**THE FREE LIBRARY OF NEW HOPE SOLEBURY**

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – DRAFT**

**January 15, 2025**

In attendance: Stacy Smith, President; Laura Mauro Mellon, Vice President; Lisa Menz, Secretary. Board members: Deirdre Alderfer; Julia Klossner, Christopher Whitney, Kara Gasiorowski, Kim Zablud, Library Director: Sam Pharo. Also attending: Victoria Short (Friends of the Library)

**CALL TO ORDER** – Stacy Smith

The meeting was called to order by Stacy at 5:31

**MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES** – Stacy Smith

**MOTION** to accept the minutes of the meeting by Christopher Whitney **SECONDED** by Deirdre Alderfer . **APPROVED** by all.

**FRIENDS’ REPORT** – Victoria Short

Friends of the Library are giving $8,000 towards the Adult and Child Programs for Sam to administer.

Everyone thanked Victoria for this generous donation from the Friends of the Library

**FINANCE REPORT** – Karen Wachsmuth

December 2024 (Preliminary)

Operations Income Statement: Excluding investment activity, December revenues totaled approximately $36,200. December revenues included individual contributions (including matching gifts) of approximately $23,600, and a contribution from New Hope of approximately $590 and $12,000 from Solebury Township.

Excluding the bequest received earlier this year and investment activity, preliminary revenues were approximately $308,437 for the whole year of 2024. This exceeds our budgeted revenues for the year of $289,717. A distribution of $8,700 from the restricted endowment fund is included in December’s financial statements.

December expenses were approximately $31,400. December expenses included approximately $7,000 for books and materials. Expenses also included an IT charge from the BCFL of approximately $2,000 that was expected to be made in 2025.

Preliminary expenses for 2024 were approximately $310,400, below the budget estimate of $328,946.

Balance sheet: Cash on hand of $162,769 increased approximately $4,900 at the end of December and provides expense coverage for approximately 6 months. Net worth was approximately $2.84 million as of December 31, 2024. The net worth calculation does include the value of the investment portfolio.

Note: This December report is preliminary as additional revenue and expenses relating to 2024 is expected. In January, Solebury Township contributed $7,000 and New Hope Borough contributed $407.24. Also, fund drive contributions of approximately $1,900 were received in late December, but not deposited until early January. Expenses incurred in 2024 that will be recorded in 2025 is harder to estimate, but is expected to exceed $8,000.

Investments The unrestricted endowment balance at the end of December was $1,746,688. The Vanguard stock and bond funds decreased in December, but have increased 15% since the beginning of the year. 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 $133,811 at the end of December. 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 $39,254 at the end of December 2024. 1/14/25

Board received and reviewed the Dec 2024 report

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT** – Sam Pharo

The 2025 parking passes have been collected and are being distributed. On related note, tickets have been issued erroneously to patrons parking in designated library spots; should that continue to be the case, I’ve been told to collect the ticket and contact Parking Enforcement to have the ticket dismissed.

The Friends have agreed to fund our combined programming budget to the amount of $8,000, with $2,000 being carried over from 2024. This will be split 50/50 between Juvenile programming, under Louise’s discretion, and Adult/Teen programming under mine.

Louise’s onboarding has been very successful, the community reaction to her hire has been overwhelmingly positive and we’re excited to see what 2025 brings. To that end, both Louise and Eric will now be submitting monthly department head reports of their own, in addition to statistics.

Doylestown has confirmed the February 10 reservation for their meeting room and Adam Gilbert-Cole is gathering attendees among the district.

Mahjong will be starting in early February, Eric headed up the popular interest meeting and we have a sizable group to proceed with. This will be weekly with an instructor to help beginners.

The recent weather closure has prompted me to offer up a possible policy change where part-timers who would typically lose their hours could be allowed to make them up within the pay period. This could also be a board retreat item to consider.

The website has been restored after access was reestablished and proof of our ownership of the domain confirmed. On a related note, the January newsletter was issued after a week delay due to a program that I wanted confirmed for the release.

The school transit system has had its first few items processed and carried up, our goal now is to encourage more people to use it and make sure our response time is swift.

We are confirmed for the NHSD Career Day in February, I will be heading a table.

Looking ahead, some goals for 2025 include scheduling the annual staff evaluations, setting up local business library card accounts for added tourism value, increasing our outreach footprint through more regular visits to businesses like McCaffrey’s and continuing to establish popular recurring programming.

Partnership proposed for a partnership with a book signing Farley’s and a local illustrator that is launching a book soon.

Jan 17th at noon is Patricia Lynch’s last day/hour working. She will be on a substitute employee list now.

**Assistant Director’s Report-**  Eric Jacobson

The library has two new teen volunteers (Aaron and Charlie) who are starting a weekly Board Games Club. Launching on January 25th, it will meet from 2 to 5pm on Saturdays and is for ages 10 and up. Aaron and Charlie are putting up flyers about the program in the middle school and high school, and are looking into advertising it in the NHSD newsletter. The library will also advertise the program with flyers in the library, a slide on the front desk TV, and posts on social media.

In other programming news, the weekly Virtual Book Club has a new name and schedule. After surveying attendees, this program, now rebranded as Book Chat, will meet the first Tuesday of every month on Zoom, and the third Tuesday of every month in person at the library. Previously, it met every Tuesday on Zoom.

I held an interest meeting for Mahjong on January 9th, and it had 13 enthusiastic attendees, plus five more who couldn’t make it but provided their contact information. It was decided that Mahjong will be held weekly on Wednesday afternoons from 3 to 5pm, beginning in early February. Feedback from attendees included the library possibly acquiring more card tables for game use, as well as the need for yearly Mahjong cards.

