

Croton Free Library
2021 Annual Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2021

PRESENT

Trustees: Jane Beller, Sharyse Eisinger, Leslie Ellis, Barry Feinberg, Adora Lam, Mary McFerran, Marianne Merola, Susan Ranis, Mayla Hsu, Laura Jaeger, Margaret Mahoney

Croton Free Library Association: Lisa Dashman, Kate Fabian, Meredith Hertlein, Patricia Foley.

Board Treasurer: Sid Franks

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

Public: Gary Eisinger

ABSENT

Lynn Kauderer

It was deemed that a sufficient quorum was present and assembled outdoors on the front lawn of the Croton Free Library on Tuesday, April 27, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was held outdoors due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was called to order at 6:13 pm by Croton Free Library Association President Kate Fabian.

A motion was made and a vote was taken to accept the minutes of the November 16, 2020 Annual Meeting and the motion was carried.

ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S REPORT

Association Treasurer Meredith Hertlein reported that the 2020 Annual appeal was the best ever with revenue of over \$21,200 despite the unusual and precarious circumstances of the pandemic. The Association's first ever online auction – again held under the restrictive conditions of the pandemic–was a “raging success” generating over \$6,600 in revenue against expenses of less than \$100, thanks to generous donations by community members and businesses.

A motion was made and A vote was taken to accept the report and the motion was carried.

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Outgoing Association President Kate Fabian reported that despite how the pandemic limited the Association's activities in 2020-2021 and prevented the hosting of the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 Book & Bake Sales and the annual food drive, the most recent annual appeal–featuring art work donated by local artist Jeanne-Noel Mahoney–was the most successful in the last four years, if not ever. A new fundraiser, an online auction, was a tremendous success both financially in that

it exceeded its goal of \$5000 and based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community.

Kate went on to explain that while the Association's activities of fundraising and community outreach support the Library's mission statement and all funds raised have always been part of the Library's financial reporting, the continuation of the Association as a entity separate from the board of trustees with an entirely separate governing structure no longer makes sense. The incorporation of the current Association activities into the board of trustees with a newly created fundraising committee as a standing committee of the board has been discussed among both the Association members and the board of trustees. The change would further unite the same group of people under one governing body in achieving the Library's mission, it would make more sense to the community and provide an opportunity to rewrite the bylaws of the Library to not only clarify the definition of the Library as an association library, but also to make other necessary changes and clarifications.

Kate reported that new bylaws of the Library have been drafted by the President, Vice President and a Trustee of the Board of Trustees, the President and Vice President of the Association and the Library Director. The draft of the new by-laws has been shared with the full Board of the Trustees and the Association.

A motion was made and vote was taken to accept the incorporation of the functions of the CFLA into a standing committee of the board as documented in a new draft of the Library's bylaws and the motion was carried.

A motion was made and vote was taken to accept the new draft of the Library's bylaws and the motion was carried.

Kate concluded by saying how much she has enjoyed being a part of "this important organization within our community" and thanked Association Treasurer Meredith Hartlein, Vice-President Laura Jaeger, Secretary Lisa Dashman, and members Patti Dalvia, who has been critical to the success of Just Right Reads among other projects for the Association, Sara Mills-Cohen, who recently "spearheaded the online auction to make it the success it was," and Adam Decker.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

Board President Leslie Ellis began by reading the Library's mission statement and reviewed the events she has witnessed on her 7 years on the board calling it "a time of real growth and change for our library": "We have had three directors, two director searches, one assistant director search, the addition of a creative space, the installation of a new HVAC system, new carpet and a pandemic."

Significant events in the past year include the creation of a Safety Committee, which included staff member Gwen Glazer, as of March 2020 tasked with writing and continuously updating a pandemic policy to guide the operation of the Library and the reworking of the Library bylaws,

one of the key aims of which was to add, at the recommendation of the Association, a new fundraising committee.

Leslie went on to thank each member of the board and Treasurer and Library Director and Association President by name noting that each worked tirelessly for the library. Sharyse Eisinger was singled out for graciously consenting to an additional year on the board during the pandemic shutdown.

NEW BOARD TRUSTEES

Leslie asked for a motion to be made and a vote was taken to affirm a new 5-year term each for continuing board trustees Adora Lam and Mary McFerran and for each of the three trustees newly voted in by the Board – Laura Stelman Jaeger, Mayla Hsu and Margaret Mahoney. The motion was carried.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Jesse Bourdon noted that the feeling at the Library during the pandemic is now more one of hope than uneasiness and concern as vaccinations have become widespread. Staff has adjusted well to new work processes, digital circulation has increased fourfold, online programming and Zoom meetings have been mastered and the Library is entering into a hybrid phase of combining in-library browsing by appointment with the highly successful curbside materials pick-up. There were many lessons learned during the pandemic, from putting more focus into e-content to streaming in-person events online. But “the most important thing we learned during this time, is that we don’t need this building to help our patrons. It seems that you can take the librarian out of the Library, but you can’t take the Library out of the Librarian.”

Due to the financial hardships many faced in the previous pandemic year, the Library opted not to increase the tax levy for the 2020-2021 budget. This year the Library is requesting a 2.9% increase, bringing the levy to about \$896,000. He urged everyone to cast a ballot at the Library Budget vote to be held at the Croton-Harmon High School on Tuesday, May 18.

A motion was made and a vote taken to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 pm and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Marianne Merola
Vice-President, Board of Trustees