**Richmond Free Library Trustees**

**Minutes May 13, 2024 6:30-8 pm**

Present: Matt Crabbe, Rebecca Mueller, Kathie Templin, Amy Wardwell

**Vote** -- Motion to approve April minutes by Kathie. Seconded by Amy. Unanimous approval.

**Vote –** Motion to approve warrant #22214 in the amount of $2700.45 by Matt. Seconded by Kathie. Unanimous approval.

**Treasurer’s Report** (Kathie)

The report Kathie got from Connie was the March 20th report- which was the end of third quarter. Since then Rebecca reported that we have exhausted the Currier grant. We are over budget on postage and electricity. We will likely go over on heat but everything else is on target.

* Rebecca asked Connie what happens if we go over budget in certain line items. Connie said that unassigned funds from the Town can be used. We consider where we have gone over as a planning tool for next year’s budget request.

**Library Director’s Report** – (Rebecca)

There were several follow up questions to the Librarian’s report.

* Matt observed that based on the swing dance session even though people say they want weekend programming they don’t actually show up. Everyone who signed up for the May 5th swing dance session even got 48 hour reminders, but only 13 people came. The upside was they got lots of extra attention! Rebecca said that free events are more likely to have more no-shows.
* Baby lap time has been a huge draw- 32 people last Monday! Lots of new Moms and babies in attendance today.

**Budget Requests**

* **Hoopla expenses-** 
  + Rebecca would like to set a cap on the cost per download for Hoopla items. The average cost is $2.70 which is higher than what we were originally expecting.
  + Audio books are the most expensive materials to download, but are the most popular with our patrons.
  + Current usage rates are not a sustainable expense. Other libraries are experiencing similar issues. They are canceling or reducing their Hoopla contracts and/or setting monthly borrowing limits.
  + RFL does not want to cancel our service- ; it is very useful and very popular! Instead Rebecca will first try decreasing the cost per download by setting a cap. If an item is more than a certain amount to download it will not be available to our patrons. This will limit what titles are available- if a title is above the price cap Rebecca thinks it won’t come up in a patron’s search.
  + If this option severely limits what is available to patrons Rebecca could choose to experiment with reducing the number of allowed borrows per month (currently 5). Rebecca will experiment with these options over the next year.
  + Kathie asked if we have assistance from the Friends with Hoopla’s costs. We do, they put in a flat $3000 contribution each year. But even with their assistance, costs are still too high.
  + Rebecca is hoping the company who owns Hoopla will also make some adjustments. They are likely to lose market since we aren’t the only library experiencing sticker shock and cutting back. Hopefully they will make pricing adjustments.
  + Matt asked about the statistics on Libby? Rebecca said that it is similar- people really want audio books as digital downloads.
* **Vote - Use of copier fund for laptops**
  + As of July 1 the separate bank account the library has to deposit copier and print fees into needs to close and become a line item in the budget.
  + Rebecca would like to spend the money in that fund before July 1 to buy laptops at a discount from the Massachusetts Higher Education Consortium.
  + We would be purchasing these regardless, but you need to pay the Consortium up front and writing a check from the copier fund will allow us to move quickly.
  + The laptops would replace all but on desktop station in the Tech room. Laptops could be used anywhere inside the library to give patrons more flexibility. They will be connected to the printers
    - Matt asked how many Rebecca would buy? She said at least 5.
    - Amy asked if she will buy laptops or Chromebooks? Rebecca said probably some of both. Laptops would allow her to install the MS Office suite software.

**Amy moved to approve the use of the copier fund to purchase laptops from the MHEC before July 1, 2024. Kathie seconded. Unanimous approval.**

* **Use of copier Fund for April expenses** 
  + Rebecca isn’t sure what Laurie meant about this item. There was no vote on this at this time!
  + Kathie asked if the copier fund could be used to cover Hoopla expense but Rebecca said that this fund does not generate enough income for that.

