

Henderson Free Library
Board of Trustees Meeting February 23, 2021
Minutes

The February 23, 2021 meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Henderson Free Library was called to order at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom, by President Barbara Greene. Members present were Mrs. Greene, Sara Treadwell, Nancy Tackley, Ann Trowbridge, Leah Poulin, Missy Drake, Mary Bryant, and Gretchen Martelle, and Director Mary Bidwell. Paulette Roes from NCLS attended as a guest.

The Town of Henderson has asked the library to gradually increase our funding through the school district library levy. As our income is increased by this method, the Town of Henderson will decrease the direct funding that we receive from them by the same amount. Their goal is to have us totally funded by taxation rather than direct funding from the Town budget.

The library Trustees invited Paulette Roes, North Country Library System (title) to attend our meeting to explain the various organizational and funding mechanisms available to NYS libraries. The following is information that Paulette shared:

Paulette explained that the Covid pandemic has caused funding for state and local governments to be tight. All agencies and municipalities need to reduce spending. She described three options available to the Henderson Free Library:

1. Continue increasing funding from BHCS
2. Form a school district library
3. A Municipal ballot, held in November.

There is no mandate for municipalities to fund public libraries. The Town of Henderson is not required to give HFL money. Our library needs to protect our finances in case the Town is forced to reduce the appropriation that funds the majority of our budget. We would do this by petitioning the Town or the School District to place a proposition on their annual election ballot, proposing to provide funding for our library by direct taxation. Once approved, that will create a line item on the annual tax bill to raise the authorized amount of money. A petition will be needed annually to increase or decrease the amount of money that is raised by taxation.

Currently, the HFL receives \$20,000 from the school district library levy. This amount was authorized by the voters of the Belleville Henderson School District. Paulette further explained that if a library receives 60% or more of its money from the school district library levy, then the organization of the library should change to become a school district library rather than an association library, our current status. If a school district library was formed, it would encompass all the libraries within the Belleville Henderson School District – Belleville Free, Ellisburg Free and Henderson Free Libraries. A new board of trustees would be elected through the school ballot process and that board would be responsible for the operation of all three libraries.

Chapter 414 of the Laws of 1995 in NYS allows our library to petition the Town of Henderson asking to have the question put on the annual election ballot to authorize a specific amount of money to direct-fund the library through a line item tax on the Town of Henderson tax bill. HFL would determine its financial needs for the year. We would then submit a petition to the Town Board. The Town of Henderson then turns the petition over to the Jefferson County Board of Elections, to be printed on the ballot. If the vote passes, the town would collect the requested funds and turn that money over to the library. The annual appropriation cannot be reduced, and we could still receive school levy funding.

Election of Officers:

Leah moved that the Board of Trustees' officers remain the same for 2021: The slate is as follows: Barb Greene, President; Sara Treadwell, Vice President; Ann Trowbridge, treasurer; and Gretchen Martelle, secretary. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Nancy moved that Ann Trowbridge and Gretchen Martelle be re-elected to the Board for terms of three years, ending in 2025. Mary Bryant seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Minutes of the November 24, 2021 meeting were emailed to members in advance of today's meeting. There being no additions or corrections, Nancy moved, and Ann seconded the motion to accept the minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously. Thanks again to Missy Drake for taking minutes while Gretchen was quarantined.

Treasurer Ann Trowbridge presented her report for the month ending January 31, 2021. All bills are paid. We received our Town of Henderson money, and Mary has not bought any DVDs. Nancy moved, and Sara seconded the motion to accept the January report as submitted. The motion carried unanimously. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. Well done, Ann!

Director's Report:

- **Christmas Stuffed Animal craft giveaway:** It was a good undertaking to be able to offer this craft to our loyal patrons and it was very successful.
- **Annual Report:** The report was submitted to Matt at NCLS last week. There were many changes which needed to be made by all libraries because of the effects of the pandemic on our NCLS libraries. Mary made the necessary changes and re-submitted the report.
- **Stewarts Grant:** The grant application was submitted, and we should hear from them in March. Mary requested \$1200 to update the children's non-fiction section. She is hoping to receive at least \$800.
- **Talking is Teaching Literacy Grant:** Mary applied for a grant from NCLS. She received ten bags containing assorted literacy items for pre-schoolers.
- **New, updated website:** NCLS is moving to a WordPress website. Mary is learning how to use the new system. Board meeting minutes will need to be posted on our website each month.

- **NCLS Funding** has been decreased by New York State. This will result in HFL paying an additional \$500 in 2022. Library directors have requested a breakdown of how the additional money will be spent.

Committee Reports:

Budget/Personnel: We have received our insurance bill. Because we have new shelving and other upgrades, we will work with the insurance company to make sure that we are sufficiently covered.

Old Business:

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

- **Goals for 2021:** Tabled
- **Audit of treasurer's books:** Sara, Ann and Nancy will determine when and where this will be done. They will report at the March meeting.
- **Henderson Historical Society Calendar:** Ann moved, and Nancy seconded a motion to spend \$35 for representation in the HHS calendar.
- **Nancy feels that it is time to hire an assistant.** Mary Bidwell feels that we need to find someone with technology ability, to help with virtual programming and updating the website. We may need to update the job description. Barb, Nancy and Ann comprise the Personnel Committee, and they will begin discussions on how to proceed. Mary Bryant will join this committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m., after a motion made by Nancy and seconded by Mary Bryant.

Our next meeting will be held on March 23, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Martelle, Secretary
HFL Board of Trustees