

Final
Rockport Public Library
Library Committee Meeting, December 14, 2021
at Town Office/RR
Meeting called to order at 3:32pm by Helen Shaw, Chair

Present:

Library Committee: Helen Shaw, Chair; William (Bill) Chapman, Treasurer; Lee Goss, Secretary, Stephanie Kumble, and Marsha Steinglass

Library Director: Ben Blackman

Friends' Liaison: Ann Filley—Attended until 4:40pm

Select Board Liaison: Denise Munger

Guests: None

Announcements/Introductions: None

Consideration of Agenda: Accepted as presented

Public Comment: None

Reports:

1) Secretary: Bill made a motion to accept the RPLC November meeting minutes as presented. Marsha Steinglass Seconded the motion. The RPLC Vote: Unanimous.

2) Treasurer: Bill reviewed the treasures report noting the current balance reflects a substantial donation of \$50,000 from the Jackie Teare estate, longtime supports of RPL. Following RPLC member discussion of appreciation, Bill recommended transferring the \$50,000 donation to the RPL Schwab investment account, which would leave ~\$11,000 in the general RPL account to meet anticipated RPL monthly expenses.

Stephanie made a motion to move the donation of \$50,000 to the Schwab investment account. Marsha Seconded the motion. The RPLC Vote: Unanimous.

Bill observes that the treasurers report is a standard monthly report. He explained that the weekly desk funds are considerably lower this month which was expected.

3) Director: Ben reports that the radiant floor heating installation is complete and they have been heating the downstairs and the children's room with radiant heat, which the staff observes makes the whole building warmer. Ben explained that it has been an adjustment learning how to monitor the radiant heat, and they have learned to pick a comfortable heat setting and leave it at that setting.

The main entrance is currently closed for construction to finish installing the bricks and granite pavers. The library entrance will be the lower entrance until the construction project is finished, which Ben anticipates will be by the middle of next week.

The elevator construction project and paperwork has been finalized.

Children's programming is ongoing with outside events weather permitting.

Employee evaluations are completed and turned into Jon Duke, Rockport Town Manager.

Ben observes there remains a lot of uncertainty with the ongoing pandemic concerns. At this time they are continuing to plan and schedule with the current pandemic conditions and will make adjustments as needed.

RPL has an Instagram account now. RockportLibrary207. Ben shared that a primary reason to open an RPL Instagram account is that teens report that Instagram is one of their primary methods of social communication.

Santa will read the books for Holiday on the Harbor due to two reschedules to date. (Note: At the time of finalizing these minutes, Holiday on the Harbor has been rescheduled again for a New Years fireworks celebration. We will look forward to Holiday on the Harbor 2022!)

Ben explained that RPL was closed last November, so the reported library activity statistics cannot be compared this month through December 17, 2021. Fortunately, in January 2022, the data should be much more informative.

4) Warrants(s):

The Warrant for \$5071.39 includes \$2737.02 for the Interlibrary Loan fund and events such as Pumpkin Painting. Ben notes that the warrant includes the Seacoast Security bill which is quarterly.

Bill made a motion to approve the warrant for \$5071.39 and Stephanie seconded the motion. RPLC Vote: Unanimous

Discussion of the ongoing website research and planning in process. There will be much more specific information presented on the website development options and costs when the research and planning process is completed.

6) Friends: Ann presented the Friends report. She explained that the Friends is a small group and they welcome new board members. Last year the Friends annual book sale earned \$16,000 before expenses, which was the last large RPL book sale, prior to the pandemic. This year, Friends has organized and hosted 4 book sales since May 2021, which has earned \$9830. The current Friends account balance is ~\$13,000 with memberships and some donations. Ann observes that hosting and storing books for the book sales in our new RPL building has resulted in minimal expenses for Friends. Recent Friends projects and donations to RPL include a Butterfly Garden, and a new railing.

Next year Friends are planning to host 3 book sale events, along with the bimonthly organization of the Art Wall exhibits, care of the butterfly garden, and the addition of some flower urns. They will also sponsor the RPL 5K walk/run with Keith Drago, who has qualified for the Boston Marathon!

Ann observes that the RPL event calendar has been working out well to assist with communication and organization of events.

