

MINUTES
West Tisbury Library Board of Trustees
Thursday, January 8, 2009
at the West Tisbury Public Library

Present

Trustees: Leslie Baker, Linda Hearn, Hermine Hull, Ginny Jones, Dan Waters

Director: Beth Kramer

Friends: Suzi Wasserman

Preliminary

In the absence of Secretary Elaine Pace, Dan Waters volunteered to take minutes for this meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Friends of the Library: Suzi Wasserman reported that she had met with Ed Housman of the Edgartown Friends in an effort to explore ways for Island library Friends groups to work together. Suzi agreed that this would work more smoothly if it did not initially involve the sharing of fund-raising information. The hope is that the joint effort might help the public know what collections are strongest in each of the individual libraries. Ed is a software specialist and could help to publicize this. Suzi noted that Friends groups vary widely among Island towns in both style and substance. Dan remarked that one of the Martha's Vineyard Library Association's *raison d'être* is to provide a vehicle for just such a conversation among the staffs, directors, trustees and Friends of the varied Island libraries. He said he has been disappointed in the MVLA's ineffectiveness and failure to meet the fairly basic needs it is their mission to address. Beth said she would convey his sentiment to the MVLA at their next meeting.

Director's Report: Beth noted that attendance was up 10% and circulation up almost 40%. She said this is consistent with a national trend of increased library use during an economic downturn. Dan interjected that anecdotal evidence suggests that Island libraries are seeing more destitute and homeless visitors who would not normally be library patrons. Apparently there has been a rise in instances of confrontations and disturbances within other libraries. Hermine asked Beth if the current library policies were sufficient to cover and protect staff. Beth said yes.

Beth reported that the library had received State Aid to Libraries in the amount of \$3,681.51, and an additional Health Access grant check in the amount of \$6,000. She has set up a meeting with Vineyard Health Care Access later this month to coordinate services and resources. Ginny asked if we should send a letter to inform Island doctors about it, and Beth agreed that this was a good idea. Beth noted that the Mother Goose on the Loose kicks off on January 12th at 10:30 a.m. The program begins on January 26th at the library and at the Martha's Vineyard Hospital Daycare. Beth said that the Equal Access program had begun earlier today (January 8), and that ten people had come to their first computer class taught by Steve. The four-week class will be repeated in March or April.

Beth said she would meet with Susan Phelps this week about Transitions/Life After 50. Beth and Diana Manter will be bringing books to Windemere on January 16th. Beth noted that there was

a meeting with the Finance Committee on January 20th at 5:30 p.m., and reminded the trustees again that the library's catalog is now online. However, Beth said, the library's computer server is old and malfunctioning. It will cost \$3,000 to \$4,000 to replace, there is no choice in the matter, but there is money in the budget. The new server will arrive next week or after Beth's vacation.

Beth said she had met with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' new design consultant, and hopes to begin to focus on the planning and design of the library expansion. Beth noted that Colleen has been doing an amazing job with programming, and that there has been good variety and wide public interest.

Minutes: In the absence of Elaine it was agreed that the minutes of the December 2008 meeting would be reviewed and approved at the February meeting.

Policy Manual: Beth distributed copies of the Programming and Youth Services policies approved last month. Taking up the board's ongoing discussion and adoption of a comprehensive policy manual, the group addressed Personnel policy. The board approved a number of changes in wording and structure, but stopped short of approving the Personnel policy as a whole because questions remain unanswered with respect to whether the Library has any authority over employee substance abuse during non-work hours. It was generally felt that the West Tisbury Public School might be the town entity most comparable to the Library in this instance, and Beth was asked to find out more about the school's personnel policy regarding drugs. Dan noted further that if notifying the Library director or board within five days of any criminal drug statute conviction is going to be a "condition of employment," then this condition must be stated in the employee handbook and made clear to job candidates before hiring.

Old Business: Hermine asked if there had been any progress with the parking lot driveway. Linda said that a Vineyard Gazette reporter had asked her the same question, and that she had replied that the driveway may not be a priority for the selectmen at the moment although she has written a letter advising the selectmen of the need for repair, and warning that there was danger of injury, especially at night. In a recent meeting, the selectmen merely said that Jesse (from the town) will fill holes as needed.

Beth noted that the energy level at board meetings seemed to be flagging, very possibly because of the late hour, and asked if the board might not meet early in the morning instead. Reaction among trustees ranged from enthusiasm (from "morning people") to objection (from "late-risers" and people with heavy employment schedules). Discussion was postponed. Beth reported that the town executive secretary, Jenn, had inquired if the library would pay half the cost of lighting for the parking lot. Linda responded that the Council on Aging should pay one-quarter, and the Library would pay another quarter.

New Business: The board was reminded of the upcoming workshop with Cheryl Bryan, on January 30th at 10:30 a.m. The workshop will focus on fund-raising and the possibility of creating a foundation for this purpose. Some trustees said they had questions about a foundation's role in an endowment and a capital campaign. Suzi suggested that we ask Cheryl if

there are other fund-raising mechanisms besides a foundation.

Hermine said that Prudy Whiting, the town clerk, had called regarding the upcoming town elections in April, to advise that any incumbents who intend to run for reelection must take out nomination papers and get them duly signed, as the town no longer follows the old practice of having this done by the clerk. Leslie reminded the board that she would not seek reelection this year. Hermine said she would use her town column to encourage the public to consider running for trustee.

There was some discussion of the art wall, where three or four openings remain.

Correspondence and Comments from the Public: None.

A motion to adjourn duly made and seconded, the meeting ended at 8:15.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dan Waters
Acting Secretary