

AMENDED MEETING MINUTES
Cromwell Library Commission
Special Meeting
Monday, September 19, 2022
at 6:30 PM
The Arch Room

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
Nov 10, 2022 11:10A
JoAnn Doyle
TOWN CLERK
CROMWELL, CT

Present: Chairman Kathy Newton, Margaret Colella, Martha Rennie, Marie Roberto

Also Present: Library Director Kara Canney, Town Council Liaison Paula Luna, Gerald Seagrave

Absent: Karen Spotts, Barbara Grotheer, Megan Blanchette

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kathy Newton at 6:36 PM.

2. Approve/Amend Agenda:

A motion was made by Marie Roberto to approve the agenda for Monday, September 19, 2022, seconded by Margaret Colella. *All in favor; motion passed.*

3. Approval of Minutes of June 13, 2022:

A motion was made by Marie Roberto to approve the minutes of June 13, 2022, seconded by Martha Rennie. There were some corrections, which will be updated. A motion was made by Marie Roberto to accept the amended minutes, seconded by Margaret Colella. *All in favor; motion passed.* Amended minutes will be filed.

4. Town Council Liaison Comments:

Town Councilor Paula Luna talked about our having a new Mayor Steve Fortenbach and new Deputy Mayor, Jack Henahan. The new Councilperson is Jay Polke.

As far as the Cromwell Middle School, four architect firms and three project management firms have been interviewed and the finalist firms were selected. The Town will be engaging in discussions with the firms and contracts will be finalized soon, after which the selected firms will be announced.

The climate culture study investigation is going to be underway. The request for proposals were submitted. James Demetriades and Jack Henahan went through the ones that were submitted and they are picking the ones to be interviewed. Then they will pick a firm to do the culture study. Marie Roberto asked what is the purpose of this and who are they going to be interviewing? Councilor Luna answered that it would be employees; it could be current employees, it could be past employees and she didn't know what kinds of questions they will ask.

Councilor Luna mentioned that she believes it was started as a suggestion from the Town Council, after the Director of Public Works, Bill Russo, resigned after four months.

There was a discussion about how this study would be conducted, how far back would the firm go, if speaking with past Town employees, if all departments would be involved, and the cost involved in conducting this study.

Marie Roberto said that she hopes the Town Council makes this transparent in terms of the townspeople knowing exactly what this study is going to be, how much it's going to cost, the scope and purpose of it. Councilor Luna suggested to Ms. Roberto that she can attend a Town Council meeting and speak about her concerns during Citizens' Comments, or to write a letter to the Town Council.

5. Citizens' Comments: None

6. Reports:

Chairman's Report – Chairman Kathy Newton wanted to give a big "thank you" to former Chairman Margaret Colella for her past years of leadership.

Library Director –

Staff

Kristy Crisler did accept a position as a full-time librarian in Cheshire. October 14th will be her last day. Director Canney is working with HR on posting a job description. With the addition of so many new faces, Director Canney included an organization chart with pictures and names, and hopes you find it helpful.

Belden Room

Director Canney met with Ken Eldridge (chief mechanical engineer) of Silver Petrucelli last week to discuss the humidity in the Belden Room. He offered some suggestions, none of which seem to have made much of a difference.

Upcoming Collaborations

Staff was at the Farmer's Market hosting a Pirates & Princesses night on 9/16. On Thursday night, 9/22, at the garden, we are doing an adult program with mocktails and herbs. Staff will be at Pierson Park for a Hocus Pocus Party on 9/23-this is a collaboration between the Library, Youth Services and the Recreation Department.

Children's Garden

Our open garden hours have shifted from Wednesday mornings to Wednesday afternoons now that many children are back in school.

We hosted a very busy event starting our fall seeds and they were put into the beds on 9/15, along with making some scarecrows.

Email

There is something wrong with the town's email. I am having many, many emails bounced back with an error code.

Collection HQ

The consortium has invested in this software that will be helping with our collections/purchasing.

Baker & Taylor

The vendor that we purchase the majority of our materials from had an outage for over two weeks causing a lull in receiving items and frustration from librarians across the country. The system was completely down.

Technology Plan

Frances and Emma have developed a plan to replace, rotate and plan for the future for our technology. We are evaluating some of the specific purchases now and will act soon. We are going to try to replace at least four PCs and six or seven iPads this year.

3D Printing

Frances has created a model of how our patrons can utilize our 3D printers.

Policies

Binders will be handed out at the meeting for us to review at the next meeting. There is some work that needs to be done-The Mission and Vision.

Community Foundation of Middlesex County

Gale Anderson donated \$100 towards our fund.

A motion was made by Marie Roberto to accept the Library Director's Report, seconded by Martha Rennie. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

Finance Report –

Director Canney said the other capital expense money (\$3,600) will be used for the computers. We do spend the majority of our programming subsidies pretty fast. Because we put so much into summer reading, it takes a large chunk of our cash.

