**THE FREE LIBRARY OF NEW HOPE SOLEBURY**

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

**May 20, 2025**

Board Meeting Agenda

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

5:30pm

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

1. **Call to Order**—Stacy

The meeting was called to order by Stacy at 5:37 p.m.

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

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

**III. Friends Report- Pamm**

Vibrant New Hope has no person or staff in their book yet. What makes the library fabulous? How about New Hope. The deadline was April 30th but they are finishing up by end of month. Please get your writings in by then or sooner.

The Friends book sale is starting and they need some more volunteers. Christopher asked about getting youth of area involved in this. Stacy discussed the NHSD key club and they might be receptive and available to volunteer. Pamm says they especially need help setting up on Saturday at 11am –11:30 and close down on Sunday afternoon. Shifts are 2 hours throughout the day to help sell books. Friends President, Kristen is in need of volunteers to sign up for 2 hour shifts. The board discussed that board members signing up to volunteer at the book sale would really help them.

August 3rd afternoon is the Mad Hatters Iced Tea Dance at NH Suites hosted by Ms. Pumpkin who is also handling the donations.

They will have a Harvest dance fundraiser at the school that will teach line and square dancing on October 12 at 4-7pm. But this is still being planned.

**IV. Finance Report- Karen**

1. **Operations**

**Income Statement:**

Excluding investment activity, April revenues totaled approximately $19,600. April revenues included individual contributions (including matching gifts) of approximately $5200, Trivia Night fundraiser of $4000, and a contribution from New Hope Borough in the amount of $9600. April expenses were approximately $34,100 with no significant unbudgeted expenses. Although we had more expenses than revenue in April, we are still approximately $14,000 behind budget YTD.

**Balance sheet:** Cash on hand of $145,108 decreased approximately $14,500 at the end of April and provides expense coverage for approximately 6 months. Net worth was approximately $2.05 million as of April 30, 2025. The net worth calculation does include the value of the investment portfolio.

1. **Investments**

The unrestricted endowment balance at the end of April was $1,735,914. The Vanguard stock and bond funds slightly increased in April from March 2025 but is still 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 $133,011 at the end of April. 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 $40,272 at the end of April 2025.

1. **Other**

The year is an audit year and it is wrapping up with Baum, Smith & Clemens. Jessica will give an update at the meeting.

Jessica discussed and explained the financial statements.

**V. Director’s Report—Sam**

Director’s Report- Sam Pharo

The Hayley Foundation has agreed to support the library’s juvenile department and summer reading program in the amount of $10,000.

Our adult craft programming continues to attract audiences (adult sketching, embroidery, felting, Stitch in Time, adult writing group, knitting for beginners) and will hopefully evolve and expand throughout the year to the point that we can offer full courses in crafting.

The Library is hosting 3 APEX students from NHSD as well as another teen volunteer from NJ. As a result, we’re looking at a bilingual story time and a poetry-performance open mic, both in roughly 3 weeks.

In preparation for their annual book sale, the Friends generously agreed to take the vast majority of our discards/donations, freeing up more floor space.

Matt McElroy kindly offered to donate printed tote bags for the library to market and sell. He also made a custom coloring book for our review.

The Adult Summer Reading program will consist of a simple book review submission raffle, no limit on tickets submitted. Prizes will include two small raffle baskets and Longwood Garden passes.

Our book carts remain small but mighty, with over $500 raised. As the Friends sale approaches, our carts will go out during the week and stay inside during the weekend so as not to compete.

I attended the Bucks County Bookfest and purchased enough local author novels to create a standalone Local Author collection. Once we’ve weeded and condensed enough to make room, it will be located next to New Fiction/Nonfiction.

Assistant Director’s Report for May 2025 – Eric Jacobson

We currently have 10 active volunteers who help the library out on weekly basis, including eight adults and two teenagers. I’m scheduled to meet with a prospective volunteer soon (Beth Olanoff) who is interested in assisting with shelving and general collection maintenance on Wednesday afternoons.

The Book Chat: Paradise Under Glass program went very well. Participants discussed Longwood Gardens’ 2025 Community Reads selection Paradise Under Glass: the Education of an Indoor Gardener by Ruth Kassinger. A twice-a-month recurring program, Book Chat has generally consisted of participants sharing what they’ve been reading and suggesting future reads. While this will remain true for the first Tuesday of every month, Book Chat will now feature a discussion of a pre-chosen book on the third Tuesday of every month.

As of May 20, the Library has received $38,882.53 from 211 donors year-to-date. This includes contributions towards the fund drive (NOFA and SOFA), general fund, equipment, Trivia Night, and the Summer Reading Program, as well as matching and memorial gifts. Year-to-date 2024 totals (through May 20, 2024), amounted to $19,423.06 from 127 donors. In 2023, 161 donors gave $26,105.94 year-to-date (through May 20, 2023).

Youth Services Report As of 5/21/25 -Louise Feder

It’s May in Youth Services, which means only one more month to go before Summer Reading kicks off – which means we are in full on, busy preparation mode!

Weekly Storytime themes for the month of May include The World of Phoebe Wahl (part of our monthly spotlight on an author/illustrator during storytime), It's Tea Time!, 1-2-3: Counting Sheep, and In Our Neighborhood. Recent crafts include fairy houses, pop up teacups, doily sheep, and expandable paper towns. Lolly Hopwood also joined us on May 13th for her wildly popular evening musical storytime (we had 21 attend this month) - the pictures of attendees launching balloons all over the children’s department are pure joy.

