

Camden Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of May 18, 2023, meeting conducted in a hybrid manner, in-person in the Picker Room and via Zoom

Attendance

A quorum was in attendance.

Present in person: Penny Abbott, John Fitzgerald, Jennifer Gromada, Ken Gross, Dave Jackson, Elinor Klivans, Nikki Maounis, Betsy Perry, Jeremy Pratt, Sarah Serafini, Elizabeth Senders, Kristen Smith, Susan Todd, Natalie Travia,

On Zoom: Stephanie French, Ken Gardiner, Colin Page, Sophie Romana

Absent: Silvio Calabi, Marti Wolfe

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm EST by Kristen Smith.
2. There was no public comment.
3. Colin Page gave an update on Camden on Canvas.
 - All planning and activities are on track: the website is almost ready to launch and artists are all set.
 - Publicity about the event will start soon. After the press release is issued, tickets will be live.
 - Marti Wolfe is looking for help addressing envelopes for invitations to Millay Society members and announcements to other interested people. This needs to be done the first week in June. Please let her know if you can help.
 - Volunteers are needed throughout the weekend to staff the information tent. Please sign up for a 2 to 3-hour shift on July 21 or 22.
4. The minutes of the April 20, 2023, meeting were accepted as submitted.
5. Nikki Maounis presented a review of recent censorship activities in libraries in the United States and Maine. A copy of the presentation is attached. The following was also discussed:
 - The list of bills sponsored in Maine's 131st Legislature was also reviewed, although it is unlikely that any will pass.
 - CPL's policy is for each challenge to be made for a single title.
 - Sophie Romana offered to help if any FOIAs were received by CPL, adding that the town has an attorney who could assist. It is not clear if CPL is subject to a FOIA because it is a quasi-governmental organization.
 - In response to a question from Sophie, Nikki listed the Library's educational activities around the subject of book banning and censorship.
6. Nikki Maounis presented the Director's Report.
 - CPL's grant application to replace the Amphitheatre chairs was turned down. The current chairs are from 1930/31. However, an individual has come forward with \$3,000 for this. The vendor has reduced the price so that the total cost would be \$6,000. A sample chair has been ordered and, if found acceptable, CPL will run a small campaign to raise the remaining funds.

- To fund improvements to the Reading Room which include adding a bathroom, CPL will apply for an American Rescue Plan Act grant. Sophie Romana offered to provide a letter of support from the Camden Select Board to accompany CPL's application.
 - Additional bricks will be installed in the Brick Garden in April or May, weather permitting.
 - Trustees should review the list of Board committees distributed with this month's meeting announcement and let Nikki know if there are any they would like to join.
7. Susan Todd highlighted some items from the financial reports that were distributed with this month's meeting announcement. We are 83% through the fiscal year and in the black for the month and year. Expenses are higher than last year by about \$40,000. We've had a great development effort with only \$11,000 to go. Our investment portfolio is up for April and the year. The finance committee is meeting to review the portfolio in June.
 8. Kristen Smith reported that the Select Board approved CPL's Bylaw revisions at their meeting on May 16, 2023.
 9. Dave Jackson and Ken Gross provided supplementary information to the Camden Harbor Park and Amphitheatre Report distributed with this meeting's announcement.
 - The caulking in the steps of the cupola needs to be replaced. The estimate is \$1,650.
 - Several stones in the seawall by the falls are loose and in danger of falling. This was reported to Camden Public Works, but CPL was told it is our responsibility. Public Works has done similar work in the past. Sophie Romano offered to look into this to get a better understanding of who (town or CPL) is supposed to pay for what. Sophie asked if this was included in the FEMA claim, and Nikki replied that no one from CPL was involved in determining that.
 - John Ward, who restored the "Two Little Fauns" statue in 2006, will be in Camden in August and will re wax the statue.
 - The Camden Rotary Club holding the Music by the Sea event on July 4th. Current plans include 4 performances in the Amphitheatre – including a 50-piece orchestra – and fireworks over Camden Harbor.
 - A plumbing contractor and electrician were in this week to work on plans and estimates for the ARPA grant for improvements to the Reading Room which include adding a bathroom.
 - Silvio Calabi is taking the lead on addressing the unresolved fate of the State Seal carving. It is enormous and CPL has no place to put it.
 10. Susan Todd gave an update on the Megunticook River Citizens Advisory Committee.
 - A speaker's series was held Tuesday, May 16, 2023. "Wabanaki Land Relations, Caretaking, and Responsibility—thoughts on the Megunticook" was given by Dr. Darren J. Ranco.
 - The next speaker series will be held on June 20, 2023 and feature Dave St. Laurent.
 - To understand community concerns, in June, the MRCAC will meet with Save the Dam Falls and in July they will meet with Restore Megunticook.
 - MRCAC will have tables at the S.E.A. Fair in the Amphitheatre on June 2 and at the Camden Farmer's Market on June 3.
 - Sophie Romana added that some kids' events have been held and more are planned as the weather gets warmer.

- This week, Camden signed the \$1.6 million Coastal Resiliency grant to study the Megunticook River awarded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NOAA. In 2022, Camden received the largest such grant in the United States.

11. There were two items of new business,

- Kristen Smith questioned the placement of political signs in front of the library. Political signage is determined by state law; Camden does not have regulations or laws regarding this. Political signs may be placed in the public right-of-way only where permission is not required. They are allowed 30 days before an election and must be removed one day after the election. CPL does not allow any political signs except in the small corner of Atlantic Avenue and Route 1.
- Nikki welcomed Select Board member Stephanie French to the meeting.

12. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 5:16pm EST. The motion was seconded and passed.

13. The next Camden Public Library Board meeting is June 15, 2023, at 4:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Gromada