

**Auburn Public Library Board of Trustees**  
**Minutes**

***March 10, 2021 Meeting 6:00 p.m.***

Attending for BOT: Mary DeCoursey (chair), Suzette Dowd (vice chair), Nan Johnson, Paula Melican, and Matt Toth

Attending for Library: Jean Collins (director)

Guests: Julie Jacobson (Town Manager) and Edward Kazanovicz (Assistant Town Manager)

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting was recorded by Auburn Cable TV

January 6, 2020 minutes were reviewed and a motion to approve was made by S. Dowd and seconded by P. Melican. Motion was unanimously approved.

Directors Report/Bill Schedule

The Director's Report and the Bill Schedule were reviewed.

Response to Julie Jacobson's letter:

I've read all the materials we have received from the Town Attorneys over the past five years regarding the lack of any oversight, authority/responsibility for the APL BOT. It is not that I am incapable of understanding that the Charter and the Reorganization removed almost all of the usual role granted for Library Trustees under Mass General Laws. (Unfortunately, the BOT was not a part of that charter/reorganization process or we might have been able to salvage some useful role for the BOT.)

I want to be clear, and I speak for myself, I now realize that the TM will not assign or share responsibility with the BOT. After 5 years of conversations with the TM about the deteriorating situation the BOT found itself with the Library, and the work I tried to do in my conversations with the TM to make the relationship better, and the TM not being able to, or having interest in, making any changes in the relationship between the BOT and the Library, you received our letter describing the frustrations we experienced. When the TM received the letter from the BOT last summer, a simple telephone call to the Chair stating that the TM had no interest in sharing any responsibility/authority with the BOT, we could have avoided the subsequent investigation and intimidation and resulting anxiety for BOT members. It is no stretch to interpret your response, "it is what it is."

Why is it that any idea a member of the BOT suggests finds a 'black hole' in response? When the BOT consistently requested certified librarians in the Library, we had no support from the

Library or the TM but only statements, that none are available—how do other libraries find directors, people with a MLS, MLIS, children’s librarians and other specialists but we can’t find them, or if we do, we can’t keep them? It’s impossible to even get a response saying, I’ll think about it, or let me look into it. With six BOT members, I believe there are some very good ideas for a community library.

Where does that leave us? The only place I have been able to see a way for the BOT to be returned to some semblance of use and value to the community and actually the Library, would be through a charter change since the Town Counsel does not believe the reorganization changed anything.

As TM can you tell us what the steps are to begin the process of restoring the value of the Library BOT to a functioning, valuable asset to the community through a charter change. Do we start with the Board of Selectman or the Town Meeting.

Presentation by Edward Kazanovich (Assistant Town Manager):

Library/Goddard Park Pedestrian Bridge Project was awarded a grant for \$505,000 from the Arthur M. & Martha R. Pappas Foundation. The Pappas Foundation requires a match of at least 50 percent of the total project cost of \$1,010,000. Mr. Kazanovich presented the proposed financing plan using no taxation on this project.

Proposal was approved on a motion by M. Toth and seconded by P. Melican. Motion was unanimously approved.

**Trustees Business**

Friend of the Auburn Public Library update by M. Toth on the reinstatement- all paperwork has been sent to the Internal Revenue Service including all signatures.

Youth Survey: Dr. Casey Handfield has been contacted and is willing to email to students.

Library website will include the agenda for BOT meetings. It will be posted by the Director of the Library.

After more than 20 years of service, Nan Johnson announced that she will not be running for re-election in May. She will be dearly missed.

Next Meeting:

April 7, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. and it is to be held virtually.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 on a motion by S. Dowd and seconded by P. Melican.