



Trustee Meeting Minutes

Date: October 17, 2023.

Time: 7:00 PM

In Attendance: Peter Griffin, Chair; Lisa Thornton, Vice Chair; Michael Mazalewski, Secretary; Neil Fallon, Trustee; Frank Merchel, Trustee; Rich Parow, Trustee,

Excused: Elizabeth Gill, Trustee, Jim Bull, Trustee, Cheryl Haas, Searles Coordinator, Ross McLeod, BoS Representative,

Agenda:

1. Review minutes of September 19th meeting
2. Coordinator’s Report / Financials
3. Warrant Article amount for 2024
4. Update on rental fee increase
5. Review front steps redesign
6. Update on bathroom and kitchen renovation
7. Update on downstairs photo gallery
8. Millstone removal status
9. Establish a committee to review contract and bylaws
10. Marketing update
11. Recognition of past Searles Trustees / Friends of Searles
12. Discuss November meeting / reschedule?
13. Other business

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Meeting Minutes:

The following meetings were reviewed by the board:

Meeting Min. Date	Motion to Accept	Seconded By	Discussion/Comments	All in Favor
September 19, 2023	Lisa Thornton	Rich Parow	none	6 - 0

Coordinator Report (via email):

- **Searles Revenue Fund:**
 - Current balance \$50,917.58
- **Revenue Fund Info:**



- What comes out of this money? The bond payment; salaries for Coordinator/Open-Closer; marketing and special projects. The Trustees don't lose this money at the end of the year if they don't spend it; it always stays in this revenue fund, but the Trustees can only spend \$32,500 a year (which includes the items mentioned above.) Right now, the Finance Director feels comfortable with \$10-\$12k in discretionary spending for the balance of 2023. If the Trustees do not spend any discretionary money in 2023 it doesn't mean you can spend more in 2024. The Trustees need to discuss possibly increasing the amount requested in the warrant article to more than the current \$32,500 to possibly use these funds in the future. Reminder that if we spend money on a website, marketing, etc. that money comes out of this fund, so the amount of discretionary spending will depend on all those factors.

- **Building Shut-Down for Improvements:**

- The last function will be held on November 5th. The first function after closure will be helping hands for Thanksgiving baskets on 11/20. They have been told bathrooms will not be available.
- Floor resurfacing will begin November 7th. There is to be no foot traffic for 7-10 days after.
- Next event is 12/2 (fully booked for December)

- **Other:**

- Oven has been removed – the remainder of bookings do not need it
- Town's IT contractor has gained access to the Searles website and the COVID wording has been taken off. Cheryl expects to receive a password for herself soon.
- Cheryl will not be available to attend a meeting on 11/21.

Review of Warrant Article Amount for 2024:

- Peter proposed raising the amount that can be spent from the Searles Revenue Fund.
- Trustees discussed the pros and cons for various amounts to request.
- Motion to increase the amount that can be spent from the Searles Revenue Fund from \$32,500 to \$42,000 on the 2024 Warrant Article

Motion Summary:	Proposed By:	Seconded By:	Discussion	In Favor
Increase Warrant Article to \$42,000	Rich Parow	Neil Fallon	none	6 - 0

Update on Rental Fee Increase:

- The Selectmen approved the new rate schedule as proposed by the Trustees at their 10/16 meeting.

Front Step Redesign:

- We have two quotes, one from Mill City Ironworks for the railings/granite step caps and one from J.A. Metalcraft for the front railings. The designs differ.
- The Trustees reviewed the 2 proposals and discussed the pros and cons of each.
- Motion to proceed with the proposal from Mill City Ironworks for granite step caps and new front railings.

Motion Summary:	Proposed By:	Seconded By:	Discussion	In Favor
Proceed with Mill City Ironworks proposal	Neil Fallon	Lisa Thornton	none	6 - 0



- Frank suggested that the granite portion of the project be clarified with Mill City so the granite matches the existing top granite step and the risers are similar height for the entire flight and meet building code.

Update on Bathroom / Kitchen Renovation:

- The project is starting on 11/6. Floors are being refinished and demo in the basement is beginning 11/7. Cabinets are scheduled to be installed 11/14 after which the countertop template can be done.
- Mike reminded Dennis that during demo sheetrock removal will need to expand as far as water damage from the broke pipe this spring can be found.

Update on Photo Gallery:

- Jim Bull has been diligently working on this project and will update us at the next meeting.

Millstone Removal:

- The Friends of Mockel Pond do plan to take the millstone. No specific removal plan has been made.

Establish a Committee to Review Contract and Bylaws:

- The Trustees discussed seeing if Elizabeth Gill would lead the committee. Neil, Frank and Lisa offered to be on the committee.

Marketing Update:

- Neil Fallon presented a “Unique Selling Proposition” for the building identifying what the unique qualities of the building are that similar facilities cannot claim to have. Neil wants Trustee input as these unique qualities should be the basis of our future marketing campaign.
- Neil pointed out a list of major flaws with our biggest asset, our website, and said that getting proposals for a new website should be our first marketing priority.
- Motion for Neil and Cheryl to develop a Request for Proposal for a new Searles School and Chapel website.

Motion Summary:	Proposed By:	Seconded By:	Discussion	In Favor
Create a RFP for a new website	Rich Parow	Lisa Thornton	none	6 - 0

Recognition of Past Searles Trustees/Friends of Searles:

- Peter proposed a special ceremony to thank past Trustees and supporters of the building, specifically George and Marion Dinsmore and Margret and Barbara Case.
- Peter discussed a gift idea and received consensus support from the Trustees.

Discuss November Meeting Reschedule?:

- The Trustees agreed to move the next meeting to November 14th so more people could attend.

Other Business:

- **Rear lighting on the building is not functioning:**
 - The Trustees will remind Dennis to address this issue.



- **Searles Inclusion on TripAdvisor:**
 - Michael sent in an application to TripAdvisor for being included in their database. A rejection email was received. He will attempt to appeal.
- **Rear Garden:**
 - Rich reported that several plantings have been damaged / cut down. He is working on getting them replaced with similar plants.
- **New Rear Doors:**
 - New rear doors have been installed in both the Chapel Room and the School Room. The hardware needs to be looked at as there is no apparent way to unlock the crash bars and no handles on the exterior so regaining access once outside is impossible. Mike will look into.

Next Meeting: November 14, 2023 @ 7:00 PM.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM. Moved by Neil Fallon, seconded by Frank Merchel, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted
Michael Mazalewski
Michael Mazalewski,
Searles School & Chapel Board of Trustees Secretary