

Minutes of the Library Trustees Meeting  
Bushnell-Sage Library  
Dec. 7, 2023

Present: Pat Levine, Anne Beattie, Barbara Reeves, Trustees  
Deena Caswell, Library Director  
Lisa Bozzuto, Bushnell-Sage staff  
Pat Owen, Vice President of Friends of the Library

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

Chairperson Pat Levine asked that we defer approving the minutes of Oct. 5, 2023 until next month. Approved.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES:

Staff member Lisa Bozzuto expressed her concerns regarding the library staying open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. She stated it had been a stressful year for the staff and that they desired the time off. Director Caswell agreed with closing from 2-5 p.m. before both holidays. The Trustees approved the holiday closures.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT HIGHLIGHTS: (see attached)

D. Caswell reviewed her monthly report. She said that the library gave out two boxes of books at *Trunk or Treat* in October, and she felt that was a successful event. She stated that events taking place with young children and their attendant parents are growing our numbers. P. Levine commented that this creates benefits for the library and general goodwill in our community.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS:

The gutters will be cleaned. Sari Hoy removed Pokeweed vegetation found on the grounds. Jill Hughes, Assistant Town Administrator, is taking care of the septic tank maintenance. D. Caswell updated the Trustees on the library's printers.

SPACE RENTAL FOR EVENTS:

D. Caswell brought up concerns regarding a policy for renting out downstairs meeting spaces. It was decided she would reach out to the town hall for guidance on this issue. Further discussion will happen at a future trustee meeting

FY25 BUDGET:

The library is preparing its FY25 budget, a draft proposal is due to the town by January 24. The town administrator is recommending a 2% salary increase for staff. The budget will include a capital needs request for a generator as listed in the overall town capital plan developed in FY23. D. Caswell will also meet with the town administrator to discuss.

TRUSTEE ITEMS:

The Trustees and Director discussed a one-time payment to a staff member who had increased responsibilities due to the Director's medical issues. Our intention is to pay a bonus from state aid, which is equivalent to free cash.

We agreed that Director Caswell's contract draft was acceptable and should be forwarded to Legal for review.

FRIENDS of the LIBRARY Items:

Pat Owen spoke of Susan Butler's proposal to gift primary materials from sculptor Robert Butler's estate. This item remains in the discussion phase.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting was set for Thursday, 1/11/24 at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Beattie

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**Bushnell-Sage Library**  
Director's Report for December 7, 2023

It's been a busy and productive fall at Bushnell-Sage Library!

In October, our application for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Crossroads grant was approved by Mass Humanities. This \$10,000 grant will support further programming and partnerships that were developed during year 1. Community conversations, lectures, and a literary seminar will be hosted at the library and at Dewey Hall. Funds will also be used to support Sheffield Historical Society in digitizing oral histories as well as Sheffield Land Trust in updating, expanding, and digitizing the Voices from the Field exhibit. Oct update

Chris Kelly and I facilitated the first community conversation held under the banner of Dewey Hall on Thursday, October 26 discussing "Food in Sheffield." Twenty community members, including leadership from Sheffield Farmers Market discussed the needs and challenges of food access in Sheffield and South County. The next community conversation will take place at Dewey Hall in January, topic TBA.

On Saturday, October 14, we welcomed Heather Dune Macadam and Simon Worrall, authors of *Star Crossed: A True Romeo and Juliet Story in Hitler's Paris*. Four people attended enjoyed the authors discussing their research methods as well as the story of Annette Zelman.

Local historian Tom Ragusa shared his knowledge with Saturday, October 21's presentation The Knox Trail: Following the Footsteps of Surveyor Nathaniel Austin of Sheffield. Fourteen people were in attendance as Tom educates communities in advance of the Knox Trail's Semiquincentennial (250 years!)

Our BSL Book Club choice for October was Julia Bartz's *The Writing Retreat*. Three people joined to discuss a book that turned out to be more violent/gory than the creepy tale expected in blurbs.

Our children's department has been bustling. Early Enrichment for October featured play dough, chalk paint, collage, and making marks – all activities designed to develop fine motor skills and encourage our youngest patrons.

On Wednesday, October 25, Stefanie ran Children's Art: Upcycled T-Shirt Trick-or-Treat Bags. We saw some of these bags in use when we attended Sheffield's Trunk or Treat on Friday, October 27. Our book giveaway was a big hit! We were able to distribute two boxes full of donated or discarded books.

Read to a Dog is back on the calendar. We also hosted our last StoryWalk® of the season: We're Going on a Leaf Hunt.

Stefanie and I also met with the new librarian at Mt Everett, Alexis Kennedy. Alexis formerly worked with the Lenox school district and brings years of experience. We're excited to work more closely with Alexis moving forward.

November saw the completion of Mark Scarbrough's 2023 literary seminar looking at Arthurian romance. While attendance was small, attendees felt the lectures were engaging and enriching. We'll welcome Mark back in fall 2024 for a series focusing on Eudora Welty's themes as a rural author, under the Crossroads Year 2 heading.

On November 4, ten people enjoyed Pamela Means presents The Power of the Protest Song (Our Shared History and Present Day). This program was partially sponsored by a Sheffield Cultural Council grant.

On November 18, we welcomed back yoga instructor Crystal Sheehan for another successful Singing Bowl Sound Healing Workshop.

Our November BSL Book Club pick was *Calling for a Blanket Dance* by Oscar Hokeah. Five people joined for a conversation about families, generational legacies, and the power of crafting.

November children's programs focused on getting ready for the annual children's art wall. Programs included scrape painting, papier mache animal heads, and oil pastel stained glass windows. Early Enrichment provided an opportunity to create collaborative art. In addition to art created during November, the art wall will also feature creations by our fall LEGO Construction Zone participants as well as artwork submitted throughout the year.

On Saturday, December 2, we hosted an opening reception for the children's art wall. Kim Waterman proposed a craft show idea to us, focusing on local crafts under \$10 for a family-friendly holiday shopping options. We hosted 14 local crafters that day in our program room,

which generated \$200 in table fees that will go towards children's programming. It made for a fun and busy Saturday.

I was selected by the Massachusetts Library System to receive a scholarship in support of attendance at the 2024 Public Library Association conference April 3 – 5 in Columbus, OH. Libraries in towns under 10k were encouraged to apply for this funding. I'm excited to attend this national conference and bring back some fresh knowledge to our library.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deena Caswell