

**MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Pound Ridge Library District**  
**Location: 271 Westchester Ave, Pound Ridge, NY**  
**November 19, 2024**

President Valerie Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. She welcomed staff, guests, and board members.

**Present:** Robert Bellhouse, Anne Benefico, Michael Clark, John Cristiano, Lexie Gallo-Cook, Valerie Nelson, Richard Levan

**Absent:** Selena Shen, Jenna Wise

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

*Ms. Benefico made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2024, Board Meeting; Mr. Clark seconded; all in favor.*

The next Board of Trustees Meeting will take place at the Library on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 7:30 PM. A holiday party will take place prior to the meeting in the Schaffner Room at 6:30 pm. Staff, Volunteers, Trustees and Foundation will be invited.

**Building and Grounds (Ken Gilman)**

- 3 proposals were presented for the removal, pruning and cabling of specific trees as recommended by arborist. Mr. Gilman said all three vendors are reputable. *Mr. Bellhouse made a motion to approve the proposal from Hector Romero in the amount of \$4,350.00; Ms. Benefico seconded; all in favor.*
- Luppino Landscaping has completed the cleaning of the gutters, downspouts, and removal of leaves.

**Financials** – The Profit and Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet prepared by Mr. Lewis were included in the Google Docs for the trustees to review. **Total Assets as of October 31, 2024: \$1,876,834.17.**

**Treasurer’s Report – Mr. Clark**

Mr. Clark transferred \$25,000.00 from savings to checking in mid-November as the checking balance was low. There is cash available in the Wood Family Account. There is also another bond maturing in the Wood account. Perhaps use the cash for capital projects or purchase other bonds. Mr. Clark suggested increasing the Key Bank Savings to \$275,000.00. Mr. Clark and Mr. Cristiano will also be reviewing the Fund Balance Policy.

**Current Holdings:**

**Chase Bank:** Checking: \$89,346.80; Savings: \$194,248.38; 3 mo CD maturing November 30: \$366,090.18; 3 mo CD: \$202,269.33 (matured 10/24/2024).

**Key Bank:** Checking: \$5,000; Savings: \$239,903.81

**Wood Family Account:** Wood Capital: \$277,279.56; Wood Maintenance: \$270,765.89; General Maintenance: \$226,216.21; Cash Available \$58,414.05.

**WARRANTS**

Warrants were reviewed and any questions raised were answered by Ms. Coulter.

*Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the warrants in the amount of \$62,671.49; Mr. Cristiano seconded; all in favor.*

Mr. Clark previously transferred \$50,000.00 from savings to checking in anticipation of warrants, as reflected in the Chase checking balance above.

**COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Finance** - Mr. Cristiano plans to schedule a Finance Committee meeting before the year end.

**Technology** - Mr. Clark said Ms. Coulter would provide an update in the Director’s Report.

**Governance/Legal** - Mr. Levan proposed an addition to the Patron Conduct Policy to include an update in the wording of the photography and videography statement. The Board discussed whether this new wording should be included on signage upon entering the library’s two entrances, or is it enough that it’s on the library’s website. The signage would read “By entering the library you agree to follow the Patron Code of Conduct. Scan this QR Code for a link to read the policy in its entirety or request a copy at the circulation desk.” Upon discussion, it was agreed that signage would be made. *Ms. Gallo-Cook made a motion to approve the change in wording to the Patron Conduct Policy; Mr. Levan seconded; all in favor.*

Ms. Nelson asked for the document with current library policies and review date to be put on the screen. The only policy that needs review is the By-Laws. The delay has to do with a law that was written during Covid regarding trustees being permitted to attend meetings virtually, which is set to expire in July 2026. Ms. Nelson offered to sit down with the new Governance/Legal Committee to discuss how to move forward with the policy revision.

**Public Relations** – Ms. Coulter announced that the library will have an ad in the The Little Book of Numbers publication, ensuring that the QR code in the ad is readable.

**Program Development** – Ms. Coulter will cover in the Director’s Report.

**Human Resources** – Ms. Benefico made a motion to call an executive session following the public meeting; Mr. Levan seconded; all in favor. Ms. Nelson shared that a new law which would have increased the minimum salary for an exempt employee was struck down by the court.

**Parking Improvement** – Ms. Nelson. No update. We are still waiting for the updated Traffic Study from the engineer at DTS Provident.

**Long Range Planning/Community Survey 2025** – Mr. Clark and Ms. Coulter discussed a proposed Community Survey. Ms. Coulter said the last survey was done in April 2024 as part of National Library Week which was directed at “what do you enjoy most about the library?”

Ms. Coulter went on to report her findings from the recent NYLA Conference regarding Community Surveys and what should be considered before doing so. Discussion followed. Some of the topics included:

- Why are we conducting the survey?
- Why should community members want to respond?
- Who should participate?
- Is the survey aligned with our long term strategic goals?
- What format should the survey take?
- Perhaps conduct surveys at community events?
- Perhaps do smaller surveys once a year or even a simple questionnaire as patrons leave the library
- Be careful not to engage the community in too many surveys.
- Ask the patrons what they like but also ask people who aren’t using the library, why not?

