

Ridgefield Library Board
May 18, 2009

Present: Peter Authier; Melissa Buckwalter; Peter Coffin, (Chair); Barbara Dobbin; Lori Dowling; Thomas Hoban; Abigail Cahill Kagan; Mark Meachem; Brian Oren; Robert Payne; Cloris Pearson; Beverley Rogers; Bruce Ruehl; Eileen Walker

Others present: Mary Rindfleisch, Assistant Library Director; Robert Leavitt, President, Friends of Ridgefield Library; Carroll Brewster, Emeritus; Attorney Bob Jewell; one member of the public (Kelly Davis) briefly

Excused: Christina Nolan, Library Director

Call to Order

Chairman Peter Coffin called the Board meeting to order on May 18, 2009 at 7:35 PM in the Dayton Program Room of the Ridgefield Library.

Approval of Minutes

The April 27, 2009 Board minutes were approved as written.

Chairman's Announcements

Chair Coffin thanked everyone who had worked on the recent library social and commented on the success of the event. He announced that Attorney Bob Jewell would be joining the meeting later and put off additional comments about the Webster Bank status until his arrival.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was approved. It included the Activity Report, the Development Committee Report, two Building Improvement Committee Reports and an Assistant Director's Report in lieu of a Director's Report.

Friends of the Library

Friends' Chair Leavitt reported on the success of the recent book sale, which is estimated to have grossed nearly \$21,000; expenses for tents and tables for the new set-up cost more than usual, so net is expected to be app. \$17,000. Despite the weather and some logistical issues that had to be worked out as the new set-up was implemented, the Friends and the public generally seemed well pleased with having the bulk of the sale items in one large tent in the lower parking lot. Mr. Leavitt also reminded the Board of the Friends annual meeting and luncheon coming up on June 1st.

Development Committee

Feedback on the social was very positive, with the 1st floor location more functional and attractive; the co-hosts playing their roles well; and the two honorees thrilled to be selected. The luncheon tentatively planned for June 14th to recognize charter members of the Morris Legacy Society has been postponed because not enough people are available or interested in the public attention. The committee will continue to do outreach over the summer with the goal of having a function in the fall. We have more than achieved our budget goal for the appeal and other development revenue and continue to track very

closely to last year's results, despite the economic climate. The reinvigorated tribute gift program has contributed to this strong showing. One additional mailing, the parents appeal, is scheduled to go out in early June.

Finance Committee

Committee Member Peter Authier reported that there had been some corrections made to the financial statements as distributed; corrected versions will be sent to the committee and other interested parties may request them. The committee reviewed the investment report, which shows some improvement over recent months but is still a volatile situation. The revised Limits of Authority document was approved by the committee as distributed in the Board packet. The committee approved a 6-month renewal of the contract with Rebecca Bryan for development consulting and will continue to explore long-term strategies for how to handle this work. Work continues on unraveling the payment and investment history of our pension plan, as well as on developing guidelines for a new plan to replace the current option.

Nominating Committee

Tom Hoban reported that Library Director Nolan and the committee had reviewed numerous candidates, both self-nominated and recommended by Board members, and had interviewed 8 people. They were very impressed with the qualifications and interest of all but have chosen 4 individuals to propose for membership on the Board at this time; all four would be First Selectman appointees.

MOTION was made and seconded and passed unanimously to elect to the Board for a three-year term beginning 7/1/09 the following: Karin Fallon, Lisbeth Kelly, Philip Lodewick and Bill Wyman.

A letter from the chair will be prepared to notify First Selectman Marconi of the Board's recommendations for his approval. The committee will reach out to the remaining four interviewees to find alternative ways for them to become involved through committee assignments or other volunteer work. Finally, the committee noted that it has been discussing the need to add more diversity to the Board and is looking at more organized ways to achieve that goal.

Melissa Buckwalter will be completing her 2nd term at the end of June, and Bruce Ruehl and Bev Rogers will also be stepping down from the Board as of 6/30/09. All were thanked for their dedicated service.

MOTION was made and seconded and passed unanimously to reappoint to the Board for a second three-year term beginning 7/1/09 the following: Barbara Dobbin, Thomas Hoban, Robert Payne and Cloris Pearson.

MOTION was made and seconded and passed unanimously to accept the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee, all of whom have agreed to serve an additional year beginning 7/1/09 in these positions: Peter Coffin, Chair; Cloris Pearson, Vice Chair; Thomas Hoban, Secretary; Peter Authier, Treasurer.

Building Improvement Committee

The committee has a meeting scheduled on 5/20 with representatives of Newman Architects to update them on our new approach to possible renovation of the existing

building and to explore their offer of pro bono pre-design work to assist in this effort. Additional staff representatives will be invited to join the committee as we explore what could be done to improve service within the existing footprint, as outlined at the last Board meeting. The committee also hopes to bring in nationally known library consultant and former American Library Association president Leslie Burger to do 1-2 days worth of work with the staff and the Building Improvement Committee to explore innovative service models that would allow more productive use of the existing square footage. Pending agreement by Library Director Nolan on her return, the committee plans to enter into an agreement for a fee of \$1800-2200 for these services.

Update on Webster Bank Building

Attorney Bob Jewell, who is representing the Library before Planning and Zoning, joined the meeting at this time, and a lengthy discussion ensued about what had transpired at recent meetings of the Village District and Planning and Zoning commissions and what is likely to happen next. While Board members in attendance felt the audience sentiment at P&Z meeting on 5/4 had been favorable to the Library, the recommendation from Village District was to deny our request. At their next meeting on 5/11, P&Z continued to discuss the legal and logistical alternatives open to them and ultimately decided to run out the statutory waiting period of 65 days after the public hearing. There was mention at the 5/11 meeting of re-opening the public hearing and various other alternatives to resolve what has obviously become a difficult dilemma for the commissioners. Attorney Jewell and Board members talked through a number of scenarios and our possible responses, as well as next steps to bring this impasse to some resolution. The sense of the meeting was that the Library Board should reach out to First Selectman Marconi and perhaps the rest of the Selectmen in some fashion to discuss in a non-confrontational setting the various issues surrounding our request, from tax abatement to future design considerations. Chair Coffin and the Executive Committee will explore appropriate steps. It was noted that there is no money allocated in the FY10 budget, which goes into effect 7/1/09, for maintenance of the bank building and that having to carry these costs for any length of time will necessitate reductions to operations somewhere else.

As there was no further business to discuss, the Library Board adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Recorded and respectfully submitted,
Mary Rindfleisch
Assistant Director