Highgate Public Library & Community Center
May 8th, 2025
Board of Trustees Meeting

Present: Rebecca Manning, Chelsea Pigeon, Amber Machia, Amy Rainville, Virginia Holiman, Christine Walton

Meeting called to order at 6:35pm

Public Comment: none

Minutes: Rebecca noted that the there was a typo in the treasurer's report – Virginia was not at the meeting and so did not second the motion to approve.

Chelsea made the motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting. Amy seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The board reviewed the budget status and warrants for April.

The laptop charge with Bouchard's was to update an existing computer and get it on the library network. Christine wanted the laptop set up so that it could be brought to the basement for staff to used while working down there. The board discussed having staff working in the basement. It is a storage area and not conducive to computer/office work.

Teen program charge was for pizza for the prom dress try on time.

The 4/29 charge to amazon for $234 charged to the B&J Community Action line – Christine will look into it.

Th 4/29 amazon charge charged to the HPL Custodial Service line item was for cleaning supplies.

The 4/03 charges from VT Springs are strange – Christine will follow up with Shelly

The 4/29 charge for $56.29 for "Arena" may be an error – Christine will follow up with Shelly

Christine presented the summer pool pass invoice from Hardack for $450. Virginia made the motion to approve the purchase of the pass. Chelsea seconded. The motion passed.

There is some remaining work to be done in the basement under the flood claim. Christine presented the invoice from Newton Electric to finish up the work for $572 (already covered under the claim). There will still be $500 + left on the claim after this work is done and charged out. Amy made the motion to approve the quote for the work to be completed. Chelsea seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Amy made the motion to approve the warrants and budget status from March. Virginia seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Director's Report:

Library Programming Updates:

Special Events:

i) Prom Dress Event - COMPLETED

(1) Running from Monday, April 7th to Saturday, April 26th. Offered a pizza lunch on the last day. We had 12 dresses circulate. I informed all the Directors at FLAIR that our overstock of Prom Dresses was available for them to borrow and share with their library. Some had already offered the program and others did not respond.

ii) Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt - COMPLETED

(1) Saturday, April 19th from 11 AM – 1 PM. We had 47 people come to this event. Public feedback was very positive despite the weather. We handed out 30 goodie bags and 25 crafts.

iii) 25th Annual Norm Lavallee Plant Swap – PENDING

(1) Saturday, May 24th from 10 AM – 12 PM. Poster made, published, and circulated. We have one 3-foot shelf for free books for this event.

iv) CSLP Color Our World Summer Program - UNDERWAY

(1) Email sent out on April 22nd outlining all the details (see print out). Promotional materials have available. Monthly calendars and event posters have been made. All events are booked and planned. All marketing materials have been made and are scheduled to be posted.

Amber inquired about the kick off day on June 16th. Christine has not been planning on having a kick off event/program. Monday programs aren't accessible to folks who work during the week outside of town. Christine may consider combining the Summer Reading Program with another already planned program/event on June 7th.

Weekly Programs:

v) 2025 HLCC Programming Schedule

(1) Muffin Mondays: UNDERWAY

(a) Every Monday from 10 AM – 11 AM. We have 10 people registered.

The initial cost expectation was about $10/week. It's currently costing $36/week. The library is currently purchasing from Fiddler's. The board is in favor of supporting local businesses. The board discussed switching up the muffin sourcing to keep the costs within the program's budget. Amber suggested that we offer sponsorships for Muffin Monday to community partners or local bakeries to help cover the costs and collaborate with others.

The downstairs fridge is clean and fully functional – ready for grocery donations.

Rebecca noted that dialog can not happen in email format due to Open Meeting Law

(2) Books & Babies: UNDERWAY

(a) Every Wednesday from 10:30 AM – 11 AM. We currently have 4 children registered.

(3) Stay & Play Saturdays: UNDERWAY

(a) Every Saturday from 10 AM – 2 PM. This event will become Story Time Saturday effective Saturday, June 7th. It will run from 10:30-11:30 AM.

The board discussed the "rebranding" of the story time programming. Rebranding should happen instead of promoting the cancelation of events on social media.

Afterschool & Community Outreach:

i) Crossroads – END ON MAY 15TH

(1) Awarded a $500 Clif Spark Grant to support the program. The remaining grant funds were spent on free book giveaways and were handed out by Patti on Thursday, May 1st at her last program. All remaining items have been stored in the vault for future afterschool program giveaways.

(2) Summer plans for our Eco Field Trip - APPROVED

(a) The event will cost $1,645.70. With the $1,000 grant we were awarded by ECHO, $645.70 will come out of the library's summer programming budget to cover the cost of this program. Until we onboard a Library Programming Coordinator, this event will be staffed by MVSD teachers and volunteers.

