

**STRATFORD LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**  
**JULY 21, 2016**

The Stratford Library Association Board of Trustees meeting was called to order by Board President Judy Hampel at 7:31 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Constantine Chagares  
Karla Glad  
Edvena Jackson  
Deborah Perman  
Robyn Proto

Tory Florek  
Judith Hampel  
Doreen Jaekle  
Barb Poisson  
Peg Sheahan

**Members Absent:**

Meg Bachtel, exc.  
Shelley Hall, exc.  
Joseph Janucik, exc.  
Joel Pleban, exc.  
Robert Smith, exc.

Maria Ferrera, exc.  
Thomas Hall, exc.  
Kim Kadeem, exc.  
Cynthia Smith, exc.

Also attending: Sheri Szymanski, Director and Geri Diorio, Assistant Director.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

No report.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Sheahan motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Chagares and approved unanimously.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Mrs. Perman read several pieces of correspondence including thank you letters from both scholarship recipients, William Rooney and Anderson Ogazi. She also read a thank you from the Director of Sterling House for our collections benefitting their food pantry. Two patrons sent Ms. Szymanski letters thanking her for the service provided by the Librarians and staff.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

No report.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Ms. Szymanski presented her annual report to the Board. The Board welcomed Jim Connor and Kim Kadeem this year. Judy Crudo, Susan Fennell and Jim Connor all resigned from the Board this year. It was a busy year with many exciting changes at the Stratford Library. Completing the branding project from last year, the Library's new logo was introduced October. Our three big fundraisers brought in nearly \$49,000 for library materials and programs. The Library participated in Fairfield County Giving Day for the first time in March. All funds raised were directed to UCreate programs. Last year's summer reading was a huge success. Over 18,000 books were read by children, teens and adults. Reader's Theatre Showcase had another successful 6 week series in the summer, drawing loyal crowds. Caitlin Augusta and Beth Grimes continue to run a multigenerational Harry Potter Book Club. The Library and Stratford

Public Schools collaborated to launch *Miss Soto's Literacy Legacy* project here in the Lovell Room in November. This project places four mentor texts in each K-6 classroom each year. Ten copies of the same books are placed in the Library so that children will be able to share these books with siblings and family. The Vicki Soto Foundation presented \$5,000 to the Library at the launch to be used for corresponding programs for each mentor text. Ms. Szymanski and Children's Department Head, Martha Simpson are on the selection committee. Square One Theatre held 8 performances of *Mass Appeal* in the Lovell Room in the Fall. They were very happy and relieved to have the library as a temporary space for their play. The Library, The Stratford Recreation Department, CARE and local residents collaborated to sponsor an exhibit of items from Jeffrey Fletcher's *African American Collection* at the Birdseye Municipal Complex in February. Mr. Fletcher shared a variety of authentic pieces representing the African American experience in this very moving exhibit. The *One Book, One Stratford* committee selected the organic farming memoir, *Gaining Ground* by Forrest Pritchard. Plans are underway for the program series in the fall. The Teen Department published poetry and prose review, *Varied Voices* and the *2016 Gold Seal Book List*, which was dedicated to retired Library Director, Barbara Blosveren. The Annual Teen Volunteer Reception was held in October, recognizing nearly 125 teens for their 4,485 hours of service to the Library. The Stratford Sister Cities chorus presented the Library with a flag featuring the Stratford seal. The flag travelled with the group when they visited Stratford-Upon-Avon this year and will remain on display in the Lovell Room until the group travels in the future. The Stratford Library was honored to be recognized as a *Friend of Education* by the Board of Education in October. Martha Simpson attended Beardsley Zoo Wing Ding Festival and shared library information. Chris Bacchiocchi promoted the library when he attended the South End Expo, which featured a basketball tournament. Lucretia Duwel volunteered at the Wayne's Walk Foundation 5K. The library has been promoting the Wayne's Walk/Uber initiative to help prevent drunk driving. Elanah Sherman, Human Services Advocate for the State of Connecticut provided an all-staff workshop on the American With Disabilities Act for Libraries. Personnel changes include the retirement of Barbara Blosveren after 33 years of service at the Library. Sheri Szymanski was appointed Director by the Library Board. Geri Diorio joined the staff as Assistant Director. Benjamin Canevari and Anne Gallagher were hired as part-time pages in the spring.

### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Diorio reported that the largest building project this year was the first phase of the Library Drop Ceiling/Ductwork/Air Handling Unit/Lighting Replacement Capital Improvement Project. It involved the replacement of the air handling unit # 2 along with ductwork throughout the 1981 section of the building. The lighting and drop ceilings on all three levels were also replaced, vastly improving light and air quality. In the spring, the Lovell Room Capital Improvement Project continued with the installation of a new sound and projection system, including a new screen, LCD projector, speakers, DVD player and microphones. A new podium, fully integrated with the system was donated by the Hawthorne Foundation. The projector is permanently mounted in the original projection room above the Lovell Room and all systems are integrated and controlled from a single touch screen panel in the room. The double sets of doors located at the rear entrance of the building were replaced, as the door handles were falling off and the doors did not have code compliant panic bars enabling exit when the doors are locked. The installers re-used existing door frames and the automatic door opening mechanisms. In June, a secure office-scape wall was installed in the Lobby to house all of the uCreate makerspace equipment. The New Fiction and Non-Fiction collections were consolidated to the 550 shelf, which was placed in a prominent location adjacent to the Check-Out Desk. Patrons and staff are pleased to have these items in close proximity for convenience and Readers' Advisory. Planning for a future Capital Improvement Project to renovate the Children's Department, \$100,000 has been approved for FY17; additional funding has been requested and the Library is seeking grant funding for this project, which includes improvements to program spaces, the addition of an ADA accessible family restroom and improved staff spaces. The Library completed an upgrade of all public computer lab PCs and some printing equipment, utilizing Capital Equipment Project (CEP) funding. The Library's security camera software and DVR recording equipment was upgraded and is now accessible via the web, which will come in handy on snow

days. Flipster online magazines are now available from the Library website, featuring full length, browsable magazines accessible 24/7.

**YOUTH LIAISON REPORT:**

No report.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION LIAISON REPORT:**

Mrs. Florek reported that school is out and she believes a lot of children are taking part in the Library's summer reading program.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Glad reported that there will be a "Friendraiser" on September 11<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. to highlight the programs and services that donor support enables the Library to provide. The afternoon will feature wine & cheese, sweets, a meet and greet with Board and Staff, Department displays, technical demos and musical entertainment in the Lovell Room.

**GALA COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Jaekle reported that the committee was very busy organizing this year's Gala fundraising event, which was held on April 16, 2016. 114 people attended. The event raised \$14,770.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

No report.

**BOOK COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Glad reported that the committee raised \$12,300 before expenses.

**BUILDING AND GROUNDS:**

Ms. Diorio reported that 2 leaks in the new HVAC system were repaired under warranty. All other building issues were covered in her annual report.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:**

Mrs. Proto reported that the committee reviewed Mrs. Blosveren's goals in December, which she accomplished. The committee met and hired new Director, Sheri Szymanski. The committee worked on updating the Director's contract which was approved at the Stratford Library June board meeting. The committee developed goals and agreed upon a salary. Ms. Szymanski's goals for the upcoming year were set and approved by the committee for the upcoming year.

**GRIEVANCE/NEGOTIATIONS:**

Mr. Chagares reported that we are waiting on the union negotiators to schedule a meeting.

**TRUSTEE REPORT:**

No report.

**ENDOWMENT:**

No report.

**NEW MEMBER COMMITTEE:**

No report.

**SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Hampel reported that 2 Stratford Library Board scholarships were presented to this year's recipients prior to this evening's meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mrs. Hampel reported that the By-Laws committee met to discuss possible updates to the Board By-Laws; any proposed changes will be brought to the September meeting.

Mr. Chagares was asked about how the Town Council appoints Board members. He shared a brief history of the Library and explained that the Board is comprised of 11 Trustees and 11 Town Appointed members.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Szymanski passed out the Board Conflict of Interest forms and asked everyone to sign them and return for the file.

The Library's insurance agent will offer a presentation and answer questions prior to the September Board meeting. Board Members should arrive at 6pm.

The Library is applying for a State Construction Grant. The Library Board passed a resolution empowering Ms. Szymanski to apply for this grant. Ms. Sheahan moved, seconded by Mrs. Proto and approved unanimously.

Ms. Szymanski asked the Board for approval to charge out of town patrons a \$10.00 test proctoring fee. Mr. Chagares moved, seconded by Mrs. Jackson and approved unanimously.

There will be no August Board meeting. All are encouraged to come to the Friendraiser on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Chagares to adjourn at 8:22 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Jaekle and approved unanimously. The Board will meet next on September 15, 2016 in the Lovell Room at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Perman  
Secretary

**ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE ADA COORDINATOR, SUSAN PAWLUK AT 385-4020 OR 385-4022 (TDD) 5 DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING, IF POSSIBLE.**