**THE FREE LIBRARY OF NEW HOPE SOLEBURY**

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

**April 23, 2025**

Board Meeting Agenda

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

April 23, 2025

5:30pm

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

1. **Call to Order**—Stacy

The meeting was called to order by Stacy at 5:35 p.m.

**II. Motion to Accept Minutes of March 2025** **– Stacy**

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

**III. Friends Report- Victoria**

October. Fall Country Harvest Square Dance fundraiser scheduled for Oct. 12th at NHS cafeteria. They would like to know who our sponsors are so that they do not duplicate them. Board discussed some regular sponsors McCaffery’s and some banks

She had cards for “Vibrant New Hope” Book. People are reluctant to write their stories. They have started to do interviews of locals but it is very intensive. They are still looking for interested people. Pride parade: they are looking for participants to march and Kelleen will probably be organizing this.

Nakashima will speak on a topic of her choice.

**IV. Finance Report- Karen**

1. **Operations**

**Income Statement:**

Excluding investment activity, March revenues totaled approximately $9,200. March revenues included individual contributions (including matching gifts) of approximately $4400, a contribution of approximately $600 for the Trivia Night fundraiser, and a contribution from Friends of the Library in the amount of $3550 to be used for cushions. A contribution from Solebury was given this month in the amount of $2500 but it has been confirmed that it is to be allocated to 2024 therefore it is not included in these numbers and the 2024 financials will be adjusted accordingly. March expenses were approximately $21,900 with no significant unbudgeted expenses. Although we had more expenses than revenue in March, we are still approximately $32,000 behind budget YTD.

**Balance sheet:** Cash on hand of $159,628 decreased approximately $10,200 at the end of March and provides expense coverage for approximately 6 months. Net worth was approximately $2.81 million as of March 31, 2025. The net worth calculation does include the value of the investment portfolio.

1. **Investments**

The unrestricted endowment balance at the end of March was $1,727,056. The Vanguard stock and bond funds slightly decreased in March from February 2025 and is down 1% YTD. 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 $132,379 at the end of March. 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 $40,003 at the end of March 2025.

1. **Other**

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

**V. Director’s Report—Sam**

Assistant Director Report- Eric Jacobson

We have a new teen volunteer (Kara) who is assisting the library staff with shelving and general collection maintenance on Thursday afternoons. In addition, we welcomed back another teen volunteer (Brea), who helps with shelving and craft preparation in youth services. We have a new opening for volunteering on Saturdays, as unfortunately, our mother and son volunteer duo (Dana and Noah) have had to pause helping out at the library for now due to scheduling conflicts.

Longwood Gardens has a Community Read 2025 program, which is “designed to encourage reading for pleasure and to start a conversation surrounding gardens, plants, or nature.” To that end, the library is hosting a special Book Chat on Tuesday, May 20th in order to discuss the adult Community Read choice, *Paradise under Glass: The Education of an Indoor Gardener* by Ruth Kassinger. In return for holding a Community Reads 2025 event, the library will receive free passes to Longwood Gardens. ­

Year-to-date, the library has received $18,847.69 from 144 donors. This includes fund drive, general fund, and memorial gifts, as well as Trivia Night sponsorships and ticket purchases. At this point in 2024, the library had received $12,539.27 from 92 donors. In 2023, 108 donors contributed $13,135.65 year-to-date.

March Board Report, Youth Services- Louise Feder

April showers bring May flowers...and lots of activity to youth services!

Weekly Storytime themes for the month of April include A Very Silly April Fool’s Day, Bunnies, Eggs of All Colors, In the Garden with Lois Ehlert (part of our monthly spotlight on an author/illustrator during storytime), and April Showers. Doubling the month’s storytimes (we offer a Tuesday morning session at 10:30am and an afternoon session at 1:00pm with the same theme and craft) continues to be a success. At today’s storytimes for example, we had 17 attendees in the morning session and 19 in the afternoon. I noticed a number of new children at recent storytimes, many of whom are visiting family members in the area for their spring breaks from school. It has been a pleasure to welcome these new participants and to see how many of them come for one program and then return later in the week (or sometimes the same day!) for another, like Lolly Hopwood’s evening storytime or LEGO Club. Recent crafts include brown Es for April Fool’s Day, bunny ear headbands, and paper plate hatching eggs among others.

I was able to find money in our spring budget to offer one extra-special evening storytime with Lolly Hopwood on 4/8 at 5:30pm. The program continues to be exceptionally popular with 32 attendees at the program this month. We also had Kids Yoga at the Library with Ms. Courtney on 4/8, which shot up in attendance from its previous 5 attendees to a packed house at 21! Luckily, we had an extra 5 yoga mats in the youth services supply stash and we made use of all of them. Given the response, I am planning on having Ms. Courtney back during the summer for Kids Yoga during our summer reading programming.

LEGO Club and Rhythm Babes both continue to meet with reliable, solid attendance numbers (typically 15 or more at each session for both programs). Other recent programs included Art with Anita, Read to the Dogs with Roxy Therapy Dogs, the conclusion of our Kids Creative Writing Workshop Series with Stephanie Smith, among others. Each of the Youth Services events have their own flyers and social media posts (I’ve been continuing my informal policy of posting the week before, then day before, and in our stories on the day of) which seem to produce reliable attendence. 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.