Other special programs this month included our Stuffed Animal Library Sleepover on May 2nd (12 attendees, not counting the stuffies), a Mason Bee Jar Workshop presented by Jade Greene from the Aquetong Watershed Association on May 10th (8 attendees), and a Musical Instrument Petting Zoo presented by Keep Music Alive on May 12th (a very happy and loud 25 attendees). Tonight, we’re hosting the Screenagers documentary presented by Christy Cheever from the New Hope Solebury School District (we have 32 sign-ups for the event) and then tomorrow we have the eagerly anticipated Fairy wands Workshop & Storytime, which I am leading alongside our own JoAnn Kern (we set the maximum registrations at 12 which we hit in about a week, I cannot overemphasize how excited the kids are for this one).

LEGO Club and Rhythm Babes both continue to meet with reliable, solid attendance numbers (typically 15 or more at each session for both programs). Worth mentioning that our Springtime Egg Hunt (held after I submitted last month’s report) had a whopping 80 attendees (at least, we stopped counting at 80) for an incredible morning program – I was especially pleased to welcome Ms. Patricia Lynch as our special Celebrity Reader! We also moved Pokémon Club downstairs into the Children’s Department, and that seems to have helped identify the program and we’ve seen attendance grow (we get 5-7 kids each Friday in recent weeks). 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 attendance. Additional, regular activities like Magic the Gathering Club, Chess Club, Nerd Studio, and Board Game Club in which youth patrons also participate, continue and are run by Sam and Eric.

We are looking forward to Color Our World: Summer Reading at the Library. Thanks to an extremely generous donation from the Haley Foundation, we now have $10,000 to fund both summer reading programs and materials, as well as permission to use any leftover funds for Youth Services until the end of the calendar year. It is difficult to overstate how transformative this gift is to the department – we are now able to offer Kids Yoga and Lolly Hopwood weekly

during summer reading and were able to bulk up our special programs. I am looking into ways to spend portions of the money on long term supplies and materials that can benefit the department for years into the future (supplies for the back garden and engagement tools and toys, for instance).

Outside of programs, we are hosting three APEX students from the New Hope Solebury School District, each of whom are working on their own senior projects (a poetry night, a bilingual storytime, and a new display for our YA section). Additionally, we had two visits to the 3rd graders to talk about summer reading at the Library, sign up kids who would like their own Library Card, and talk about programs and services we offer. They were especially excited about the 3D printed dragons and the Rita’s Water Ice closing party and raffle drawing for summer reading. I’ve also been doing some much needed weeding in all areas of our YS collection, starting with items that have not been checked out in at least 3 years.

Looking further ahead, I am super excited about our summer reading program – lots of programs, prizes, books, and more headed your way! Can’t wait to get started.

**VI. President’s Report- Stacy**

**Trivia Night recap;**

**Eric Jacobsen recognition 15 years of service**

The Trivia night raised approximately $7000 for the library. Thank you to Julia and Lauren who did the lion’s share of the work and the organizing. We will do the Trivia Night next year. It was a good audience. The mugs were popular and attendees were looking to purchase them. Lauren acquired the mugs online for about $17 but we could get a better price if we order in bulk.

**VII. Property—Lisa**

The Roof Parsons, the roofer who installed the current slate roof, came out and replaced or reinstalled 10 slates. He filled in the holes in the eaves and installed 3 rubber roof patches. The charge was $2,500. He made recommendations for several further roof repairs, see below, but did not give estimates yet.

1. Install a copper roof over the small overhang over the front door that has some rotten wood.
2. Reinstall the small cedar roof as he declared it improperly installed
3. A new rubber roof as the wrong size edge metal was installed on the rubber roof.

Lisa recommends we repair the rotten wood over the door and install a copper roof and get a second opinion and quote on all 3 items. Parsons has not yet quoted the above proposed work. It will take a few months to get these quotes from at least 2 roofers.

Furniture arrangement and improvements in meeting room. Sam and I met with Stacey Groder, of AMP Business Interiors, and she made many very helpful suggestions about having the space and furniture in the upstairs area better meet the needs of the patrons, staff and board. Many of these suggestions involved no cost. We are awaiting some additional info from her about other options that involve a financial outlay such as new easy chair(s) and table. Another need she identified is a single shelf unit with doors that close that could be used by Eric in his new office area. She indicated that the cost for this would be in the neighborhood of $600-$900. She would like the electronic file of the floor plans of the upstairs to aid her in making further suggestions.

Sam noted that space is in great demand in general and with the added use by tutoring in the afternoon, 2 additional flex tables would be better than reading easy chairs to replace the current long table which is in need of constant repair. Eric will most likely need a new desk that fits its new location better than the current one in its current location.

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

We had same number of donors as last year but received less money. Some grants that are restricted can limit us to pay staff. Staff is a very large expense. The library is underfunded per capita compared to other communities.

There is a past presentation with slides that share this strong message about being underfunded and we should review this and update it for potential use to communicate the financial circumstances of the library.

The board discussed researching who is giving. The upcoming NOFA will be a hard copy and highlight how much our programming has expanded.

We officially thank Liz for her help with the NOFA and SOFA appeals.

**X. Governance- Christopher/Kim**

They are reviewing the by-laws.

There is a potential new board member that Christopher is following up on. There is another potential candidate to whom he will be reaching out.

**XI. Motion to Adjourn Public meeting**

Motion to adjourn meeting by Julia seconded by Christopher at 6:37pm.

**Next Meeting is June 18, 2025 at 5:30pm (Cancelled)**