

**WOBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES**

February 16, 2021

The Board of Trustees held a special meeting of the Board of Trustees to present the evaluation of Director Bonnie Roalsen. The meeting was held remotely over ZOOM due to the COVID-19 Pandemic on Tuesday February 16, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

6 Present – 1 Not present

Members Present:

TRUSTEE	VOTE
Trustee Mahoney	Present
Trustee Seitz	Present
Trustee Hines	Present
Trustee Schuck	Present
Trustee Callahan	Present
Trustee McNamee	Not Present
Trustee Thifault	Present

Also in attendance:

Library Director, Bonnie Roalsen

Members of the Community

1. Call to Order

Trustee Seitz called to order the meeting at 9:03 a.m. Trustee Seitz noted that the meeting was being recorded.

2. Evaluation of Director Bonnie Roalsen

Trustee Seitz stated that each board member would have 3 minutes with no interruption, to comment on the evaluation. Comments must be relative to the document identifying the 6 goals laid out by the Director at the June 4, 2019 meeting.

At the end of the comments, a motion will be held to accept/reject the evaluation. Any further comments must be on the motion and not the evaluation.

Trustee Mahoney made a motion to evaluate the Director on items other than the 6 goals. There was no second therefore no vote.

Trustee Hines thanked the personnel committee for the work done and stated that Director Roalsen has had an extraordinary challenge during these unprecedented times. She has risen to the challenge and has achieved the 6 goals. Trustee Hines agreed with the assessment of the Personnel Committee that Director Roalsen has achieved the goals.

Trustee Thifault echoed everything stated by Trustee Hines. She thanked Director Roalsen for her hard work and stated that the evaluation sums up what she has done.

Trustee Mahoney stated that he understands the approval of Trustee Hines and Trustee Thifault and does not disagree that Director Roalsen has achieved the goals she set forth. Trustee Mahoney also stated that although Director Roalsen had achieved her goals there were many problems at the Library. Trustee Seitz had Trustee Mahoney muted because he did not strictly adhere to the rules of sticking to the 6 goals.

Trustee Callahan requested that Trustee Mahoney be unmuted to continue to state his concerns.

Trustee Mahoney stated that Director Roalsen had many constituencies to answer to including the Public, the Patrons and the Trustees. He agrees the Library should have been closed at the beginning of the pandemic but for the 5 months of the closure, there was no communication between the Director and the Staff.

Trustee Seitz stopped Trustee Mahoney from speaking, Trustee Mahoney stated he felt it was not a true evaluation. Trustee Mahoney went on to state that there was a lack of communication between the Director and the staff and that the circulation desk had been broken apart.

Trustee Schuck concurs with what Trustee Hines stated. She also thanked Trustee Seitz and Trustee Callahan for all the hard work they put in to the evaluation. Trustee Schuck also thanked Director Roalsen for all her hard work since she began as Director. Trustee Schuck thanked Director Roalsen and her staff for all the work they had done to make the library a success.

Trustee Callahan stated he concurs with Trustee Mahoney that the evaluation is very limited, there are other points of interest the should be addressed. However, per the signed contract, the evaluation would cover only the 6 goals laid out. The Board can begin negotiations with the Director to identify future evaluation topics. It would be an unfair labor practice to deviate from the original contracted evaluation.

Trustee Callahan stated that he had begun his evaluation 22 months ago. He reviewed all the Director's reports, spoke with the Director about issues, verified what was being presented, participated in many of the programs, discussed things with the staff, made observations during his visits to the library, spoke with patrons. Feedback from patrons included that the library was brought from the 1960's into the 21st century, Trustee Callahan credits Director Roalsen with these advancements.

Trustee Seitz went through the 6 goals:

1. Increasing Social Media – from 2000 to almost 6000 followers on FB
2. Increased Library Programming – 1000 programs in past year
3. Redeveloping Library collection – introduced BiSac making it much easier for patrons to find items
4. Integrating physical and Digital content – Rag Rock Gallery launch, Woburn High Yearbooks and historic newspapers are now accessible online.
5. Cultivating public/private sponsorships – i.e.
 - a. Mapping project with MIT researchers
 - b. A major grant proposal to the state for on demand book delivery
6. Increasing professional development opportunities for the staff – Numerous in-house training on current technology and an educational conference.

