

Hopkinton Town Library
REPORT FROM LIBRARY DIRECTOR

February 24, 2021

Library Staff: All but two staff reviews are completed and as ever, it has been a constructive process. Leigh Maynard is now back with us in the library after her shoulder break. Staff have been putting in extra time to work on a complete inventory of the collection. We just finished a four-week series of thirty minute yoga sessions with Ohana Yoga as a staff development/team building effort, which has gone well. Another series is planned for March. Goal Two 1c.

Finance: We are currently operating with a tentative budget until Town Meeting takes place on May 1st. Town auditors are reviewing our financials for 2020 this week.

Steve Lux, the Trustee of Town Trust Funds called to say that one of our thirteen trust funds (William P. Young Fund) managed by the town stipulated that the principle be spent down after 25 years. He needs a letter from the library trustees approving the execution of this process. A check for approximately \$1,400 will be sent to the library. He also asked for the letter to note that the library should receive the interest on the remaining twelve funds in March of each year for the record. I will draft a letter to this effect for Nancy's signature. Goal Two 1a

Library Services: Curbside pickup continues to be steady, though circulation statistics are flattening out a bit, with only a slight increase in adult fiction and juvenile non-fiction. Circulation of downloadable books continues to go up with a 42% increase this January versus the same month in 2020. We had 177 library visitors in January (starting on the 12th) and 190 to date in February. We continue to limit numbers of library visitors to five per ½ hour. Computer usage remains low at only 2-3 each month. Goal One 1a

Karen initiated a "Drop In Tech Help" program every Thursday via Zoom in February. She has worked with five patrons on this platform and many others via phone calls. She also runs a monthly book discussion zoom for approximately twelve participants. Goal One 3e

In NH and across the country there have been increasing numbers of "First Amendment Audits" in libraries and other town facilities. Though we hope that this will not be an issue in Hopkinton, we need guidelines for staff if the situation arises. Background from the Office of Intellectual Freedom at ALA:

A loosely organized social media campaign to "audit" government spaces and agencies for alleged First Amendment violations has begun to target public libraries. The individuals and groups undertaking these self-described "First Amendment audits" claim a right to film in any space accessible to the public, arguing that they're entitled to do so as taxpayers and citizen journalists. Based on their output, their goal is to create videos of their encounters with police, security officers, and public officials that document a claimed violation of the camera person's First Amendment rights. The video is then posted to YouTube or other social media, and used as evidence for [a legal claim against the targeted agency](#) or its [officers and officials](#).

Currently the guidance for staff is to remain calm and cheerful and non-confrontational. Staff should refer to our Appropriate Library Behavior Policy as a reference point if visitors become disruptive. Trustees should consider adding "No photography of library patrons without prior permission," for privacy purposes, though it is unclear how this stands up to another patron's first amendment rights to photo or videotape. Currently, library staff use a "Photo Permission Form" when photographing patrons in the library that we may use for a publication.

Programs: We held a Zoom based program with John Greabe titled “the Constitution and Democracy in Troubled Times.” At least twenty people were on the zoom call and the video of the session received over fifty views. There was interest in having more sessions like this one. The AARP TaxAide program continues to go smoothly.

- We are planning a community read with the Hopkinton School District of “How to Make a Slave” Jerald Walker as part of the district’s culturally responsive teaching initiative. We are also working with the Office of Diversity at Keene State. Staff from that office will help to facilitate discussions. We will also run a series of programs including one on black artists responses to societal challenges. Goal Two 2c
- We will be issuing a “call for Covid Art” (all media) this week for a September/October show in the library. The gallery committee will be overseeing the selection process and help with installation. Goal One 1e and Goal Two 2a
- Planning for the Summer Reading Program is underway, this year a celebration of our local community. We will be monitoring the covid situation to determine whether any of the programs can be in person, or entirely remote as last year. Goal Two 1k

Building: We continue to work with Electronic Security Protection on the installation of a keypad entry system and a Panic Button system. Jason LaCombe has suggested some other approaches that are being explored. Goal Two 1

Planning and Policy: Trustees will review the draft Social Media Policy. Goal Two 1g

Community Relations: We have been attending meetings of the Hopkinton Recreation Committee in an effort to better coordinate programming. Goal Two 1k.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Dunlop