Board Meeting Agenda

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

February 19, 2025

5:30pm

In attendance: Stacy Smith, President; Lauren Mauro Mellon, Vice-President; Karen, Treasurer; Lisa Menz, Secretary; Sam Pharo, Executive Director; Board members: Christopher Whitney, Kara Gasiorowski, Deirdre Alderfer, Julia Klossner. Also attending: Pamm Kerr (Friends of the Library).

**I. Call to Order**—Stacy

The meeting was called to order by Stacy at 5:33p.m.

**II. Motion to Accept Minutes of January 15, 2025 – Stacy Smith**

**MOTION** to accept the minutes of the meeting by Christopher **SECONDED** by Julia. **APPROVED** by all.

**III. Friends Report- Pamm**

She is working on organizing the tea party but waiting for folks to contact her back about this event.

**IV. Finance Report- Karen**

1. Operations

* Income Statement:
* Excluding investment activity, January revenues totaled approximately $43,600. December revenues included individual contributions (including matching gifts) of approximately $5,400 and state aid in the amount of $37,800. Solebury’s contribution of $7000 in January was confirmed for 2024 and is not included in the January reports but it did put 2024 in the black on a cash basis. January expenses were approximately $23,000. There were minor payments for library materials in January, so we are approximately $6,000 behind budget. There were no significant unbudgeted expenses in January.
* Balance sheet: Cash on hand of $186,287 increased approximately $23,500 at the end of January and provides expense coverage for approximately 6 months. Net worth was approximately $2.88 million as of January 31, 2025. The net worth calculation does include the value of the investment portfolio.

2. Investments

* The unrestricted endowment balance at the end of January was $1,782,087. The Vanguard stock and bond funds slightly increased in January from December 2024. The Library’s Vanguard portfolio of four stock and bond index funds is designed to produce solid returns over time, rather than react to short-term market movements.
* The restricted endowment balance was $136,518 at the end of January. The restricted endowment fund is invested in the same Vanguard stock and bond funds as the unrestricted endowment fund, so it has had a similar overall experience as the unrestricted endowment fund.
* The non-endowment general fund balance was $39,328 at the end of January 2025.

3. Other

* The year is an audit year and it has kicked off with Baum, Smith & Clemens.

There is still a question about why Solebury gave $7,000.

Julia said we should find out so that we can ask them to match it again next year.

Stacy said we should have an informal meeting with Hannah who is our rep on the Solebury boro to touch base and also ask about the unexpected $7000 received this year.

Deirdre requested Karen for a copy of the monthly budget sent to her.

Karen said there is a shortfall this year on the budget because the Spelling bee fundraiser is not happening this year so some other fundraisers might be helpful to fill in the gap in the budget.

Karen asked about the newspaper subscription. Sam listed out all the costs of the newspaper. It was suggested that they both look at this outside this meeting.

Julia said that New Hope and Solebury fund the library at a lower rate than many other libraries in this area. She suggested that the municipalities could be filling that gap and we should approach them again  
and remind them that we start each year with a funding gap.

Christopher moved to approve the budget. Julia seconded it. All approved the budget.

**V. Director’s Report—Sam**

Director’s report for February 2025

* The February 10th diversity training will be rescheduled for a Monday in March, pending confirmation with the Doylestown library manager. If Temple can coordinate, I’m hopeful for slightly higher attendance since I learned a number of directors were unclear as to the training’s focus.
* Mahjong has been very popular with our patrons and looks like it will run well as a weekly program.
* We have upgrade to the next level of Mailchimp and are in the process of using the new template that Cori provided for future newsletters and event blasts.
* The NHSD Career Day was postponed until April due to weather closing. I still plan on attending and hope to have a fair amount of 3D printed promotionals to distribute.
* The Annual Report process has begun, Adam has distributed the stat sheets for the district libraries and I will request the usual personnel data from Linda.
* With much assistance from Louise, the various works of art throughout the library are now properly mounted and displayed for the public’s benefit.
* I attended a District meeting on Thursday 2/13, one of the issues was having board members attend and serve on the District Council which has been communicated to you. In addition, a comment from one of the directors prompted me to check TechSoup for discounts on Little Green Light and it appears there is one that would apply to our budget level.
* On a general note, outside of our metrics, I would like to comment on the professional nature of our library team. Despite several bouts of sickness, some causing absence, the library remains capably staffed and our customer service is highly regarded as we put on an aggressive schedule of events each month.
* Respectfully submitted, Sam Pharo,