Christine has hired a Programming Coordinator and is confident that she will be able to coordinate the Summer Crossroads Program. She has communicated with Crossroads instructors and is also communicating the library's & grant support. This may impact Virginia's garden programming on Thursdays.

ii) Big Rig Day – CANCELLED (Due to weather)

iii) Memorial Day Parade – PENDING

(1) Monday, May 26th

(a) Memorial Day Committee Details: HVFD Chicken BBQ starts at 11am in the park. Bake Sale – to benefit the Veterans Memorial – Sue will be in the park at 9:30am for drop off donations of baked goods. Parade –line up begins at 11am, the parade begins at noon from the arena and ends at municipal bldg. A short ceremony in the park is to follow.

(b) HLCC will be involved in the parade. The lineup begins at 11 am and parade starts at 12 pm. I have reached out to Jes to see if the library and rec would like to collaborate on a community event.

The Rec Department is doing a float. Christine is planning on having the library represent in the parade. Chrisine, Taylor and the new Programming Director will be handing summer reading promotional materials out. Last year the trustees facilitated bike decorating at the school. It is

unknown if there is a bike decorating contest this year. Christine has located the banner and all of the bike decorations from last year – they are all in the basement, organized in totes by Patti.

Personnel & Staffing:

1) Update to Staff Bulletin Board
    a) Posted weekly schedule - COMPLETED
    b) Posted monthly program schedule - COMPLETED
    c) Posted monthly checklist – COMPLETED
2) New Library Programming Coordinator Position – FILLED
    a) I have found a new Programming Coordinator. Their information will be released during executive session. The position was taken down Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, on all platforms.

Monthly Metrics:

1) Adult Patron Visits: 268
2) Children Patron Visits: 91
3) Computer Usage: 23
4) Reference Questions: 4
5) Items Circulated: 435
6) New Cards Given: 6

Age Well Update:

1) We handed out 60 meals this month. The program will permanently end on Thursday, May 29th.

Grants Update:

1) Our 2024 grants:
    a) We received a $10,000 grant from LTC (Libraries Transforming Communities) that is an accessibility grant. We have currently spent $3,774.24
    b) We received a $8,000 grant from ARSL (American Rural/Small Libraries) that is an agricultural grant meant to go to our community food project. We have currently spent $1,545.49
    c) We have received a $2,000 grant from Ben & Jerry that will go to fund Muffin Monday Social Hour. We have currently spent $1,002.83
    d) The library received a $1,000 grant from NCSS for our playgroup programs that needed to be spend by the June 2025. We have currently spent $771.73
2) Summer 2025 grant:
    a) We have received the 2025 Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant for $15,000.00. This is an outdoor education, community gardening, and sustainability initiatives at HLCC. This grant must be spent it full by May 31, 2025. We have currently spent $2,058.91. This money has been spent to begin refreshing the outdoor gardening classroom: new gardening bench of educator, 6 small garden benches for students, 3 wooden picnic table, and a 9’ by 13’

gazebo with sunshade. I have been in contact with Moose Mountain Creations to purchasing an 8' by 12' wooden shed. Waiting on a site visit.

The funds need to be spent by May 31st, 2026. The board discussed the use of the grant funds. The existing music garden should to be incorporated. The board revisited discussion from the April meeting regarding keeping the existing division of space and the existing open space. Christine would like to update as much as possible in the backyard space. In order to get the shed into the back yard the fence and garden may need to be disturbed. The board discussed having a process to discuss large purchases ahead of the money being spent and the opportunity to vote on and approve these purchases and how communication could happen and has happened in the past.

b) We have received the CLiF Summer Reading Grant for $2,000 that covers the cost of an author event and free book giveaway. Clif is taking care of everything. Our author is, Mat Heagerty and he is already confirmed. His marketing material has been printed and posted.

c) We received the VT Summer Reading Grant for $350 which covers the cost of purchasing marketing material for color our world. It has already been spent in full.

d) We received the ECHO Connect Learning Grant for $1,000 to help support the Summer Crossroads program with MVSD. All monies will go towards paying for busing to each location: $1,545.70.

Library Marketing & Communications:

1) May Newsletter and e-newsletters have been published
2) Monthly Programming Calendar from June – August is completed.

Library Facilities:

Inside:

- The basement main room reset was completed on Thursday, May 1st. The entire basement is cleaned and organized.
- Ruffneck Builz construction completed the restoration to the basement on Thursday, April 24th.
- Newton Electric completed the electrical work on Thursday, April 24th. The fire inspector came in and recommended work on the electrical panel. This is covered by our flood claim. This will be the last repair in the basement before it is completed.

Public Works did some work on the toilet. If it continue to have issues the Library should bring in a plumber.

Outside:

- Plan to purchase new raised beds, new outdoor chairs, new play structures, new outdoor school prep space, and new event tent/cover.
- Backyard Clean up- Saturday, May 10th, 10-1 pm.
- Plant & Play in Saturday, May 31st to plant this year's garden with the kids.

The library will be closed on May 19th at 3pm because Christine will be at an event.

Amy made the motion to approve the director's report. Chelsea seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Library Steering Committee Update
Amy has been invited to attend the May 15th Select Board Meeting.

Old Business
-Story Walk: Amber & Rebecca cleaned up the flower beds and mulched. There are now 7 stations. Christine will coordinate volunteers to get them re-painted. Christine found story walk books in the basement. The library staff will take responsibility of maintaining the story walk moving forward.