The juvenile DVD/Blu-rays have been relocated from the children’s library to the main floor alcove. They now reside adjacent to the adult DVDs/Blu-rays and signage will be updated.

The library’s burgeoning video game collection has seen encouraging usage. We are focusing on Nintendo Switch games and plan on expanding the collection to roughly 15 titles by the end of 2025.

**Youth Service Director Report -**  Louise Feder

This January marked a point of transition for Youth Services at the Library. Our own, beloved Ms. Patricia Lynch celebrated 17 years as head of the department and prepared for her retirement. Her final day is set for Friday, January 17th, wrapping up a period where she worked part time for the first two full weeks of the month to help train her successor and the Library’s newest hire, Louise Feder.

Louise’s first day was Thursday, January 2nd and she is overjoyed to join the Library’s full time staff. Early days were spent planning programming, updating and creating new flyers and promotional materials, taking on shifts at the front desk, assisting patrons, and participating in training put on by BCFL staff regarding collection development and ordering.

Weekly Storytime themes for the month of January include Happy New Year, Snowy Storytime, The World of Eric Carle, and All About Lunar New Year. Twelve participants attended the Happy New Year Storytime on Tuesday, January 7th, which Louise led and incorporated a mix of familiar elements to returning families (the hello and good bye songs remain unchanged) while adding in a handful of new touches as well (Charlie the Youth Service’s large stuffed bear has taken on an active role in Storytime, much to the child attendees’ delight). The craft for this first Storytime was a miniature 12-month calendar which had room for original illustrations. It proved so popular that multiple Storytime parents returned to the library to bring home additional mini-calendars for their older children.

LEGO Club is off to a solid start this year as well, with a whopping 21 attendees on January 8th. Several participants made original creations, all of which were labelled and placed in the newly created, “LEGO Club Hall of Fame,” a special display in the Youth Services Department. The Hall of Fame, which is flanked by LEGO books from the Library’s collection, has proved a point of interest in the days since its installation and Louise is hopeful it will help build enthusiasm for the program over the course of the month. The next LEGO Club is January 22 and has also been promoted in the New Hope Solebury School District’s email home to family and community members.

The National Charity League led a special, collaborative storytime at the Library on Saturday, January 11th in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Volunteers held two 30-minute storytimes and led a bookmark craft for attendees. Louise also set up themed-coloring pages for the event and promoted it on the Library’s social media channels.

On January 17th, the Youth Services Department will host Lisa Borine with Doylestown Health for a Teddy Bear Clinic. Attendees are invited to bring their favorite stuffed animal to the Library and take part in activities designed to address a child's concerns over doctor's visits and routine medical procedures. Louise created a special flyer to promote the event in the Library entryway and posts for social media.

Other programs held later this month include Art with Anita (registrants will paint a winter deer with acrylic paints), another LEGO Club, and a Preschool Family Block Party Storytime (a shape themed storytime and free play session with the Library’s beautiful set of large wooden blocks). All of these events have their own flyers and social media posts, created by Louise. Additional, regular activities like Magic the Gathering Club, Chess Club, Nerd Studio, Board Game Club and Pokemon Club, which youth patrons also participate in continue and are run by Sam and Eric.

Looking ahead, Louise is already 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, musical storytimes, and more. Look for updated displays and layouts in the coming weeks as well!

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT –** Stacy Smith

We will be having the Retreat on January 25 at 9am to noon at Trinity. Bring desserts and breakfast items.

Please bring fundraising ideas as that will be a main focus.

Stacey called for topics to discuss at the Retreat to be emailed to Stacy

We will discuss how much money we need to raise this year.

As previously announced, there is a special Diversity and Implicit Bias Training at the Doylestown Library that we have arranged with Temple University. This is an important free training that also includes a free lunch.

The whole NHS library staff will be attending with the exception of Louise who had a prior engagement. Staff get continuing ed credits. The Board of Trustees Members are encouraged to attend and there will be library staff from other libraries in Bucks County attending.

On Board Training for board members is open to all board members on Feb 26 at 6pm at NHS library and by zoom for 90 minutes.

**PROPERTY** – Lisa Menz

* 1. Solebury Roofing has said they could repair the holes in the eaves in the Spring.
  2. The Native Plant Garden is being walked on as there is not a delineation of where it starts. The compacted earth resulting from standing and walking on the garden may inhibit the perennials from returning. There will be a small fence installed in the Native Plant garden in the courtyard. Jade Green has volunteered to work with the Girl Scouts to create a fence from sturdy sticks and install it.

**MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT** – Julia Klossner

* 1. NOFA was $28,000. The board congratulated her on this amount.
  2. Donors of $250 and up as well as new donors will receive a thank you note. Current board members will be assigned by email from Julia to write hand written thank you notes to these donors.
  3. We are looking to switch graphic designers. Her name is Cory. She will revamp the library newsletter email and then the NOFA communications. SOFA will be 100% online and then hardcopy mailing for the Fall campaign.

**GOVERNANCE** – Christopher Whitney

Committees- Deirdre to move from Finance to Marketing and Development

We want to maximize the skill sets and experience we have.  We do not want anyone serving on a committee that is not rewarding for them.

A retreat agenda item- bring some names of people who might want to participate on committees and volunteer activities.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None**.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by Christopher Whitney to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. **SECONDED** by Lauren Mauro Mellon **APPROVED** by all.

The Board had an executive session.

Next board meeting: February 19 2025 at 5:30pm at the NHS Library, in person and via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Menz, Secretary