Assistant Director’s Report for February 2025

* At the moment, the library has 12 active volunteers who generally work regular one-hour or two-hour weekly shifts. This past month, we welcomed and trained Lakshmi Desiraju, who is our new volunteer for Monday afternoons.
* Historically, it has been relatively tough to attract and retain volunteers who are interested in helping out with shelving and general library collection maintenance on Saturdays on a regular basis. I reached out to a mother and son duo (Dana and Noah Lucas, respectively) who had previously inquired about volunteer opportunities, and they agreed to help us out in that regard. It has worked out very well so far.
* The weekly Board Games Club has had mixed success so far. On the one hand, we had five eager pre-teen participants one session, and positive reviews from both participants and their parents afterwards. However, the two teen volunteers who were supposed to run the program dropped out. The new Titusville Tabletop Games store in Titusville, NJ saw our social media posts about the Board Games Club, and expressed interest in collaborating with library, which I will look into.
* Currently, 2025 gifts recorded in Little Green Light amount to $6,828.26 from 56 donors. 2024’s year-to-date total was 39 donors giving $6,118.35, while 2023’s year-to-date was 38 donors contributing $4,683.32. These totals include any types of donations. For instance, 2025’s total includes those tagged as NOFA, general fund, and memorial gifts.
* Respectfully submitted, Eric Jacobson

Youth Services Report for February 2025

* What a busy month we’ve had in Youth Services! So many storytimes, oodles of programs, and loads of happy, playing, reading kids.
* Weekly Storytime themes for the month of February include Birds of a Feather, Happy Valentine’s Day, Clouds and Rainbows, and Visiting Local Author Kerry Toole. This month, we’ve doubled the number of storytimes offered – we now have our usual Tuesday morning session, but also have an afternoon session at 1:00pm (same theme, also on Tuesdays). We had 14 participants at the morning session and 3 for the afternoon session during the Birds of a Feather week, all of whom were very understanding about my absence (illness), and were able to complete the paper birds craft I had prepared ahead of time. Our Valentine’s-themed storytime this week had 18 in the morning and 9 in the afternoon – it seems like so far we’re getting a younger group in the morning and older kids in the afternoon, just getting out of their morning preschools and coming to the Library afterwards. We made beaded heart necklaces, which is great for hand/eye coordination and dexterity – several bags of supplies went home so older siblings could make necklaces as well.
* We also are trying out an extra-special evening storytime with Lolly Hopwood, two Tuesdays a month at 5:30pm. I had a good feeling that this would be a hit given Lolly’s popularity but also because working parents are always looking for activities they can participate in with their kids after work but before dinner – and so far, so good! We had 37 people show up for our first session on the 12th, many of whom were visiting the Library for the first time ever, or for the first time in a long time. Happily, I have already seen several attendees back in the Library this week and anticipate them coming to our other youth and family programs as well.
* LEGO Club continues to meet with regular participants (14 at the 2/5 session). I’ve been preparing LEGO challenges (for example: balloon powered vehicles, wind powered sailboats, etc), and sometimes the kids are really into the challenges, but more often just want to free build together, which is wonderful to watch. I have a special box in my office where participants can keep one favorite build from each meeting (as long as they fit in the box) and can pick up where they left off when the Club next meets. So far, a few kids have swung by my office in between meetings just to check on their builds and are happy to see they remain intact.
* Our Doylestown Health Family Programs continue: On January 17th, we had 41 participants attend the Teddy Bear Clinic and 3 for the Five Senses program on February 7th. “Get Good Karma!” is scheduled for February 28th – after chatting with Lisa Borine, the program lead, I learned this one is about mindfulness, but is presented through yoga poses done in tandem with a Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Storytime. Given the high level of interest in both Eric Carle and our Kids Yoga programs, I’ve adjusted publicity for this program accordingly.
* On a related note, we have two Kids Yoga programs scheduled for Wednesday mornings this month, one of which had to be moved to March 12 due to snow. Before the cancellation we
* had 7 signed up through the website for the first session and I anticipated a healthy number of walk-ins. We’ll see how the session on February 26th goes – fingers crossed the weather cooperates this time around!
* Another new program, Rhythm Babes, begins this Friday the 14th at 9:30am. Geared toward babies aged 0-24 months, we will be playing, singing, clapping, and generally having a blast downstairs in the Children’s Department.
* Other programs held later this month include Art with Anita (virtual this month, a painted collage of a teacup), another LEGO Club, and a special read-aloud with Dr. Jackie Miller, a 5th Grade teacher from the NHS Upper Elementary School, this coming Saturday 2/15. All of these events have their own flyers and social media posts (I’ve adopted an informal policy of posting the week before, then day before, and in our stories on the day of) which seem to be gaining real traction. Additional, regular activities like Magic the Gathering Club, Chess Club, Nerd Studio, Board Game Club and Pokémon Club, in which youth patrons also participate, continue and are run by Sam and Eric.
* Outside of programs, I’ve been making a few small changes to the layout downstairs. A peg board has gone up, ready for book recommendations, our block corner (full of the gorgeous wooden blocks Ms. Patricia purchased with a grant a few years ago) has been a big hit, and I’ve been rotating the toys put out on the floor as well as the board books. Special book displays rotate often, including a birds display in honor of the Eagles’ Superbowl, and Valentines books for the holiday.
* Looking ahead, I’m still planning for the Library’s Summer Reading Program, preparing to relaunch the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program, and bring in special programs and events like a youth writing workshop, author visits, and more.
* Respectfully submitted by Louise Feder

