

Friends of the Library Minutes for Meeting on April 28, 2021

Attending: Dani Buehler, Angie Eakins, Mary Frieze, Tony Gies, MaryJo Hamling, Pam Koterba, Arlene Mari

Minutes and Agendas were distributed and President Arlene Mari called the meeting to order at noon.

Treasurer's Report (Tony G.): Balance of \$23,177.92 plus a recent donation of \$100.

Library Director's Report (Dani B.):

Last week library was notified they received a TIF grant for replacing windows at the back of library. TIF pays half of it and the Friends will pay the other half, which is \$2,100.

The computer table for the children's area, the lock box for use for technology being checked out by patrons and the red filing storage cabinet that were ordered have all arrived and are installed.

Two weeks ago the library staff virtually attended the Montana Library Association Conference. This was half day Thursday and all day Friday. This was a good group learning experience and resulted in good discussions. There are lots of items from the legislature that can affect the library, including the policies about weapons carrying and trespass issues plus funding. Some of this is due to HB 102 and HB 501. These affect public buildings. The cities in MT will need policies and/or ordinances dealing with these issues, including carrying of weapons.

The library is hiring a seasonal helper to begin by the end of May. There are presently some applicants for this position. The Summer Reading Program for children/youth (up to 18 years of age) will be held in-house this year. There is no adult reading program scheduled for this summer.

The stonework on the exterior Front Entrance upstairs will be repaired and restored by Benchmark Masonry since the library received a grant. Grant is for \$7,000 and the estimate is for \$9,000 so the depreciation fund will be used for the balance. The News Argus plans to do an article about the restoration and Dani and Jo McCauley from the Library board will be involved.

The Lewistown library is 1 of 2 pilot libraries to receive upgrading for internet and other technology. This is supported by the Montana State Library funding from ARPA. The workers will take out the old wiring which hinders the present functioning. Much of the old wiring does not meet FCC standards for Internet causing the internet to be unreliable and extremely slow. The Lewistown library had already been planning for this upgrade, so that was well timed since this library was ready to be a pilot building. Good job, Dani and library staff for being prepared. Hopefully this will be completed by the end of June. There might be times when parts of the library will be closed down while the work is completed.

The Genealogy Society might be able to resume services for patrons this summer. The library will need help to move some furniture and the friends might be able to help with this. Then the genealogy people will need to have their people and/or other volunteers help them to assist patrons.

NEW AND CONTINUING BUSINESS:

Upcoming Book Sale is 4/30 and 5/1. Workers will be : Friday Cheryl Gillen and another volunteer, and Sandy B. and Angie E. and for Saturday, Tony and Louise Gies and Bob and Claudia Tate and Arlene Mari.

No appointments will be required and all will be asked to wear a mask.

The group discussed future book sales and decided to return to the first weekend of each month as was done prior to the Covid situation. Shoppers were especially glad to have Friday sales since some could not come to the Saturday ones. So for June the sale will be Friday June 4th 1 till 5 pm and Sat. June 5th 9am till 2 pm.

Mary Frieze kept track of all those who scheduled appointments for our recent sales. There were 82 people and 10 of those were members of Friends of the Library. The shoppers really wanted to come to the sales. Discussion was held about asking people who come to the next sale if they would like to join the FOL. That way, they can be included on the emails sent out prior to future sales.

Flower Barrels in front of the Book Station: The FOL will plant flowers and maintain these. Arlene has checked with Donna Philip and she is willing to buy the flowers that FOL will pay for and plant them. There won't be barrels out on the corner in front of the library because those tended to get too hot in the sun.

There is a need for the FOL to have some members who will take care of the garden of perennials under the windows of the library along 7th Avenue. Dani got it cleaned out and going. There needs to be periodic work of weeding and cleaning out from May through September plus at the end of the summer season there is work to get it cleaned and ready for winter. There is also the problem of Belle Flower that is noxious and tries to overtake the garden. It is difficult to remove. Tony G. will buy weed killer for the FOL as he has done in the past and spray for weeds on the Book Station lawn and parking lot area to keep the weeds down. FOL will pay for this.

Library Director Search Update: Mary Frieze and the Library Board have devoted a lot of time to this process and there are applications. There is a big challenge for finding housing in the Lewistown area and if the applicant who secures the position is from out of the area, this will be an issue.

Comments on Book Station and what we could do to improve it. What direction would the FOL like to go?

Discussion was held. The FOL efforts have done a lot to the Book Station building. One area that needs some work is the furnace area in the back center of the building. There could be some good storage there, if some of the old metal there from the previous gas station could be removed.

Other Business: Discussion about the annual Author Dinner. Because the library is a public entity, any fundraising such as this event should be done by the FOL or other groups. In the past, before the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the City of Lewistown, the library paid for the meals and gratuity and did this through the Summer Reading Program budget category since the revenue from the dinner went to the Summer Reading Program. But now this should be done without being in the library budget. In the past other city departments have done fundraising so this is not just a library issue. In the case of some organizations such as Head Start, their employees are not involved in fundraising and the Friends of Head Start organization handles the fundraising events. Those present said the author dinner is very popular and it includes support from a wide range of local area people. The FOL group might evolve the dinner event and this will be discussed at future meetings. The meeting was adjourned by Arlene at 1:05 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
MaryJo Hamling
Secretary FOL