

**Simon Fairfield Public Library  
Minutes  
January 26, 2021  
Trustees' Meeting  
Conference Call**

**Present:** Danielle Morrow, Kate Anderson, Ellie Chesebrough, Betty Holden, Dawn Fontaine, Barbara VanReed, Nick Socrat, and Justin Snook.

**Absent:** Daina Harvey

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM by Chairman Morrow.

**Minutes:** It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to accept the minutes for December 22, 2021.

**Financial Report:**

- A \$1,000 donation was received from Wayne Shumate for archival improvement and supplies to be spent at Rebecca's discretion.
- A \$50 donations was received from Shirley Moczynski for the INT building fund.
- A \$100 donation was received from Victoria Giancola, who chose to pass along her COVID relief to her favorite institutions.

Account Summary 12/22/2020			
			Balance
Assets			\$243,509.48
Annual Appropriations		\$114,355.57	
Personnel	\$82,570.23		
Operational	\$31,785.34		
Other Municipal		\$6,205.00	
Capital Outlay	\$3,615.00		
Article 10 Repairs	\$2,590.00		
Trustees Accounts		\$122,948.92	
Library Grants	\$19,021.91		
Revolving Acct 53E 1/2	\$74.82		
Wm & Janet Carrick Fund	\$1,237.34		
Mone Historical Books	\$533.83		
Building Donations	\$11,485.83		
Regular Donations	\$56,078.46		
Bldg Donations with Interest	\$21,015.54		
Trust Fund	\$1,645.24		
Richard S. Douglas Expendable	\$1,855.95		

Richard S. Douglas Non-Expendable	\$10,000.00		
Income			\$286,674.19
2020 ATM Article 10		\$13,000.00	
Building Donations		\$13,561.09	
Carrick Grant		\$925.00	
Fines		\$23.50	
Friends of the Library		\$1,560.59	
Regular Donations		\$5,686.01	
Tax Appropriation		\$251,918.00	
Expenses			\$154,033.42
Friends of the Library		\$1,560.59	
Other Services	\$496.40		
Programming supplies	\$10.96		
Regular Programming	\$1,053.23		
Other Appropriations		\$10,410.00	
Repairs & Maintenance	\$10,410.00		
Special		\$4,500.40	
Circulating Materials	\$3,585.40		
Repairs & Maintenance	\$915.00		
Personnel		\$94,177.77	
Part-time Wages	\$11,628.90		
Full-time Wages	\$43,379.11		
Salaries	\$39,169.76		
General		\$43,384.66	
In-State Travel	\$358.45		
Other Supplies	\$582.70		
Circulating Materials	\$28,836.66		
Custodial Supplies	\$123.19		
Office Supplies	\$594.32		
Telephone	\$222.43		
Professional & Technical Consultants	\$8,105.00		
Other Property Related Expenses	\$470.00		
Non-Energy Utilities	\$143.04		
Heating	\$402.99		
Electricity	\$2,463.33		

Covid-19	\$205.05		
Equity			\$110,868.72
Opening Balance		\$110,868.72	

**Reservations:**

Committed to: Amount:  
**Archives** \$2,000.00

**Building Project**

Building Donations	\$11,485.83	Goal:	\$400,000.00
Int Building Donations	\$20,651.54	Remaining:	\$309,973.69
Library Grants	\$5,879.70		
Regular Donations	\$50,000.00		
Trust Fund	\$1,645.24		
Other	\$364.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$90,026.31 (22.5%)</b>		

**Director's Report**

- o **Pandemic Covid 19**

**Open Schedule**

Snook is trying to coordinate re-opening with surrounding directors to avoid hosting patrons from surrounding towns with different risk profiles and whose library options aren't as available. In order to accommodate tax season needs with printing/copying/scanning/faxing services, brainstorming with staff and other directors to try to offer these services in a safe and responsible way. Notary services are provided outdoors.

