

Final Minutes
MarLA Board Meeting
December 16, 2024 (MCL)
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Lynn Bjorkman, Mary Burke, Janice Hunton, Elaine Larson, Annie Minnich, Laurie Schmidt, Kathy Scoggin, Debra Mitts Smith, Kathy Trombly-Ferrin

Members Absent:

Molly Arnason, Deb Yanker Black, Addie Smitten

Also Present:

Liz Kelly

Agenda

Welcome and Call to Order – Lynn

Reading of Land Acknowledgement Statement – Lynn

Reading of Vision Statement - Lynn

Secretary’s Report – Janice

- Minutes of October 2024 meeting were presented.
- Discussion: none
- Lynn moved to approve, Debra seconded; minutes were approved.

Treasurer’s Report – Kathy

- Review of financials — balance is down from September, due to payment for AV equipment; net revenue is positive 12k compared to budgeted. Total revenue to date is 60k, more than expected.
- Budget projections are still in process, adjustments are expected until mid-January, final approval of 2025 budget will happen at the February board meeting. Adult programming is requesting a bump up to \$4k for 2025, and the Outreach committee is requesting funds for a more substantial display for farmer’s markets and festivals.
- Fundraising needs will be updated in February after more is known about earnings and requests for expenditures.

Other Business - Lynn

- Review of Library Calendar - same for 2025 as it was for 2024, except for some changes for the Outreach committee noted below.
- Policy Review for Requests to Use A/V Equipment - three main areas — who owns the equipment, who can use the equipment, and how the library will be compensated for use of the equipment — are all covered clearly in the proposed document. Discussion topics included the proposed stipend for volunteer time for longer events or a donation to the library. Volunteers feel strongly that donations to the library are preferred over a stipend for their time. We feel it

would be a good idea to keep a log of when/how/who the equipment is used. Gayle Knutson is the volunteer with the most direct contact, so we will ask her in conjunction with the Adult Programming committee if they would be willing to keep a record of use. Kathy S moved to accept the policy, Lynn seconded. All approved.

- Updates on Board Recruitment - for 2025 and 2026 We have a full board, and can have up to five more members. Liz Kelly is interested in joining the board in February. We will have many board positions open for 2026 due to term limits, so are thinking ahead to identify potential members. Laurie will look at current members and their skills, compare with the board manual that lists specific skills helpful to the board, and narrow down what skills would be helpful to add in 2026.
- Possible replacement of worn library chairs - Janice and Kathy volunteered to look for options with a \$400 budget per chair. Laurie has two upholstered chairs available, and Lynn will take a look at them and let Jan and Kathy know.
- Holiday “thank you’s” to City Staff. Lynn provided holiday cards for city staff members for all board members present to sign, and we would also like to include gift card to the General Store of \$30 per staff member. Lynn moved to spend \$120, Elaine seconded, all approved.
- Scandia Heritage Alliance (SHA) - After a recent meeting with stakeholders, the SHA is requesting MCL representation on their board. Lynn felt there is good energy around the SHA and it would be a beneficial way to bring the two communities together. In the plans are fantastic meeting and performance spaces that we could potentially use to further our mission. Lynn asked for names of current and former board members who might be a good fit for this position, preferably a Marine resident to help bridge the connection between Scandia and Marine.
- Fundraising idea presented by Mary - Two paintings by James Wilcox Dimmers have been generously donated to the library to be offered in a silent auction. Tammy is willing to give us wall space to highlight the paintings, and we might request other donations of local artists as well for this event. Mary would like to form a committee to brainstorm this idea, estimate the value of paintings, organize the event, etc.

Committee Reports

Adult Programming – Mary B

Doc Night

- Very successful kickoff with BAD RIVER on November 7...packed house.
- Showed THE BEST OF US on December 5...smaller audience but good participation from City Council, many local fire and rescue departments.
- Another doc (to be determined) is planned for January 16, rather than the first Thursday because its too soon after the holidays.
- Final doc night will likely be Saturday, February 15 featuring the Oscar-nominated short documentaries. Location TBD due to the remodelling plans for the Village Hall.

Adult Programs

- We’re considering a couple of possibilities for early 2025 before the Village Hall becomes unavailable.

River Radio

- We did our last show for the first half of the season on December 14, and will pick it up again in mid-January.

Art Exhibits

- Currently showing a display of pet pictures people contributed as kind of a light, easy-going holiday idea. This will be up until early February. Tammy is working on the next slate of artists.

Beyond Land Acknowledgement - Liz

- Laurie, Liz, Lynn, Jim, and Jackie Christensen are the committee members
- They have had two meetings to date. Their first major project was to identify and highlight with yellow feathers items in our collection written by indigenous authors.
- Activities in this committee will be folded into adult programming.
- They also hope to be partnering with the SHA indigenous partner team, researching for a nature walk through the wetlands around Scandia/marine areas.

