

Hopkinton Town Library
REPORT FROM LIBRARY DIRECTOR
May 26, 2021

Library Staff: The summer schedule is a work in progress as vacation time is taken into consideration. We are reviewing and updating the Staff Procedural Manual, documenting all tasks performed. Goal Two 1c and 1l.

Finance: Our budget was finally approved on May 1st. All staff received a COLA of 1.5% retroactive to March. We have not yet received the May year to dates, but it appears we continue to be on target with spending. Goal Two 1b.

Library Services: Curbside pickup continues to be steady as does of our circulation of print materials. We were not open to the public in April 2020, so comparisons are not useful. We circulated over 6,500 items in April 2021. We are now getting more inquiries about using our meeting room space, as well as our quiet study rooms. Goal One 1a

Programs:

Although we had a good range of programs in May, attendance was fairly low. We have heard from people that it is a combination of “zoom fatigue” as well as fatigue for the subject matter (i.e. encouraging culturally responsive teaching and learning with Hopkinton READS 2021 using Jerald Walker’s “How to Make a Slave” as the springboard for discussion. We had thirteen at our art talk and eighteen for the book discussion (combined noon and 7pm numbers). The quality of the programs was excellent and much appreciated by those who did participate.

Upcoming Programs include

- Planning for the Summer Reading Program is underway, with a focus on “Celebrating Community.”
- A panel discussion is also being planned on culturally responsive teaching and learning for the Fall continuing to work with Keene State College.
- “The Call of Kilimanjaro” Zoom presentation. (Thursday May 27th 7pm) Get ready to climb 19,341 feet to the Summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro – one of the famed Seven Summits – the roof of Africa. Based on his memoir, author, adventurer, and TV host (New England Legends on PBS) Jeff Belanger takes you on a breathtaking multimedia journey of Tanzania.
- Our Call for Covid Artwork for a show in September and October is being distributed. Deadline for submissions is July 6th. Our Gallery Committee is working on this initiative. Goal Two 2c

Building: The building has been painted and stained and looks great. Final step is to choose a color for the arch over the main door. After years of attempts to fix the steps directly in front of the community room, Dan Blanchette from the Department of Public Works and I determined that the best method was to eliminate them all together. We were going to have a paved ramp installed to replace the steps, but it would not meet code. DPW staff also took out broken and uneven pavers and added paving that will both decrease the possibility of tripping and ease snow removal. Goal Two 1

Pending Capital Projects to be reviewed and prioritized.

1. **Porches.** Currently the porch (A) on the Local History Room end of the building is underutilized. I had the screens removed by the painting crew. Over the years the porch screens on both sides have been destroyed by wind and weather each winter. In 2013 we had screens with metal frames built by Beckett Glass and installed for \$3,400 on the children’s room end (B) of the building. They have held

up very well. Chris Wardell provided us with a quote to do the same on the opposite end for \$1,500. They would also work with Beckett glass for the screens.

- Challenge, we have also considered closing in Porch A to provide extra storage space and a possible additional study space. We have two quotes on that from 2019, one for \$92K and one for \$120K. One of the ongoing challenges of our current space is a lack of storage. It doesn't make sense to invest in new screens if we are going to pursue the conversion to storage space.
2. **Generator.** Over the past eleven years, our aging dry sprinkler system has been developing leaks from corrosion that have resulted in water leaking into the library, system failures that have required the Fire Department to come to the library and significant costs for pipe replacement. Experience with systems like ours, is that the corrosion process will continue to result in pin hole leaks through the system. We monitor this closely with a meter on the air compressor, which alerts us to excessive air loss. When the building loses power, the air compressor no longer works, which has resulted in system failure (i.e. the system fails and the building alarms sound and the Fire Department is summoned). This has happened at least fifteen times in the past ten years. This is not a good use of FD time and the flooding is destructive for the pipe. A small generator would make sure that the air compressor continues to run and other basic functions continue. Two preliminary bids came in at approximately \$11,000. These quotes probably need to be updated. NOTE: we have not had a system failure since the upgrade of the system after the lightning strike, but it is only a matter of time.
 3. **Air Conditioning Units.** The library was built in 1998 and we are in the process of planning for when some of our larger systems will likely need to be replaced. Our HVAC technicians, who have been working with us since the building was constructed, anticipate that our two A/C units will probably need to be replaced in 2021 or 2022. We have been putting aside funds annually in anticipation of that happening. The units are estimated to cost \$10,000 for the smaller unit on the Slusser Center side of the building that runs the Community Room, and \$25,000 for the large unit that governs the entire building. We have been fortunate that the units have not yet required repair despite their age; they will only be replaced as needed.
 4. **Outdoor Seating Area.** Even before Covid, we conducted some programs, particularly for children, outdoors. We are going to install a tent this summer, but that is only a temporary solution and also subject to wind and other damage. The Foundation board has expressed an interest in the installation of a more permanent outdoor space that would provide protection from sun and rain. Design, materials and installation costs have not yet been gathered.
 5. **Building Security.** The staff has expressed an interest in having a panic button system installed in the building. A related project would be to provide keypad access to the building to discontinue our reliance on keys. Loaning out keys to community groups for community room access after hours is a cumbersome undertaking and could be more efficiently managed with a keypad system like what is used at Slusser. We have one quote for this project at just under \$10,000. At least one more quote should be obtained.
 6. **Windows.** Several windows in the Community Room have failed and screens throughout the building have broken. Some of the shades in the community room have also failed. These are necessary for darkening during daytime programming. An estimate for replacement costs is needed.

Capital Project Funding Sources: The porch and outdoor seating area projects lend themselves to private fundraising, including the library foundation and Friends groups. Projects 2, 3, 5 and 6 are projects that should be paid for out of library resources including some combination of the operating budget, capital reserve funds and library accounts. Current balances in our capital reserve and trust funds:

- Building systems Replacement CRF \$50,207
- Tech Maintenance Trust Fund \$17,130
- Facilities Maintenance Trust Fund \$10,410 as of June 2021. (NOTE: this fund was used to pay for library painting and staining at \$38,000)

Planning and Policy: Trustees will discuss the Privacy Policy. Goal Two 1l.

Community Relations: Trustees should discuss whether outside use of community spaces and quiet study rooms should be resumed and on what timetable. Goal Two 2a.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Dunlop