We are looking forward to our Springtime Egg Hunt later this week, which has over 50 registrations and an active wait list, as well as Art with Anita: Virtual (36 are currently registered) and Plant-A-Thon out in the back garden (attendees will learn about compost, gardening, and leave with seedlings of their own). Jade Greene from Roots to River Farm has generously offered to bring seeds and seedlings from the local CSA to Plant-a-thon, so it should be a fun afternoon. Then in addition to our regular programs in May, we will hold a Stuffed Animal Sleepover on Friday 5/2, a Musical Instrument Petting Zoo on Monday 5/12, Lolly Hopwood on Tuesday 5/13, a screening of the documentary *Screenagers* in collaboration with NHSCares and the Today Club at the New Hope Solebury School District on Wednesday 5/21, and a Fairy Wands Workshop and Storytime with our own JoAnn Kern on Thursday 5/22.

Outside of programs, I continue to make a few small changes to the layout downstairs. I have shifted all our juvenile non-fiction over (same wall, same location) to make more effective use of the present bookcases and then shifted the end of juvenile Fiction along behind it. I also moved Parenting over to the shelves on the left-hand side of the stage and removed a few shelves on the right-hand side of the stage to improve browsing and access to the block corner. My hope is to expand on the Parenting section to create a “Caregiver Corner” in that section, complete with baby carriers available for checkout and a community resource board for tutoring, school events, etc. I also moved the audiobooks and juvenile music CDs to the end of the graphic novel section to allow removal of the old (tippy!) DVD rack they were previously stored on. Finally, I made new signage for each of the sections in youth services (Easy Fiction, J Fiction, etc.) to enhance the browsing experience and better assist our wonderful shelving volunteers. All of these changes will be reflected in the shelving guide Eric is creating as well.

Looking further ahead, I’m still planning for the Library’s Summer Reading Program and prepping our back garden and side yard for summer programs and general use. I am thrilled to report that Dilly’s, Manoff’s Market, Soulberry Market, and Pierre’s Chocolates have all signed on to be reading log prize sponsors, several local merchants have agreed to offer raffle prizes, and the Rita’s Italian Ice in Lahaska has agreed to sponsor our closing ice cream social in August. Three cheers for summer reading! It’s going to be a fun one.

Director’s Report- Sam Pharo

We have maintained a very busy programming schedule in March, again reaching 52 programs with a 20% increase in program attendance. We anticipate further increases in attendance as summer approaches.

Our seedling station has proven to be popular, with approximately 10 seedlings distributed and another 8 received from the public, in addition to the many jade plants that Louise has donated and the spider plants from Joann Kern.

I connected with Fisherman’s Mark about either establishing or connecting with an ESL class that we could host. We had a productive call but no definitive plans were made at this time.

We had a productive conversation with two members of the Bucks County Playhouse, they are definitely interested in establishing an account with us, as that would allow for museum access.

As we did last year, the children and I will be pleased to help represent the Library in the annual Pride Parade.

Beginners to Knitting was launched and is fully booked. We hope to circulate knitting kits with the leftover supplies, if they aren’t used in future classes.

Our Adult Sketching meetup is also going well, led by Ms. Robin. This is a meetup style group, a focused sketching art class might happen in the future but as a separate offering.

The library took part in the NHSD Career Fair, through that event I met with the residency life coordinator for the new senior housing development, Birches. We hope to collaborate on having the residents shuttled to the library for our program offerings.

We transitioned the Pokemon club to the Youth Services department and it has started to see better attendance. Going forward, it will be known as the Pokemon Lunch Club.

One facilities issue, our lift has been out of commission for one week. We had our electrician pay a visit, they investigated to a fine degree and were unable to identify what was keeping power from the lift. Several calls have been put in to the manufacturer.

A patron has donated a 3d printer.

**VI. President’s Report- Stacy**

Trivia Night 5/8 will be discussed as a subcommittee in detail after meeting.

Kara and Stacy met with Hannah how from Solebury township to touch base in a productive meeting of mutual support.

Julia did a debriefing of the organization of Trivia Night, including: Emcee,slideshow.

Send sponsors logos to Lauren and also Louise. 56 sold with 2 weeks still to go. Board members will be assisting the running of the event that evening.

**VII. Property—Lisa**

Four or so slate roof tiles have fallen off the roof. Parsons Roofing, who installed the tiles has texted me that he will stop by “soon” and take a look at tiles and eave holes.

There is a Chickadee couple that are building a nest inside a birdhouse in the children’s garden. Two birdhouses were removed to discourage House Wrens and give the Chickadee clutch a better chance of survival.

Since the native wildflower garden in the children’s garden is returning, it is a possibility to apply for another native plant grant from Bowman’s Wildflower Preserve at some point in the future.

A decorator is coming tomorrow to look at meeting room and give ideas of how to make it and its furniture more usable for the varied needs of patrons, library staff, and the board. The current table in the meeting room is needing constant repair and the chairs are cumbersome.

**VIII. Marketing & Development—Julia- SOFA**

Sofa last year was the first year we went digital with the appeal. It is going well and we are on track with the appeal.

**X. Governance- Christopher/Kim**

No report.

**XI. Motion to Adjourn Public meeting**

Motion to adjourn meeting by Lisa seconded by Karen at 6:37pm

**Next Meeting is May 21, 2025 at 5:30pm**

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