Children's Programing – Kathy/Debra

- Halloween Open House (about 125 people stopped in for Story in times spite of awful weather). The general feeling is it is a tradition we'd like to continue, and the folks on the committee who participated had fun.
- We've had several Family Nights and PJ Story times — these continue to be popular and well attended. Due to the planned building project at the Town Hall there is (at this point) only one more for January 10 planned.
- We continue reading to the MVS K and 1st grade classes once a month and do twice monthly visits from all the classrooms for checkout. Volunteers seem to think this is a sustainable project and is working well.
- We participated in setting up a display of Native American themed books for the celebration of NA Heritage in November, and would like to do this every year.
- We have a committee meeting in mid-January to start planning Summer Camp and to think about other programming possibilities for the spring. We've reserved the MVS for the weeks of June 9 and 16 for the camp.
- We continue to appreciate volunteers who share their time with us — and could always use more volunteers willing to sign up for our checkout times — especially during the winter months when some of our folks are out of town for warmer climates for a bit.

Collections – Debra

- Year in review — close to \$6k has been spent for new books, divided roughly evenly between children and adult titles.
- Due to requests from MVS teachers, the collections committee is asking about purchasing series books as the students become more proficient readers. Space is always a consideration, since series take up a lot of linear space. We could create space on the current bench along the south wall, or where the DVDs are currently housed.
- Lynn felt there is a need to amend the collections policy that is not based solely on the age of the book. As we grow the partnership with the MVS, other criteria are more important for our children's collection.
- LoraLee and Lynn have started helping Kay with cataloguing, and Beth Honetschlager is helping Kay with the committee meetings.

Communications – Elaine

Recent Activities

- Publicity and website updates for River Radio, Documentary Nights, Halloween Boo Bash, Family Fun Nights and other fall events.
- Publicity and website updates for National Native American Heritage Month.
- Created Google Forms for the online Quilt Auction. This was quite simple to do and seemed to work well.
- Publicity for a call for local art (pet photos) for a display in the Library.

In progress

- Revisions to the website for the Staff Volunteer page.
- Adding Communications information to the Library OneDrive, including procedures for the website and related accounts.

For Future Discussion

- Logo update — the board agrees that the current logo no longer reflects the values of the library, and that we should discontinue its use. Sue Knapp suggested that the MarLA logo, showing a cross-section of a tree, could be used for both the non-profit and the library. While some members liked the symbolism of growth rings which show history of the region and a recording of the land, other members felt it was highlighting the trauma caused by the logging industry in the area. Other suggestions were made for modifying our current logo. Lynn is not comfortable embarking on a whole new logo redesign for reasons of time and expense, so we agreed to table this idea for now.

Operations – Mary

- Reminder to board members to sign up for a month in 2025 to oversee the Scandia free libraries.

Outreach – Deb/Janice

- We created the volunteer appreciation table, hand-written thank you cards, and goodie bags for all of our volunteers, and let them know they would be available to pick up any time in 2024.
- We would like a better set-up for farmer's markets, including a tent, table, signage, etc. We feel that participating in these events is worthwhile, and a snazzier booth would attract even more people. The committee will identify what we currently have, what we need to purchase, and submit a budget request to Kathy by mid-January.
- We agreed that the Volunteer Appreciation display was well received and is in keeping with honoring the work of our many volunteers. The suggestion that we publish the list of names in a local paper was met with a bit of hesitation due to data privacy.
- Creating a t-shirt design is contingent upon a decision for a new or modified logo.

Strategic Planning – Laurie

- Post-meeting conversation — see below

Library Success Stories

- Volunteer appreciation display was much appreciated
- Lots of traffic and good cheer in conjunction with the reindeer visit.

Adjournment and confirmation of next meeting date

- Kathy moved that we adjourn the meeting, Debra seconded, all approved.

**Next Board meeting:
February 17, 2025
Adjourn time 8:27 p.m.**

Strategic planning discussion - Laurie

Laurie suggested we read an article about a small neighborhood library in England entitled *If There Is Nowhere Else To Go, This Is Where They Come*. She invited comments and reflections about the article and our experiences.

- Debra was involved for years with a small neighborhood library in IL, and she shared similar stories to UK library.
- Mary has been to lots of smaller libraries in the WashCo system, and has seen lots of programming possibilities. She can see us being a community room.
- Kathy would like to teach older students how to do research, and provide the tools needed to conduct thorough on-line and print material searches. The collaboration with the MVS would be a natural extension of this vision, especially since they are adding a 6th grade next year. Also, Kathy has been approached by the Marine Mills Folk School, who is also interested in collaborating with us.
- Jan felt that the social services mentioned in the article are not as needed for our context, but community building events would be welcome in our service area.
- Annie suggested a book mobile to the Stugas and the MVS.
- Lynn - she visits bookstores and libraries when she travels, and commented on several Vermont/NH small community libraries. The ideas for building connections are not complicated, and often consist of lots of ideas posted on the walls for conversation ideas, crafting ideas, cooking ideas, etc.
- Liz suggested a survey of current patrons to create a list of topics which might be of interest.

Summary from Laurie - three ideas emerging:

- Collaboration with existing orgs, MVS, folkschool, etc.
- Conversations idea
- Book mobile