their concerns seriously. All trustees agreed that the staff were entitled to clean air and functioning heat, and that library patrons were entitled to the same. All trustees felt that they should support the staff in seeking a resolution.

Trustees discussed what efforts could be undertaken to ensure a safe working environment. Mrs. Ashley suggested that the air quality in the building should be tested. Mr. Zinni and Mr. Kyne felt that the leaks in the furnace should be fixed immediately. Mrs. Rosa felt that the odors could be a health hazard. Mr. McCue asked if replacing the furnace had come up during the budget discussion with the selectmen and Finance Committee, and Mrs. Rosa stated it had not.

After considerable and lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mr. McCue, seconded by Mr. Zinni, to close the White Library for the safety of staff and patrons until the furnace is repaired properly or replaced. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Paiva asked what would happen with the staff – would they still be paid or would they lose money? Mr. McCue responded that they would need to work to be paid. All agreed that the staff should not be punished for a maintenance issue. It was estimated that by closing the White Library, twenty hours would be lost each week.

A motion was made by Mr. McCue, seconded by Mr. Zinni, to open the Hathaway Library for the hours that the White Library is normally open in addition to its regular hours. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Mrs. Rosa stated that on a recent visit, one of the selectmen expressed concern for the items at the White Library that were disorganized and/or piled on the floor. Trustees will consider a policy at the next meeting that would deal with this issue.

Mr. McCue stated that on a recent visit, another of the selectmen expressed concerns for the restroom facilities at the White Library. All felt that this could be corrected with minor cosmetic work, and the Director will be asked to purchase the needed supplies.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mrs. Ashley, seconded by Mr. Kyne, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:11p.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: Michael T. McCue
Michael T. McCue, Secretary