**December Circulation:**

	2019	2020
Books	1526	2112
Audio	79	39
Periodicals	115	53
Video	622	375
Other Physical Media	46	9
Digital Loans	654	967
PC/Wifi Clients	176	62
<b>Total Use</b>	<b>3218</b>	<b>3617</b>

**Old Business**

- o **Building Projects**
  - **Building Sub-committee:**  
No report

- **Electrical Systems, Interior Plastering**

The basement light that caught on fire has been repaired, the emergency light above the circulation desk has been replaced, the floor plugs that failed inspection have been capped off and an electrical outlet has been installed in the bathroom. The non-safety outlets around the children's area still have to be replaced, two new outlets have to be installed on each side of the front doors, and the emergency light in the basement has to be hardwired instead of plugged into an outlet.

- **Hot water heater**

It has been informally estimated that the cost for equipment and installation of ecosmart mini tanks to be about \$2,000. However, Town Administrator Wojcik, Building Maintenance Manager Furno, Electrician Grenier, and Sochia's Oil & Gas, Inc., did not support an effort to install a hot water system that was not dependent on using the oil furnace. Their conclusions were based on the following: the current hot water system works and also can provide backup and extra heat if the new electrical system fails; the boiler will rust if it is not run; refueling for the oil boiler needs to be done more often so that the oil does not sit for too long; oil is not expensive. They feel that the town is not going to allow to get rid of the boiler or deliberately let it fall into disrepair even though a new electrical heating and air conditioning system was installed several years ago.

A motion was made, seconded and passed 6 yes, 1 no, to stop work on the electric hot water tank proposal.

- **Grants**

- No report

- **Long Range Plan Update**

It was suggested that a goal to provide on a regular basis copy to the local papers about the Library activities. It was mentioned that including a schedule of events similar to what is submitted by the Whitinsville Library and Uxbridge Library would be appropriate. Additional news stories as are currently submitted should continue, with a goal of a monthly article.

- **Friends**

The Friends flier is being mailed on Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. Fontaine will submit to social media outlets reminding readers to look for the flier and renew or begin a Friends' membership. She will also submit an entry to social media about the Friends' auction of books February 1-21.

## **New Business:**

- **New Business**

- Annual Report

Ever since I was entrusted with the directorship of our library, my highest priority has been making it more open, warm, and welcoming. Every modification I have made to our building and our operations has been with the purpose of bringing more people in and bringing them in more frequently. I believe the Library is in its glory when it is bustling with borrowers, filled with social activity, and noisy with children. So you can imagine how deeply devastating 2020 seems to have been. We started out the year exactly how I wanted it

to be. Between January and February, we hosted 56 programs with 595 attendees. We were planning spring break events to augment our usual summer reading program and gearing up for a big capital campaign year. Then March happened. As news broke about COVID-19 reaching the Commonwealth, library listservs began buzzing as they have never buzzed before:

-March 12: Conversations between directors started in earnest. Nobody knew anything about the virus, but if it could survive and transmit via paper, cardboard, buckram, vinyl, or plastic, then library networks had a major problem on their hands (note: we know now this isn't something to worry about). With no guidance from above, libraries began preparing their own contingency plans.

-March 14: Before opening our Library on Saturday morning, we moved tables to the front door and set up computers there to provide circulation services to patrons without them actually having to enter the building.

-March 15: The Massachusetts Library System announced discontinuation of inter-library delivery.

-March 16: Libraries across the state and throughout CWMARS began closing and the writing seemed on the wall for us as well. We made a rush to get as many books, ukuleles, and e-readers out of the building and into patrons' hands as possible.

-March 17: The first thing I did when I woke up was check the google doc where library closings were being compiled. Overnight, it had updated to 146 CWMARS libraries either closed or imminently closing. I remember asking myself, "how many libraries are members of CWMARS nowadays?" I checked the website. The answer was 147. I closed the Library. We assigned staff to various back-burner projects in the days that followed, such as transcribing historical documents, shelf-reading, shifting, collection weeding, and painting.