-Plant Swap: 25th Annual Norm LaVallee Plant Swap will be held Saturday, May 24th 10am-noon. The board discussed logistics and promotion with Christine and added "book swap" to the event. The date on the banner will need to be updated. Rebecca and Amber will put out the banner on Saturday, May 17th. Christine will ask the town to put the event on the town sign and will list on Front Porch Forum. Will put out Library totes.

-Memorial Day Parade: covered in Director's Report

-Bikes: Christine has connected with Jes. Jes shared the bike lending details with Christine.

New Business:
-Programming goals from Christine:

Long Term Goals (6 months +)
1. To host weekly library programs for infants and toddlers (ages 0-2)
2. To host weekly library programs for preschool & school aged children (ages 3-11)
3. To host weekly library programs for seniors (ages 65+)
4. To host monthly library programs for teens (ages 12-18)
5. To host monthly library programs for adults (ages 19-64)
6. To host one multigenerational community event each quarter
7. To maintain our partnership with Crossroads at HES
8. To maintain our partnership with the Rec Department
9. To maintain our partnership with the Town Office
10. To establish a sustainable volunteer program
11. To host quarterly cooking classes at HLCC
12. To develop a plan for the future of the gardening program at HLCC as we spend our ARSL Sustainability grant
13. Continue to write programming grants on behalf of HLCC
14. Continue to network with other programmers to host events at HLCC

Short Term Goals (within the next 6 months)
1. To acquire a part-time Programming Coordinator
2. To train a part-time Programming Coordinator
3. To promote all 2025 Color our World Summer Reading Program to the public beginning Monday, May 26th.
4. To offer the public an exceptional summer reading experience through our 2025 Color our World Summer Reading Program.
5. To have part-time Programming Coordinator attend Thursday Summer Crossroads over the summer
6. To have part-time Programming Coordinator work with the Director to plan and host Thursday Crossroads starting in September
7. To bring Charlie Cart back to HLCC for future culinary programs (to be stored in meeting room)

-Born To Read Program: The board would like this program resurrected. In the future it would be great if books could be given to the individual whose name it has been donated in. Chrisine will work on this.

-Policy Review: for June meeting. Rebecca will send out digital copies and printed copies as requested.

-Library Hours: Christine has shared with the board that the library hours will remain limited through September. The library will be fully staffed with 80 hours of staffed hours. The board noted that in the past the library has had 34 open hours with one full time staff and one part time staff member. The library is not currently accessible to community members who work out of town during the week due to closing at 5pm. Christine is not willing to consider expanding library hours until the new programming director is fully trained. Christine will propose updated regular library hours at the June meeting.

-July Library Scheduling: Christine has proposed closing the library June 30th – July 3rd due to "staffing shortages." It is unclear if the Clerk and Programming Coordinator are available to cover the library open hours while Christing is on vacation. It is the director's responsibility to make sure that library open hours are covered.

-Volunteer Hours: Christine will coordinate Story Walk painting and outside facility clean up projects in June (volunteer group from MVU). Chelsea will share some community service group contact information with Christine. Christine has also had some community response from potential volunteers in response to her volunteering campaign.

-Little Free Libraries: Chrisine has applied for grant funding for new little free libraries. Rebecca and Amy will coordinate picking up the repaired Little Free Library.

Amy made the motion to enter executive session at 8:23 to discuss personnel. Chelsea seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Christine exited executive session at 8:35pm

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

The next trustee meeting will be Monday, June 9th, at 6:30pm

Short & Long Term Goals

1. More programming, especially outdoors based or utilizing the school and town office space

2. More community involvement in programs & running programs

3. Continue to clean and organize the library space

4. Create new transitional book section for children (between early readers and juvenile fiction)

5. Find grant money to expand large print and CD/audio books

6. New library building to expand offerings to the community, events and improve community relationships

7. Work with a marketing agency to put together a marketing plan for the library & community center.

8. Renewed focus on trustee training

9. Outreach to each board & foster relationships between boards

10. Utilize trustees more effectively

11. Consider re-evaluating the hours that the library is open and make sure we are meeting the needs of the community

Board of Trustees

Calendar of Annual Tasks

JANUARY

-Begin to discuss presentations/presence we want to have at Town Meeting

-Library written report for Town Meeting

-Begin recruiting new board member prospects if positions are opening

FEBRUARY

-Finalize plans for Library representation at Town Meeting

MARCH

APRIL

-Annual review and update of all Library policies and board by-laws

-Orientation for new board members

-Set date for plant swap

-Pick date for spring yard clean up

MAY

JUNE

JULY

-Review Craft Show documents

AUGUST

-Send out Craft Show documents

-Explore and organize/schedule annual trustee training opportunities for the fall

SEPTEMBER

-Director annual evaluation

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

-Treasurer & Director work on next year's proposed budget

-craft show

-plan for plant tower

DECEMBER

-Board to finalize proposed budget

OTHER :

-visit another library & trustee group to get new ideas and perspectives

-evaluate long range planning

-evaluate how the trustees are linking the community with the library