A motion was made by Margaret Colella to accept the Finance Report, seconded by Marie Roberto. *All were in favor; motion passed.*

7. Old Business:

Margaret Colella talked about the meeting with the Friends of the Library. The meeting gave her and Marie Roberto a chance to meet the President, Naomi Stein, and to understand the present Friends of the Library situation.

A small group meets monthly, along with Emma Russo-Savage, who is the Library liaison. Naomi, as President, is the only member of the Executive Board at this time. If, by the February annual meeting there isn't an Executive Board slate to present for election, the group will have to disband.

The present bi-laws were written expressly for the purpose of applying for nonprofit status and were written around an already elected slate of officers. Perhaps the Executive Board could be streamlined until more members are recruited to fill all the vacancies. Naomi can't do it all by herself.

We discussed increasing membership through a publicity campaign and by working with other civic groups in town, which is something to look into. Naomi spoke about her desire to broaden membership to include younger people and families. Marie Roberto spoke about the Library Commission and Naomi came away with a clearer picture of our role with the Library. She also extended an invitation to Naomi to attend a Commission meeting in order to open the lines of communication between the groups.

The purpose of the meeting was to establish a working order of operations so that the Friends of the Library can function independently and with autonomy from the Library, and the Library can be comfortable with them functioning within an established and defined role. We spent a lot of time discussing the Connecticut Friends Guide on responsibilities of the various groups involved in libraries and specifically the general administrative role. It was agreed that this should be adapted as central to the role of the Friends of the Library. Hopefully, this written working order plan will continue to be defined to ensure that there are no future questions about the Friends' role, should they continue on. They have an important function beyond just fundraising; and that's quite simply people who share an affection and appreciation of our Town Library, offering support to the Library. We know, from our past experience, the importance of community support when we were after the new building and renovation.

I think nurturing a strong bond with these people seems to be a smart direction to ensure the future of the Cromwell Belden Public Library. Hopefully, Naomi will be able to fill those spots. Director Canney said that she believed she had.

There was a discussion about the possibility of the Library hosting a Friends tea again, as it was a successful fundraiser in the past.

Marie Roberto mentioned that one of the concerns she has is the differentiation of roles. One thing is fundraising and the other thing is the role that Friends can play in promoting the Library differently than staff can. We have to build this again. I think we're all in agreement that the Friends should continue to exist.

Director Canney said one of the things that was discussed with the Friends was what they would be comfortable with trying to give us annually and then giving us one amount for us to use, instead of asking them to pay for individual items at a time. Anything we spend it on, we would obviously say "sponsored by" or "provided by" Friends of the Cromwell Belden Public Library. The Friends were thinking this would be easier for them.

Emma Russo-Savage joined the meeting to give an update on the Friends and what positions were filled. She said that the Secretary and the Treasurer positions were filled. All four cabinet positions have been filled; they just need membership.

Marie Roberto mentioned that she would speak to the Resident Council at Covenant Living about a Friends membership drive after the first of the year.

Margaret Colella suggested that there should be some type of a sign-up sheet as to what a member of the Friends would be interested in; the role of Friends in supporting programming, book sales, greeting, etc. It's not just about fundraising.

Martha Rennie also said there should be an option or a checkbox for contributing only and not wanting to volunteer. They want to be informed, but they don't want to make a time commitment and they're happy to support the group.

8. New Business:

Marie Roberto had a budget question for Director Canney. She asked why there wasn't an assistant position for the Director. Director Canney said that they did away with the position when the stipend was taken away during previous contract negotiations. Ms. Roberto is concerned that there is no one in place to cover for the Director if she happens to be out for an extended period of time. People of this Town love the Library. If it's important to people in the Town, what's the problem with putting another position in the budget? I think we're a little lean over here and I'm concerned. We need a full-time technology person to drive us forward.

Director Canney said that Ms. Roberto raised a good point. There has to be a true need and a solid plan in place before you ask for anything. Having another full-time person or an Assistant Director would be great. Director Canney will think about it, devise a plan and see what the best approach is.

Gerald Seagrave left the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Marie Roberto mentioned an article in the New York Times Magazine on September 11, 2022, titled "Read Scare". It is about how the battle over what should stay on the bookshelves in the local library turned a Texas town upside down. Director Canney will scan it and send it to members of the Commission.

Chairman Kathy Newton thought it would be a nice gesture to send a card from all of the members of the Library Commission to Karen Spotts for the loss of her husband, Mayor Allan Spotts. All members attending the meeting agreed.

9. Other:

None

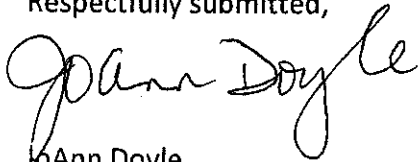
10. Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting date is Monday, October 17, 2022, 6:30 PM.

11. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Margaret Colella to adjourn at 8:30 PM, seconded by Marie Roberto.
All were in favor; motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JoAnn Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "J" and "D".

JoAnn Doyle
Recording Secretary