**Interior Capital Projects --** Finalize Proposed Plan & Schedule (to Connie)

Connie keeps a list of anticipated upcoming capital expenditures for FY25. This gives the town a planning tool to see where funds might be needed in the year. For the RFL she has listed:

**For FY 2025:**

* + Boiler at $20,000.00
  + Flooring $15,000.00
  + Lighting $15,000.00
* Rebecca isn’t sure our current boiler needs replacement. It is still running although it is 20 years old. Should we replace it proactively or wait until it dies? She doesn’t have a firm cost for repairs or replacement.
* Matt asked if all our lights were tube lights in the building. Rebecca said we still have some fluorescent CFLs in the stairwell and wasn't sure what is in the community room. .Rebecca feels we don’t need to spend this much on lighting since we have already replaced the fluorescent bulbs with LED bulbs and our fixtures do not need replacement.
* We wondered if we should drop the lighting expenditure completely or move some of the lighting allocation to flooring in case we need more carpet replacement.
* We wondered if we should lump refinishing the community room floor into the “flooring” expenditure? We have money in the reserve fund to complete this if needed.

**For FY 2026**

* Interior painting for $25,000

Rebecca will update our requests with Connie.

**Summer Construction Report: (Matt and Rebecca)**

* Exterior repair & painting–
  + The work is on-going!
* Sill plate rot–
  + There is rot on the bottom sill plate of the entrance door. As a result the door isn’t hanging right and ADA controls won’t always open the door.
  + Matt wondered if the money to fix this issue could be included in the grant funding request?
  + Hunger Valley has been working for a week- they are very busy working through their list of tasks.
  + No complaints from patrons about the construction so far! Rebecca has notified patrons in several ways of construction work schedule .
  + Matt appreciated the tulip plantings!
* Interior flooring replacement schedule (Rebecca)--
  + We don’t have a schedule from Flooring America yet. Rebecca is working on it.

**Open House –**

* We revisited a discussion we began last month. The Trustees would like to hold the event after all the construction is completed and the flooring goes in. This would likely be the end of October.
* We brainstormed ideas for both adult and family events that would entice folks to attend the Open House.
  + A Halloween costume swap event?
  + A story time (or multiple story times) with costumed readers?
  + An autumn “soup swap” or “chili- cook off” but with soups. Participants bring a soup and attendees vote on their favorite. Winner gets a gift certificate to RCK?
  + Soup Swap participants bring their recipes and we craft them into a cookbook or swap recipe cards?
  + Revive the “Soup and Stories” event that was held in the past? Maybe coordinate with the Friday Food Affair to have soup and adult story telling?
  + Have the costume swap and kids events early, have soup and storytelling later in the evening?
* Next meeting we will work on a tentative schedule and logistics.
* What would this look like for staff? Staff would have the option to come help in exchange for flex time during the week. We could also ask the Friends to help as well.
* The Friends book sale is tentatively still planned for the first Saturday in December. Matt and Kathie will attend the Friends June 17th meeting to discuss changes to the pre-sale logistics.

**FARMERS MARKET- (addition)**

Marissa from the Farmer’s Market reached out to see if the RFL wanted to host a story time event at the market

* After some discussion the Trustees didn’t feel like that venue was going to be the most effective place to listen to a story.
* Last spring and fall we also didn’t get a lot of traffic at our library table. So we don’t plan to have a table at the market this year. Instead we will do our fall open house event.
* Rebecca will communicate with Marissa.

**Executive Session** – Personnel

Rebecca answered a few general questions before we went into session:

* Do the Trustees have full power to approve this proposal?
  + Yes, the Trustees hire the Library Director.
* Do you have a time frame in mind?
  + The month of September would be the off month
* Is the staff aware of and ok with Rebecca being gone in Sept?
  + Yes. This is the quietest month for the RFL. Summer programming is complete. School is back in session so visits are less and staff childcare needs are less.

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Rebecca’s personnel request by Kathie. Seconded by Matt. Unanimous approval.

Motion to exit Executive Session by Amy. Seconded by Kathie. Unanimous approval.

***Motion to table Rebecca's proposal until the June 13th meeting so that we can discuss further with Laurie and Rafael present as well as get some additional questions answered by Laurie and Rebecca. Seconded by Matt. Unanimous approval.***

**Motion to adjourn by Amy. Seconded by Kathie**

**Next meeting Monday, June 13th 6:30 PM**