

**James L. Hamner Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 19, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 by president Jennifer Harris. Members present were Kat Spears, Ruth Ashton, Jennifer Harris, Tom Hayghe, Carol Hix, Virginia Whitaker, and Gail Geraghty. Also in attendance were Friends member Louisa Fink and Board of Supervisors liaison Shaun Weyant.

Jennifer asked for approval of the minutes, Ruth motioned and Tom seconded.

Public Comments - None

Friends' Report - Louisa shared that the book exchange held on September 9th went very well; it was well-attended and Carytown Teas was a huge hit. A representative from Liberty Systems met with Kat and the Friends at their meeting on September 12th to present plans for reorganizing and refurbishing the library. Friends agreed to pay the Swank Movie Licensing fee of \$550 for showing movies to the public. Louisa said that they had authorized payment for the Junior Library Guild, retroactive to 2021, from the Helen Wright fund. The Friends attorney is petitioning the court to amend the will of donor Helen Wright to allow for the purchase of more than only childrens' books.

Officers' Reports - None

Committee Reports - Carol brought up that as we are down two members, we should discuss what's to be done. Tom said that we need to make a decision about the openings. Jennifer said that we have had a hard time filling openings, as no one has expressed interest, and the website's online form may be a deterrent. Shaun said that for now, as long as we have a quorum of members present it shouldn't be a problem. It was decided to discuss this further at our next meeting.

Library Director's Report - Kat discussed the library use report, which showed that participation is up in nearly all areas from last year. The computers are almost in constant use, and she would like to purchase a few laptops for additional computer access for patrons. Programming has been well-attended - the painting class filled up right away. The "Preserving Your Family's Treasures" class in October is being presented in collaboration with the Historical Society at the historical society building. Library staff looked into buying our own equipment for showing movies outdoors, and found that, for less than the cost of one rental, we can own it. The next movie in the works is scheduled for Saturday, October 28 with a Halloween trunk or treat in the Library parking lot. On Saturday, December 2, right after the Amelia Christmas Parade, the library will lend its movie equipment for Deputy Sydnor, high school SRO, to do a movie night on the Courthouse Lawn.

An After-School Meal Program is being held at the library for students from 4:00 - 5:30 Tuesday through Thursday. The program, funded by the USDA for students aged 18 and younger, is being administered by the schools. Activities will be provided by Library staff and Amelia County 4-H staff. Also, this fall, in collaboration with the American Legion, there will be a "Thank a Vet" program, with local school students writing letters to local veterans and library patrons invited to use notecards and art supplies in the library to write thank you letters. The Saturday Storytime, which has been restarted, has had attendance of 6 - 8 students weekly. For the Christmas parade, plans are to rent two book character costumes to be worn, and to pass out small gifts and candy to kids.

Kat spoke about recent changes in state funding contributions. The projected line item amount was \$80,000 in the current year's budget, but we were actually awarded \$84,713. This week, however, Kat found out that the state funding was increased to \$99,000 thanks to a more generous budget from the General Assembly allocations; it will be distributed quarterly.

Kat spoke further about the proposed plans prepared by Liberty Systems to improve the library's layout and functionality. Jay Malise, the company owner, created plans that were well-received. Kat shared the floorplan with the board. Kat is pursuing a grant from T-Moblie to help with financing, and the Friends may also be able to support the children's library improvements. As well, Kat is reworking the library's use of funding, and there's a possibility that we could raise some funds from independent sources and federal grants. Upgrades could begin as early as spring.

Kat said that she let go of the IT contractor due to high cost and unreliability and he responded with a lawsuit for breach of contract. The county attorney, Jeff Gore, saw nothing in the written contract that would prevent the library from giving 60-days notice to cancel the contract, but the IT contractor is pursuing the suit. During this transition to new IT, she discovered that the library is actually eligible for some free IT services that the library wasn't taking advantage of, as well as federal funding for equipment costs reimbursable up to 90%.

Also, the library website is currently being revamped, at zero cost to the library as state funding has been provided. The state funding will also cover the cost of website hosting which is several hundred dollars per year. A much more functional calendar will now be available on the website.

Virginia told Kat that she has done an amazing job and thanked her for all she's done.

Old Business - None

New Business - Kat brought up the 6-month evaluation of the library director, as October will mark her 6th month. Tom, who will lead the evaluation, explained how it will be handled. He said that he'd rather wait until November to start the process, as is typically done, and Kat agreed.

CIP - Kat suggested that we pursue expansion only of the meeting room, and reconfiguring the space we already have. The \$35,000 we've requested should cover the cost of plans/drawings. Ruth suggested we may not have to use the same architect. Members discussed the importance of planning carefully. Tom said we have the benefit of experience from last time to better know what is needed. Kat said she will share around that we're putting this out to bid.

At 7:10, Carol moved we adjourn the meeting, and Ruth seconded.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.