Stacy commended Sam and the library staff for the many improvements and keeping the library running at a high level even with staff sickness.

Sam said we are a great team and the sky is the limit.

**VI. President’s Report- Stacy**

* Diversity training new date will be forthcoming;
* Board On boarding on how to be a board member for the state is at the NH-S library on Feb 26 at 6pm till 7pm or 7:30. Also Zoom capable.

Christopher said that the training is about how as an independent library we relate to the state and what mandates we have to follow and which ones we don’t.

**VII. Property—Lisa**

Nothing to report this month

**VIII. Marketing & Development—Julia**

Sofa begins soon.

Julia said that Dierdre sent out a draft of the new email design so please review it by the end of the week and let her and Julia know if there are any typos or errors. The theme is “Drawn to Your Library”

Julia said Liz wanted the final okay from Sam on the pictures for the sofa email as there are some pictures of children in the children’s library.

Lauren gave a multimedia presentation on the new Mail Chimp newsletter design by Liz.

**IX. Trivia Night**

Julia gave information about feedback from Maggie at the Logan that she offered the use of the room that we used for our Poe fundraiser. We will need a microphone and can borrow the same one as we have in the past. Cash bar was suggested. The Logan will donate the food. They can offer round tables that seat 8-10 people. She thought we could fit 15 tables in the space.

Stacey suggested teams should be of 3-4 but people can also come as an individual and we will put them at a table with a team.

Trivia night is May 8th, 7-9pm

Christopher suggested that tickets be no more than $50 as their is a cash bar and folks need to pay for parking.

Lauren said the check in could have two people and one person brings the participant to a table of her choice.

Julia suggested that we just sell tickets and not register teams and also not sell tables just tickets. And any teams can be formed that night at the tables that participants are seated.

Stacey asked for a volunteer to head the Trivia night committee and should we have themes or categories. And that we need raffle baskets, sponsors, logistics such as how will people write down the answers. She suggested not having whiteboards but that the answers are given incognito such as on papers that are collected.

Lauren asked if there is a prize for the winning team. Stacey said that the other library had a plaque with the winners name on it and the plaque kept at the library. Julia suggested a digital recognition of the winning team.

Kara suggested reaching out to folks who helped with the Spelling bee should be tapped to help with the Trivia Night. Christopher suggested asking Joanne Resczka to help with the Trivia.

Lauren said she can do a flyer. Lauren also said that she will create a Spreadsheet to show sponsors recruited and who was contacted for Spelling Bee this past year.

Julia brought up topic of how sometimes raffle baskets are not worth the income they bring and that focusing on sponsors are a better option. Board discussed sponsors.

Julia and Lauren to work on logistics.

**X. Governance- Christopher**

Nothing to report this month.

**XI. Motion to Adjourn**

**MOTION** by Lauren to adjourn at 6:56p.m. **SECONDED** by Kara. **APPROVED** by all.

Next Meeting is March 19, 2025 at 5:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Menz, Board Secretary