Trustee Seitz stated that Director Roalsen has met and exceeded these goals.

Director Roalsen thanked the trustees for the evaluation. She also thanked the trustees who understood and supported their shared vision for the library. Director Roalsen is proud of what was accomplished and that WPL is one of very few libraries that has remained open during much of the pandemic.

Director Callahan made a motion to approve Director Roalsen's evaluation as presented. Trustee Schuck seconded.

Trustee Mahoney asked if his and Trustee McNamee's evaluations would be part of the public record. Trustee Seitz stated that since they did not address the 6 goals, the evaluation by Trustee Mahoney and McNamee could not be included. Trustee Mahoney stated that he and Trustee McNamee would send their evaluation directly to the city.

A roll call vote was taken: 5-1 motion carries

TRUSTEE	VOTE
Trustee Mahoney	No
Trustee Seitz	Yes
Trustee Hines	Yes
Trustee Schuck	Yes
Trustee Callahan	Yes
Trustee McNamee	Not Present
Trustee Thifault	Yes

3. Legal Issues

Trustee Seitz turned the floor over to Trustee Callahan. Trustee Callahan has reviewed how the Board's involvement with Legal Representation came about.

- Discussion during the summer between the Director, individual board members and the Mayor regarding libelous comments directed at the Director and some staff on social media.
- In consultation with the Mayor, it was determined to retain legal representation to address these issues. The Director stated that the cost could be covered by either the budget or State Aid.
- At about the same time the Mayor hired an investigator to assess the situation in order to protect the interest of the City.
- The 2 legal counsels met on numerous occasions. Worst offenders were silenced.
- In the Fall the Mayor made an effort to remove a Board member.
- In September it was agreed by the board that additional legal counsel would be retained resulting in a challenge to the Massachusetts Attorney General's position to declare the Board a public entity.
- The question arose on how to pay for the legal expenditures – Not wanting to effect any funds available for operations, there was discussion to have the Board pay out of Trustee Funds. Payments to be voted on are:
 - \$19,064.97 to Nutter, McClellan and Fish LLP
 - \$50,625.00 to Fisher Broyles, LLP

Motion made by Trustee Callahan and seconded by Trustee Schuck to pay all legal bills out of Trustee Funds. A roll call vote was taken. 5-1 Motion carries.

TRUSTEE	VOTE
Trustee Mahoney	No
Trustee Seitz	Yes
Trustee Hines	Yes
Trustee Schuck	Yes
Trustee Callahan	Yes
Trustee McNamee	Not Present
Trustee Thifault	Yes

4. Communications –

A motion was made by Trustee Callahan and seconded by Trustee Hines to pay the PR firm of Melwood Global from Trustee funds for services rendered on behalf of the Library totaling \$27,500.00.

Trustee Callahan stated there was never a meeting in October of 2020 discussing Melwood Global. No contract was ever approved.

Trustee Mahoney read an email from Jan Rabbitt dated October 5, 2020 addressed to a representative from Melwood Global indicating she had met with Melwood Global and had received and was reviewing a contract. She also requested the invoice for the initial \$5,000.

Trustee Callahan stated that although a contract was produced, he believes that no contract was ever signed. A roll call vote was taken. 5-1 Motion carries.

TRUSTEE	VOTE
Trustee Mahoney	No
Trustee Seitz	Yes
Trustee Hines	Yes
Trustee Schuck	Yes
Trustee Callahan	Yes
Trustee McNamee	Not Present
Trustee Thifault	Yes

9. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Schuck made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Thifault seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion Carries 6-0. Meeting was adjourned at 9:53 am

TRUSTEE	VOTE
Trustee Mahoney	Yes
Trustee Seitz	Yes
Trustee Hines	Yes
Trustee Schuck	Yes
Trustee Callahan	Yes
Trustee McNamee	Not Present
Trustee Thifault	Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Phillips
Recording Secretary