

**Croton Free Library**  
Board Meeting Minutes  
March 8 2021

**PRESENT**

Trustees: Leslie Ellis (24), Adora Lam (21), Lynn Kauderer (23), Susan Ranis (24), Barry Feinberg (23), Jane Beller (22), Marianne Merola (22), Sharyse Eisinger (21), Mary McFerran (21)

Treasurer: Sid Franks

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

Croton Free Library Association: Kate Fabian, President

**CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was held online via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was called to order at 7:34 pm.

February 2021 minutes were approved

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- Patron Services

Patron Services statistics were presented and continue to reflect the effects of pandemic restrictions. February was a short month with several holidays and snow closings, and this may explain the slight decrease in some areas of patron usage.

- Emergency Fire Box Installed

The Fire chief has approved our newly-installed emergency key box located to the left of the front door. This allows the fire department access to the library in case of emergencies such as the one experienced in December 2020. Similar key boxes are installed in other public buildings around the village.

- Second Levy Payment Deposited

We have received the second check and last check for this fiscal year from the school district in the amount of \$ 434,837. It has been deposited in our money market account from which monthly withdrawals of approximately \$65,000 will be made.

- Budget Planning for 2021-2022 has begun

Planning for the next fiscal year has started. We asked, and received approval, for the maximum allowed increase in the tax levy. This was possible because we received no increase last year. The increase of about \$26,000 brings our total anticipated tax levy income for next year to \$895,664.

- Response to Dr. Seuss controversy

The estate of Theodor Geisel has recently acted to remove some of his books from circulation due to content which is considered offensive. The library respects their wishes, but does not want to censor or blacklist any book. The Director has decided instead to remove these books from our shelves and add them to our archives. They will be available by request for in-person use by Croton residents only, i.e., not circulated to other libraries.

- Preparing for Reopening

Pressure has increased for the library to reopen. The Safety Committee will be meeting next week to review our options. Currently about 65% of libraries in the county are still providing curbside pickup only.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Finance Committee:

The Treasurer reports that the Library is continuing to do well financially and is operating within and often below budget projections. As was reported by the Director, we have received and deposited our second tranche from the school district. At this point we are more than half way through the fiscal year and are approximately \$30,000 under budget, or less than 5% across the board. New procedures have been established for reviewing credit card payments and recording these expenditures in the budget. Budget planning for next fiscal year has begun. The Finance committee will be meeting soon to review our current investment portfolio and other budgetary considerations.

The monthly Check Register for February 2021 was reviewed by the Board, voted on, and approved.

- Buildings and Grounds

The committee will be meeting Thursday, March 11, to review a draft report from the Director with regards to the problems he has identified with the Library's current space configuration. After review, the draft report will be shared with the entire Board. One issue to be considered will be the issue of what percentage of the planning work will be performed by the Board and what percentage will be handed over to a professional consultant.

- Art Committee

The next artist to display their work on our website for the months of March and April is Karen Allen. Her work combines two dimensional and three dimension aspects.

- Croton Reads

The committee met to discuss the possibility of reviving last year's Croton Reads program which was scheduled to discuss The Gilded Years, by Karin Tanabe. The author has been contacted and, while still interested, will not be available until May at the earliest. One issue to be resolved is the format to be used since it is impossible currently to know to what degree public gatherings will be allowed. Another issue is scheduling, not only with the author, but to maximize community participation. The Director will follow up with Ms. Tanabe.

- Long Range Planning

The Long Range Planning report typically begins with input gathered at the June Blue Sky meeting. The committee will be specifically concerned with updating the strategic plan in line with any new state regulations and reviewing our current policies, especially with regard to post-pandemic considerations.

- Safety Committee

The committee will be meeting with the Director next week to consider issues regarding the reopening of the Library.

- By-Laws Committee

The committee has started work on the major project of revising our by-laws in order to add additional seats onto the Board and to transfer the responsibilities of the Library Association to the Board. One important task will be to update the by-laws relating to the financial issues created by this new arrangement. It may also be necessary to create new permanent Committees for the Board. The President expresses her gratitude to all who are working with her on this challenging assignment.

## **LIBRARY ASSOCIATION REPORT:**

The Silent Auction has been set up and advertising will begin this week with signs and letters in the Gazette. A wide range of items have been collected including many from local artists and businesses. Prices range from \$15 to \$500 and it is anticipated that the final receipt from the auction will be around \$5000. Items are available for preview from a link on the Association website. Bidding will be opened this Saturday, March 13, and will continue for two weeks.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- WLS Trustee Institute

The WLS Trustee Institute was attended by several members of the Board, and was reported to be very informative and helpful. The major takeaway from the presentation was the importance of regular review and updating of the Library's policies, especially the Library's Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. Overall, attendees felt good about how well we are doing compared to other Boards in meeting the recommended guidelines in general.

- Vote: Expanding Trustees to 11

In order to accomplish the merging of the Library Association's responsibilities with the Board's responsibilities, it will be necessary to add two additional seats to the Board. A vote was taken asking for the Board's support to go ahead with this increase which will be formally voted on when the revised by-laws are presented for approval. The vote was unanimous in favor. With one of our Trustees leaving, this will mean that three new Trustee seats will be open next year.

The next Annual Meeting of the Library Association will be held on April 27.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 pm

Respectfully submitted by Lynn Kauderer