

VERMONT BOARD OF LIBRARIES
MINUTES OF MEETING
Approved July 12, 2022

January 11, 2022
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Meeting conducted Virtually
via Microsoft Teams &
In-Person at Department of
Libraries, 60 Washington
Street, Barre

In Attendance: Bruce Post (Chair), Tom Frank, Maxie Ewins, Linda Saarnijoki, Adriene Katz, Deb Granquist, James Saunders, Tom McMurdo (Secretary)

Others Present: Janette Shaffer (VTLIB), April Shaw (VTLIB), Joshua Muse (VTLIB), Joy Worland (VTLIB)

Call to Order: Chair Bruce Post called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Public to Be Heard: No members of the public spoke.

Review of Meeting Minutes: The board discussed corrections for the October 11, 2021 minutes, consisting of a change of phrase and several small typos. Tom Frank moved to approve the corrected minutes, which was seconded by Linda Saarnijoki. Approval had six members in favor, with one abstention.

Organizational Meeting: Bruce Post explained that he and Deb Granquist's terms were expiring in February of 2022. Both have served for eleven years. He suggested that the board elect a new chair and vice chair.

Linda Saarnijoki asked for clarification on the responsibilities of both positions. Bruce explained that the chair presides at meetings, and that the board provides advice to the State Librarian, as well as managing geographic naming. He explained that the role can vary; he worked very closely with Scott Murphy and Jason Broughton, because of a number of large issues that came up during their terms as State Librarian. Bruce also pointed out that geographic naming has become a larger piece of the board's role in recent years, with an increase in petitions, and that the chair plays a significant role in that process.

Deb Granquist suggested that Bruce was underselling his role, that chairs have a dramatic impact on the overall success of a board, and that he always put a significant amount of work into making the Board as successful as it has been. Bruce added that he would communicate with Deb (as Vice Chair) between meetings when issues came up and the State Librarian was looking for advice.

After discussion of all potential candidates, Linda Saarnijoki made a motion to nominate Tom Frank as Chair of the Board of Libraries, and Deb Granquist seconded the nomination. Approval was unanimous. Bruce nominated Maxie Ewins to be Vice Chair, and Tom Franks seconded the nomination. Approval was unanimous.

Bruce Post mentioned that there will be vacancies to the board, though he and Deb could continue to serve until they are filled. He suggested that the board should consider approaches for filling these openings. Bruce also pointed out that a silver lining of the Teams-based option is that it makes things easier for potential board members who live far from Barre. Tom Frank highlighted the desire to add members outside of Chittenden

County, especially the southern end of the state. Bruce and Tom McMurdo discussed ways to advertise the positions, particularly if you were looking for people not directly in the library community, such as trustees, friends, policy makers, and citizens.

Deb Granquist suggested that boards often use the approach of starting with the skills/backgrounds they have, and focusing on what they are missing or what is underrepresented. She also suggested that it could make sense to wait for the new State Librarian to be in place. Tom McMurdo explained that it's likely an announcement will be happening quite soon. Bruce Post suggested it might make sense for the board to schedule a special meeting to meet with the new State Librarian.

Tom McMurdo suggested it may not make sense to wait for the new State Librarian's input, based on both their likely workload and the Boards independence, and elaborated on some of the ways the department could share the positions, including listservs. Deb Granquist agreed that the State Librarian would not be a decision maker on board member selection but felt they might be able to share input on priorities. She asked if the number of board members (7) was determined by statute, and Bruce confirmed that it was.

Tom McMurdo also pointed out that there would need to be a system to choose board members, in case there were more than two applicants. Bruce explained that the decision is ultimately up to the Governor, with a confirmation by the legislature, and walked through the process a bit. Deb Granquist said that when she applied, she was interviewed by a member of the legislature.

James Saunders suggested that especially if the board is going to do a significant amount of geographic naming, it might be worth reaching out to folks in the Abenaki community about the board positions.

Report by the State Librarian: Tom McMurdo summarized his written report. The department distributed over \$920,000 in grant funds to 162 public libraries, which came from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) through IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services). Vermont was among the first states in the country to issue these funds to libraries. The department set a minimum of \$2,000 per library (ranging up to \$66,000) to make sure that it was worthwhile for every library to apply, and 162 out of 185 public libraries successfully applied. Bruce said that he really appreciated the minimum, and he asked what reporting was involved. Tom McMurdo explained that it was similar to any other subgrant, including what was done with the money, and what impact it was having. Janette Shaffer mentioned that the funds need to be spent by July 15, 2022, and elaborated that we tried to make the traditional reporting as easy as possible, but also asked for testimonials, photos, social media posts, and the like to be able to show the grants' impacts. Deb Granquist wanted to share that she felt these grants were especially important to small libraries, both for the funds but also for giving some their first chance to participate in a real grant.

