

**NORTH KINGSTOWN FREE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

August 30, 2021

PRESENT WERE: Lori Vernon, Varuna Abeywardane, Rini Georgekutty, Liz Suvari, Dan Humbyrd, Martha Parks, Dianne Izzo

ALSO PRESENT: Ralph Mollis, Town Manager of the Town of North Kingstown, Jim Lathrop, Town of North Kingstown Finance Director, Tom Sgouros, member of the North Kingstown Free Library Corporation Board

1. Call to Order- A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the North Kingstown Free Library with the Town Manager and Town Finance Director held on Monday, August 30, 2021 in the library meeting room was called to order by Liz Suvari at 7:02 p.m.

2. Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-6 (c) notice of this meeting has been posted on the Secretary of State's website.

3. Invitation to and discussion with Town Manager and Finance Director on the topic of the Library Budget – both past Fiscal Years and current Fiscal Year

The Trustees, the Town Manager, and the Town Finance Director held a wide-ranging discussion on the serious issues related to the library budget. The discussion included the following topics:

- The library's place and role in town government and how the library was mis-represented in the town's public budget documents as an "Enterprise" fund.
- The "deficit" in the library budget for FY 2022, which the Finance Director reports started three years ago. This was a complete surprise to the Board of Trustees.
- The Town's view of the lack of efficiency in the library budget, particularly with regard to personnel.
- The Finance Department's re-arrangement of accounting for library expenses on the line item level and the recent charging of "allocated expenses" for services rendered to the library by other town departments.
- The lack of clear explanations for why allocated expenses were added to the library budget when other town departments, except for enterprise funds, do not pay these charges. And the lack of clarity on how the percentages for allocated expenses are calculated.
- The Town's new suggestion that the library raise funds to pay for operating expenses.
- The Trustees' clear understanding of and willingness to advocate for the public library as a municipal service that the town provides. The library's use of other monies: grants, interest on the endowments, donations, and Friends of the Library support are donations to the Town to fund enhancements to services and other projects beyond the operations that are the responsibility of the Town.
- Strategies to be developed to improve communication and trust on both sides.

The copious notes of the exchange of ideas between the Town officials and the Library Board members, taken by library director Susan Straub, are on file in the budget preparation folder for FY 2022/2023 in the director's office.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Aylward (Interim Library Director)
From the notes taken by Susan Straub