

**Nahant Public Library
Board of Trustees
August 6, 2019**

Board Members Present: Chris Stevens, Anne Spirn, Dan Munnelly

Others Present: Sharon Hawkes, Carolyn Ziering, Jim Dolan, Janet Dolan

Convened: 6:35 PM

Noise Complaint. Jim Dolan returned to speak about noise level and cell phone use in the Library. Sharon reviewed the library's mission, policies, and the accommodations the Library has offered thus far. Jim seemed to be seeking a balance between a silent library and a boisterous one. The Trustees, while sympathizing with Jim's dilemma, reiterated that they stand behind the policies of the Library and have offered reasonable accommodation. When it was suggested that Jim utilize the quiet room or notify staff when he is having trouble with noise, he did not seem amenable.

Jim also brought up the library's cell phone policy, which states: "Patrons wishing to converse on their cell phones will need to do so outside the Library." Sharon acknowledged that a member of staff spoke out of turn and spoke in error when Jim first asked about cell phone use in the library and Sharon apologized to Jim for this error when she first saw him after the incident and again at this meeting.

Janet and Jim Dolan depart.

Employee Evaluation. The Trustees, seeing that the employee was not present, decided not to discuss the evaluation. Instead, the Board decided to reiterate their support of the Director's handling personnel matters as she deems appropriate. Chris Stevens, Board Chair, made the following statement:

"I initially called for this meeting because at the BOS meeting I essentially agreed to give Kim another 30 days. In hindsight, I realized that was wrong. I caved to the BOS and the town administrator—

Everyone has been so careful in our meetings with Town Counsel and the Town Administrator and at the BOS meeting not to discuss the reasons for the termination because the employee was not at the meeting, which is ridiculous because it is virtually impossible as you all know to discuss the actions of the issue without discussing the actions of the employee.

I wanted the Town Administrator and Town Counsel to understand why the Library Director was going to do what she was going to do because all they've ever heard is the employee's side of the issue. They have never once asked the Library Director for her side of the issue.

Their only response has been in regards to threatened litigation. It is clear their only concern is with the town, not the library.

My thought was if we put everyone in a room, with said employee, then Town Counsel and the Town Administrator would be forced to hear the Library Director's reasoning for termination and perhaps realize that this is simply a personnel issue and should be dealt with as such.

Tony, however, has deemed the meeting a waste of time since we're not going to take Town Counsel's advice, his words. Once again he has dismissed any concerns the Library Director or the Board might have in regards to this incident and is only concerned about possible litigation."

Director's Report.

Patron noise complaint. Sharon made the following suggestions to the Board for responding to noise complaints:

- acknowledge it is difficult to offer a full range of Library services in a small and intimate building
- offer quiet hours beginning in September
- Nahant Room (with a computer, desk space and chairs) is available for quiet use.
- use headphones to help mask intrusive sounds.
- assume that programs will be loud and distracting, check the calendar to avoid those times or attend ready to engage in the program.
- continue to enforce no yelling and no cellphone calls policies. Patrons may speak to one another and to staff in a normal conversational tone.
- Patrons should plan their visits for regular Library hours.

ARIS statistics. Sharon has completed the Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) report for the Mass Board of Library Commissioners, and will begin working on the Financial Report next week. Circulations are up 5.54% over last year, and 64% since 2015! Program attendances are up.

Staffing. Olivia Barton-Medugno was hired as the library page. Olivia has experience working with the public in retail, working with children as a teacher's assistant, and with young children as an English language tutor. We welcome her to Nahant Public Library.

Terrace repair. The terrace project has been awarded to Adams & Smith Architects, with 30 years' experience in small, historic public libraries in New England. Richard met on August 1 with a masonry restoration expert, a structural engineer, and DPW Superintendent Zach Taylor to discuss the design approach to the terrace. Next steps: to have the DPW's plumber go in and connect drain pipes, and to put out simple bidding for someone to shore up the structure.

Exterior repair. Tony Barletta, Vicky Masone, Lynne Spencer and Zachary Taylor met on August 1 to discuss how to approach the rest of the exterior repairs.

Short term building projects. Most all of the short-term projects Sharon tracked since her arrival are complete or have been rolled into one of the larger projects. Sharon believes the only item that is unaddressed is the installation of a panic button behind the service desk.

Friends fundraising. Sharon discovered that a set of books donated to the Friends by a patron is worth about \$1,000-1,500, and another book is worth about \$500. Thanks to Anne Bromer's suggestion, these will be auctioned off by Skinners Auctions in November.

Memory Café, Dementia Friendly Nahant. The Mae West program brought 10 people to the Connections Memory Café. In August, a movement professional will lead the café. Expenses on this project are complete, which included the guest artists, memory kits (which will be offered to fellow Memory Café hosts), the music collection and CD player, and various pieces of equipment.

Summer Reading Program. The Children's Summer Reading Program now has 45 children signed up, ranging in age from "almost 3" to 13. There is an outer space coloring page in the lobby, and Astro the high-flying space dog is hiding out in the children's room holding a space fact. Upcoming events include some planet gazing with Peter Foukal on August 8 and live streaming a downlink with the International Space Station on August 9. Thank you to the Johnson School for its partnership in this year's program.

Music series. Carolyn's music series concluded on August 1 with Marilyn Goodrich on classical guitar. Congrats to Carolyn for some lovely evenings.

Nature in Nahant, 2020-21. The Mass Board of Library Commissioners announced that Nahant Public Library has been accepted for a 2-year grant for a total of \$15,000 to care for the Library's pressed plant collection and to offer a Walk Nahant Day, walk brochure, lecture series, photo exhibits, and the scanning and preservation of the collection. In year 2, the Library will concentrate on working with students at the Johnson Elementary School, which will include a visit by "Miss Flossie Johnson" (the teacher who created the collection in 1897) and [Wildman Steve Brill](#), an expert in edible wild plants. Partners in the project include:

- Robert Wilson
- John Benson
- Diana Brandi
- Linda Pivacek
- S.W.I.M., Inc.
- Nahant Historical Society
- Nahant Garden Club
- Northeastern University MSC
- Audubon Society
- Johnson Elementary School

The press release was turned into an article by the Boston Globe online on July 30. There has been some concern among a few people about partnering with Northeastern. Sharon has sent out written replies to a couple of community leaders clearly stating that Northeastern has provided no monetary incentive to the Library.

Clean Slate added to public computers. HiQ and Carolyn together uploaded Clean Slate programs on all public computers on July 30. Clean Slate will return the computers to a baseline after each use, so that a patron's personal information or documents won't remain after use.

New art work donated. Esther Johnson used a watercolor of a pinky schooner to demonstrate what an early fishing vessel in Nahant Bay looked like. She has kindly donated that watercolor to the Library, and it is hanging in the hall leading to the restroom.

New Business.

Director's Report. The Trustees responded to a few items in the Director's report. They want to acknowledge that a meeting was held regarding renovations to the Library building at which Sharon was not present because she had not been informed nor invited. Dan Munnelly would like to schedule another meeting of the Building Conservation Committee and hopes that the committee might be able to help move forward the envelope project. Dan Munnelly also shared his misgivings about partnering with Northeastern University.

Fundraising. Dan Munnelly had questions about the fundraising efforts and the timeframe. This will be addressed at the next meeting along with a plan to create an account to collect campaign contributions.

Adjourned: 7:50 PM