Tom McMurdo described some recent hires at the department: Lucie Fortier is the new Contracts and Grants Administrator, while Sam Kelley is the temporary Administrative Services Technician. Tanya Ryals was recently hired to be the Governance Consultant; she is currently the acting director of the Jonesboro, Arkansas library system.

Tom McMurdo spoke about the Library Working Group, who last met on November 12, 2021, and would be meeting on January. 14. At the Nov. 12 meeting, the group started taking testimony from librarians. The initial testimony was written, with some submitters selected to present at the meeting. Each session will focus on a different topic of the group. Tom felt that the group learned a lot during the testimony, and that the model was working well.

Tom McMurdo talked about the Department's survey of public libraries under COVID, and the changes in approaches (like masking) over time. He also mentioned the Department's new ebook and audiobook platform, which is in the finishing stages of contracting. Tom mentioned that he thought the department was doing well overall, and that they were looking forward to reaching full staffing. Bruce Post wanted to express his thanks for all of the hard work that everyone has been doing during the current vacancies.

Geographic Naming: April Shaw updated the board on the five current petitions. She suggested that Paige Brook, School Brook, and Heron Brook should be heard together, because they branch from the same source in Bakersfield. Paige Brook had previously been heard by the Board, but the petitioners went back to research whether there was any Native American naming precedence. The next petition is Root Brook, which is located in Montpelier and goes through the petitioner's property. The fifth petition is for Bumble Bee Brook in Shelburne. April's hope was that the board could propose a schedule for hearing these petitions, as there has already been a bit of a delay in the process. Bruce Post suggested that if the petitions are straightforward, it should be possible to handle them in a fairly expeditious timeline. He also mentioned that there may be additional petitions regarding Negro Brook. Bruce emphasized that it's often valuable for petitioners to reach out to the Board before actually submitting their proposal.

April Shaw suggested hearing the three Bakersfield proposals at the April meeting of the Board, and Root and Bumble Bee Brook at the following meeting in July. Tom Frank suggested that that timeline should likely work. Deb Granquist mentioned that it looked like some of the proposals had not gone to the relevant selectboards, and asked whether we were thinking of that as an expectation going forward, with the intent of making sure the board is consistent in its approach. April Shaw confirmed that she does ask about local input, and specifically references the selectboard. She said that the evidence of local support does vary between petitions, but that everyone is reminded of its significance. April also said that giving a firm schedule should make it easier for petitioners to meet with the selectboard, or invite local supporters to the hearing.

Bruce Post asked if there was a requirement for local support at the USGS level, and recommended reaching out to Jenny Runyon there. Linda Saarnijoki pointed out that the board will need to be explicit whether local support and contact with the selectboard is required, recommended, or appreciated.

April Shaw spoke about a potential petitioner, who is hoping to name 47 unnamed waterways in the town of Weathersfield. She asked whether the petitioner needs to submit 47 separate petitions. Bruce Post suggested looking at previous examples, and Tom Frank felt that it had always been a singular name per petition. Tom McMurdo felt that it was in the petitioner's interest to submit separately, as otherwise if one name was a sticking point it would block the entire petition.

Resolution: Deb Granquist had a resolution to be adopted upon the retirement of Bruce Post as chair of the Board:

Whereas Bruce Post has served on the Board of Libraries for eleven years, nine of which as chair of the Board of Libraries, and whereas Bruce Post has overseen the work of four State Librarians, and whereas Bruce Post has led the Board with extraordinary competence, efficiency, professionalism, and unfailing good humor, and whereas Bruce Post has been a tireless advocate for the State Librarian, the Vermont library system, and the role of libraries in peoples live. Now therefore the Board of Libraries wishes to express its deep appreciation for Bruce's leadership and his service to the state of Vermont, the people of Vermont, and the future of success of libraries in our state. The Board extends best wishes to Bruce for all of his future endeavors. To be adopted by the Board of Libraries on January 11th, 2022.

Deb Granquist made a motion to approve said resolution, which was seconded by Tom Frank. Approval had six members in favor, with one abstention. Bruce Post expressed his thanks to the Board, his belief in the Department of Libraries, and his appreciation for the role he has had.

Linda Saarnijoki also wanted to express her appreciation to Tom McMurdo for all of his work as interim State Librarian.

Tom Frank moved to adjourn the meeting, which Deb Granquist seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 12:01 pm.