

Portland Library Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
Van Beynum Room  
September 19, 2024

Board Members Present: Olenka Castelli, Don Eiler, Myra Finkelstein, Betsy Graziano, Melissa Kelley, Laurel Steinhauser

Absent: Jade Richardson

Others Present: Jennifer Billingsley (Library Director), Monica Jenson (Friends of the Library), Ralph Zampano, Shaun Manning

Laurel Steinhauser called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

### **1. Public & Staff Comment**

No public comment.

### **2. Additions and Approval of the Agenda**

Jenn added an additional item: Under New Business, 6.d. Approval of Werdelin Funds: \$1,800” as well as a new Item 11. Executive Session for the purpose of Library Security, and then renumbering Adjournment to Item 12. “Personnel” will be discussed in the Executive Session. A motion was made by Myra Finkelstein, seconded by Betsy Graziano, to approve the amended agenda, all were in favor, motion carried

### **3. Review Minutes:**

#### **a. Action on the Minutes of the July 18, 2024 Meeting**

Melissa Kelley made a motion to approve the July 18, 2024 meeting minutes, seconded by Myra Finkelstein, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

### **4. Corresponding Secretary’s Report**

A donation of \$250.00 (copper leaf) was made in memory of Robert Muir.

A green leaf was brought to Mr. Trophy for engraving last week and will be picked up after the other items are completed.

A plaque will also be made for display at the Cube.

### **5. Old Business**

#### **a. Director’s Evaluation Report (in Exec. Session)**

### **6. New Business**

**a. Approval of Display Shelving: In memory of Madalyn M. Gouin (up to \$2,500)**

A motion was made by Betsy Graziano, seconded by Melissa Kelley, to approve the display shelving in memory of Madalyn M. Gouin (up to \$2,500) from the Memorial Fund contributions made in her memory, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

**b. 2024 Town Trick or Treat Event Plans and Funding**

The event will take place from 4:00 until 6:30 p.m. Friends are purchasing Halloween books to be given away. Jenn B will be available. They must purchase candy and some non-candy giveaways, possibly bubbles. Myra, Don and his wife, and Monica volunteered to help. Don Eiler made a motion, seconded by Myra Finkelstein, to spend up to \$500 from the Memorial Fund to buy candy and bubbles for the event, all were in favor, motion carried unanimously.

**c. Sale of Books During Library Events – Discussion**

Jenn referred to two policies, “Exhibits” and “Soliciting and Sales in the Library.” They explained why they were included in the handouts. If any sales result from an exhibit, the artist donates 10% of the sales to the Library. Sometimes a book author may ask to sell their books after a presentation so the same rules should apply. For the upcoming events, the members were in consensus with Jenn, to allow the sale of books by authors. A review and possible edit of the policies will take place after the budget is submitted. Jenn will include a couple of options at the time the policies are up for review.

**d. Approval of Werdelin Funds: \$1,800**

Jenn gave a brief background regarding the Werdelin funds. The original gift was \$12,000 in 2013 to honor her memory. Jenn wants to reaffirm the original intent and that it will be spent out of the Memorial Fund. After a brief discussion, Myra made a motion, seconded by Betsy, to approve \$1,800 from the Memorial Fund to be spent for the purpose of historic materials and programming, all were in favor, motion carried.

**7. Friends of the Portland Library**

Monica Jenson provided the following report:

- Venmo electronic payments will be available to patrons of the Fall Book Sale.
- Next Artist reception is Saturday, October 5 presenting the works of local artist Janet Lopes; future local artist shows are being planned.

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- The Friends will join the Library staff participating in Portland's annual Halloween on Main Street and will distribute books to trick or treaters.
- Planning for the Fall Book Sale is underway: Members only sale - Friday, October 18, 3pm - 7pm (closing 1 hour earlier than last year as we had very few customers between 7 and 8pm); Saturday, October 19, 10am - 2pm (extended by 1 hour this year); Sunday, October 20, 9am to 12N (opening one hour earlier). We are continuing the \$10/bag pricing. Volunteers are needed!
- The Friends in collaboration with the Portland River Valley Garden Club have planted a red bud tree in the garden space at the left of the entrance. It is to honor the memory of Phyllis Greene, a long-time teacher in Portland schools, a past Friends President and an avid gardener and long-standing member of the garden club.

## 8. Chair's Report

Laurel mentioned an article that was in a recent *Rivereast*. It told of a breakdown in communication between a nearby library and the Friends of that library. Laurel expressed gratitude for our staff and our Friends of the Library and how well they work together. She praised their collaboration and said that we benefit tremendously from them working together.

## 9. Director's Report

In addition to Jenn's report, the following was covered:

Provided by a state library grant, the network upgrade is taking place. CEN is the network provider. The contract is with CEN and NOVUS using electricians from Northeastern and Geoff is wonderful. They are all super great to work with. Work starts at 7:00 a.m. every morning so as not to disrupt the Library patrons. They are now working on the far side of the building. They are hoping to have it done in another two weeks. Some kind of social media post will be shared about the project for it.

The Cube has arrived and Jenn thanked Don. The patrons and kids love it. The location is filling the need. It has shelving on either side. Children can actually climb inside.

Circulation numbers were slightly lower for August. Jenn did the math and the library was open fewer hours. The State cares about days not hours. Participation was doubled in the adult summer reading program.

Gilead offered free Mental Health First Aid training. Half of the library staff took the training and will be tested for certification. It is great training, also open to members of the public. Attendance was 26 the first day and 24 the second day. It is about recognizing when people are in distress and providing the correct next steps, including open communication. It is an 8-hour course for adults offered by a state grant.

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Betsy said she loves Jenn's written report; "it keeps the Strategic Plan front and center."

**10. Other Discussion**

**11. Executive Session: Library Security**

At 8:01 p.m., Don Eiler made a motion, seconded by Betsy Graziano, to enter the executive session. Jennifer Billingsley, Shaun Manning and Monica Jensen were invited to join them.

The directors exited the executive session at 8:28 p.m.

Betsy Graziano made a motion to approve the Director Billingsley's Annual Evaluation, seconded by Melissa Kelley, all were in favor, motion carried.

**12. Adjournment**

Melissa Kelley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Don Eiler, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon Hoy*

Sharon R. Hoy  
Recording Clerk