-March 24: A mandate from the governor sent all staff home on paid leave except the director (me). I remained in the building working on Library and Adult Social Center projects, namely recording *They Raced Horses on Main Street* and offering Patrice Rousseau what assistance I could to set up the outreach and delivery program.

-April 9: All Library staff were reactivated in the effort to call every household with a senior citizen, ascertain their needs, and compile a master list for the Adult Social Center's delivery program. Library Pages were assigned historical document transcription to do from home.

-April 12: I began delivering available items to patrons, which evolved into our Thursday home delivery service. At this point we entered a long holding pattern of staff working from home except to deliver food while I stayed on-site to answer the phones, assist patrons with digital resources, and collect holds for Thursday delivery runs.

-May 21: After multiple definitive studies showed very unlikely risk of COVID transmission via library materials, we opened up the book drop to returns and did an "anti-delivery run" to collect the mountains of outstanding loans. Up to this point, we were only circulating physical items which had been on the shelf on March 14, and the collection was dwindling. This got things re-circulating again.

-June 9: With delivery working out so well, we were one of the slower libraries to adopt curbside service. But we did give into peer pressure and began offering parking lot pickup on Tuesdays. Most patrons still preferred delivery. At this point, we also recalled part time staff back to work on-site.

-June 22: The Massachusetts Library System resumed inter-library delivery services, and there was much rejoicing! Not every library immediately began participating, but opening up the network for those libraries that did want it was a monumental step forward in restoring the breadth of access to materials we seek to offer.

-July 13: The Library re-opened to the public for browsing with modified procedures and reduced capacity. We were one of the first libraries in the area to allow the public back in because our size and building layout actually worked in our favor for once! Since our circulation desk was easy to glass off and has a direct line of sight to the only entrance, we can keep track of the number of patrons in the building without requiring extra “door-count” staffing at the front door.

-November 18: After four months of good times, we had to close to the public once more and revert to curbside and delivery service only. It was a heavy-hearted decision, but a necessary one as cases were on the rise again and patrons from high risk communities whose libraries had closed were beginning to frequent our doors. My aim during the second wave of the pandemic was to keep our staff protected and prevent a situation where we would all have to quarantine and interrupt all services. We aren't out of the pandemic yet, but 2020 is behind us. We learned a few lessons the hard way: a) don't buy the cheapest doorbell at Home Depot, and b) don't waste time trying to make a virtual summer reading program happen. We've missed you, and getting the doors back open, programs back running, book clubs back reading, and Gail stamping kids hands is on our minds every single day we have to walk in and out of this building without flipping the open sign over.

But 2020 was a record-setting year for electronic circulation. The 11,340 digital items borrowed by Douglas patrons didn't make up for the dip in physical circulation, but it closed the gap some. The pandemic also led to a record number of library card sign-ups and reactivation of old accounts. We ended the year with 3,698 active patrons—more than ever before. We helped dozens of patrons jump across the digital divide who would have never made the leap in a normal year. When the Library does resume normal operations, the physical collections are going to be better organized than ever and the fresh coats of paint on the wall look quite spiffy. The Friends of the Library raised over \$14,000 for the Library's building fund with their Fall Online Auction. And home delivery is a service that isn't going anywhere even after the pandemic is over. On balance and in hindsight, 2020 is a year that saw more movement forward in Library services than most if not all others because our trustees, our staff, our patrons, and our town have been resilient and adaptable. And once all this behind us, we are poised to hit the ground running. Keep reading, everyone.

It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the annual report.

- FY 2022 Budget  
According to the Town Administrator Wojcik's 5 year plan, the Library is budgeted \$261,543 for FY 2022, \$79,611 of that is operations and \$181,932 is personnel as of Jan. 21 of this year. At this time, there is no need to expect any deviation.

**Next Meeting:** February 23, 2021, 4 PM.

**Adjourn** The meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellie Chesebrough, Secretary