5) Select Board: Denise reported that the Capital Improvement Project Plan is in progress. Any capital expenses over \$5000 must be approved by the town. There is a Workshop scheduled for the Rockport Select Board in January 2022. Denise acknowledged that the Select Board is very aware of the parking needs. RPLC general discussion of parking challenges for RPL and the town. Denise noted a need for documentation from the Rockport Town Parking Committee that includes suggestions for improving

access to the town parking, including signs. Ben and staff observe that diagonal parking in the drop-off parking improves space.

Unfinished and Tabled Business: None

New Business: Ben presented an overview of his budget draft prior to meeting with Jon Duke, Rockport Town Manager, to review the budget proposal.

Ben explained that 6% is estimated for the annual Cost of Living Increases. The Employee benefits is incomplete because it is completed by Megan Brackett, Finance Director.

Ben has added an education stipend of \$1200—\$50/month for 2 staff members—to compensate current staff with an advanced degree, as advanced degrees are not required for the position. Ben explained that he believes this should be a town wide budget line, so this may not be in the final budget, but per Jon's suggest he has introduced it in this budget draft for further discussion with Jon Duke, Rockport Town Manager, and Megan Brackett, Finance Director.

Ben is requesting \$30,000 in the Miscellaneous Professional Services Budget Line for development of a new website. He has budgeted 30,000 for continuing maintenance for the current website for next year, as well as previous estimates of \$20,000 to \$30,000 for new website development fees. He explained that professional services do not require a bid process. RPL can research and select the best website service match for RPL. Ben and staff will provide more specific information on the website proposals and answer questions when the proposal choices are finalized. RPLC discussion that the current website maintenance is a minimal fee, with general agreement that the library has outgrown the current website services. Ben anticipates the web hosting costs should be covered in the current budget plan.

Ben would like to increase the budget line for Library Programs, which includes speakers, presenters, and events. He plans to increase this line incrementally over the next several years from \$750 to \$3250, which includes adults and children programs. General RPLC discussion of ways

to improve communication and attendance for RPL events, such as email notifications and reminders, and the website event calendar.

Ben explained that the electricity line increased due to expectations that electricity costs are going up this year. Additionally, he observed that the electricity bill was very high last year, and now includes radiant floor heat, although new and very efficient, is an unknown annual expense.

Ben increased the building repairs and maintenance line from \$500 to \$1500 to be prepared for any repair and maintenance needs.

Post Office Box rental fees line of \$38.40 was increased to \$125 to reflect the actual costs of Post Office Box rental fees.

The reduction in the State of Maine delivery fee line by \$1048 is based on a recent bill. Ben feels comfortable with the current negotiated delivery fee contracts. General RPLC discussion of increasing \$200 to cover unexpected expenses. This increase will allow Ben to adjust the ILL deliveries which is considered a very valuable service and is expected to increase donations. Historically, Ben observes we lend more items than we receive due to our excellent collection.

Ben increased the training and education line by \$1000 to \$3920 for staff professional development, conferences, and training. General RPLC discussion in support and recognition that continuing professional development is an important priority and revitalizing and inspiring for staff.

Ben explained that the Contractual Services line includes elevator maintenance.

Ben increased the Supplies line from \$5000 to \$5750 for adults and children programming supplies.

Capital Improvement Items for the Town Budget include \$2000 in two lines to provide funds for service and repairs for capital improvements when needed.

Discussion of increasing periodicals and reference book items. Ben supports an increase with the understanding that most reference research is online now, so the RPL desk reference library materials do not get used

often. He observes that the Mayo clinic and health references are the most utilized. General discussion that DVDs and Audio/Visual materials are most needed. Following RPLC discussion an increase to the reference books line by \$300 to \$900 was suggested and supported.

Ben has budgeted \$19,000 for the Book Line with RPLC agreement.

Ben explained that the RPL Budget will be submitted by Friday, December 17th.

Budget Summary: \$8000 total increase for the town budget.

Ben is requesting RPLC approve \$28,377 for the RPLC endowment budget, which includes \$25,000 for the website. The actual annual increase is \$3,377. Ben explained that he strives to be conservative to protect the RPL endowment for the future. His goal is to increase the programming budget annually for the next 3-5 years.

Stephanie made a motion to accept the budget as presented. Bill seconded the motion. RPLC Vote: Unanimous.

Adjournment: 5:06pm

**Respectfully submitted,
Lee Goss, Secretary**

Next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2022 at 3:30pm in the Richardson Room, Rockport Town Office.