Mr. Clark notified the board that on the Town of Pound Ridge website information about the library has not been updated since 2010, and it even mentioned that the town applied for a grant in 2022 to build a Community Center which would include a library. Mr. Clark will be meeting with Kevin Hansan, library liaison. Mr. Bellhouse thinks it’s important to conduct the survey to capture information as input for long-term planning initiatives. Mr. Levan informed the board that the long-range planning committee, along with Jennifer Coulter, will be getting together in the next few weeks.

**Children’s Room Refresh** – Ms. Benefico reported that the electrician upgraded the electrical in the pillars which will supply the electricity to the computer tables; the adult seating (2 chairs and a bench) from Wayfair have arrived; templates of tree canopies have been installed to get an idea of sizing and height before finished product is built; there is delay in the arrival of the curved shelving, hoping for a delivery after Thanksgiving; the painter will also be working at the library on Dec 8/9. Starting Friday November 29 through Tuesday December 3, consolidation of non-fiction collection will take place; removal of books from shelves, as well a breaking down of existing shelving. Hoping that the new shelving arrives the week after Thanksgiving, books will be placed on new shelves, and after that installation of canopies, computer tables and carpeting will take place with a potential completion date in mid-December.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT** – Ms. Coulter

- The Foundation held a fund-raising event on Sunday November 3 which featured Kurt Gallagher and also included face painting. Contributions were made in the form of buying a leaf to be attached to the decorative tree branches. Ms. Coulter thanks the foundation for their dedication, support and efforts.
- The grant request which the library made to the Foundation for the Everbrite Light Feature and 4 AWE Literacy Tablets is still under consideration. Ms. Sarkis, President of the Foundation, said a decision would be made after their December meeting.
- The old furniture from the Children’s Room has been moved down to the Sensory Room, which is now functioning as a multi-use space.
- Ms. Coulter announced that registration will no longer be required for smaller programs.
- New York Governor Hochul announced there is \$80 million dollars in capital funding to be made available for non-profit arts and cultural organizations. Based on the criteria, the library would be eligible for funds. However only

5013c organizations can apply making the Foundation eligible. Ms. Coulter posed to the board about whether we should ask the Foundation to apply for the grant. Ms. Coulter would like the grant to be used to upgrade the audio/visual equipment in the Schaffner Room, and eliminating handheld microphones. Discussion followed. It was suggested by Ms. Nelson that a conversation should be held with the Foundation before their December meeting to talk about this grant and whether or not that might be interested; and also for Ms. Coulter to start getting quotes for the work needed to update the audio/visual system in the Schaffner Room.

- Rebranding of Library Cards. Current cards are generic. Ms. Coulter is suggesting new designs while keeping the original library logo. Rebranding will strengthen our connection with the community and enhance our visibility and ensure that every cardholder feels valued and represented. Sample cards as well as pricing were displayed on the screen. Themes could include nature, literary, arts/culture. Perhaps offer a selection and let patrons choose. Suggestions for the future might be digital library cards and a library app for mobile phones. The Board agreed to support the rebranding.
- Extend library operating hours starting in January 2025, staying open on Thursdays until 8:00 pm. Ms. Coulter has worked out the staffing and logistics to accommodate the late hours on Thursday. *Ms. Benefico made a motion to extend the library hours on Thursday to 8:00 pm starting in January 2025; Mr. Bellhouse seconded; all in favor.*
- Halloween Walk was successful. Sensory balls were a big hit. Special thanks Ms. VanTilburg and Ms. Gash for their enthusiasm and hard work.
- Donations. Mr. Norman Senior donated \$250.00 to honor the service of Bonnie Schwartz and Michael Clark. Ms. Claire Giancaspro donated \$20.00 to thank the library for sponsoring Deirdre Breen's programs. Thank you notes were sent.
- Pound Ridge Library going fine-free. It's a growing national trend and 24 out of the 38 WLS libraries are fine-free. It encourages patron loyalty and would shift the focus from penalties to service. A chart was displayed on the screen for trustees to review fees collected for the years 2019 through 2024. Discussion followed. We will get the word out on our social media sites. We will also have to update any policies we have on our website regarding fines. *Mr. Levan made a motion for the library to go fine-free; Ms. Benefico seconded; all in favor.*
- IT Changeover. Verizon and Optimum have installed their equipment. Right Click Solutions has set up new equipment for testing. WLS does not provide support for forwarding business emails to personal accounts, so due to security reasons that function is blocked.
- Middle Grade Nook coming soon. A space in the teen room is being re-done to accommodate 10-14 year olds. Ms. VanTilburg is in charge of the design. New outlets for shelf lighting, plants and lava lamps will be installed. Weeding out of materials will make room for the new nook.
- Trustee Education – all trustees are required to complete 2 hours of training by the end of the calendar year. Newly elected trustees have one year from the time they started.
- Ms. Coulter is on the Pound Ridge Community Update Committee, and she has completed the library section.

#### **8:53 PM New Business**

Mr. Bellhouse inquired if the library has an ethics statement for the trustees to sign. He came across this while doing training. Ms. Coulter agreed that we should have one and will look into this and report back to the Board.

#### **8:54 PM Public Remarks**

Ms. Emily Forbes from the Foundation thanked Ms. Coulter and the library staff for their help in making the November 3<sup>rd</sup> event a success to support the Children's Room Refresh. She noted that donations can still be made by scanning a QR code found at the circulation desk.

#### **8:55 PM Public Meeting Ended**

#### **9:00 PM Executive Session Commenced**

#### **9:35 PM Executive Session Ended**