

be done to ensure the success of libraries. The result of that April 14th dialogue was an Action Guide to help libraries bring the findings from the Aspen report into the community. It is currently being used for strategic planning, mentoring, financial planning, leadership classes etc. at the State level. Middlebury, Stamford and Wallingford were selected to participate in a national pilot. These three Connecticut Libraries are three (3) of twenty-five (25) libraries nationwide chosen to participate in said pilot to test the Action Guide. The Action Guide encompasses strategies and exercises to engage the library staff, library boards and the community. Connecticut will be at the forefront of this implementation. This is a prestigious honor to have three libraries from the State of Connecticut to represent this pilot program. Mrs. LoRusso is currently working with her staff in implementing strategies. Mrs. LoRusso's evaluation and findings along with Wallingford and Stamford directors, will improve this Action Guide to be launched nationwide in April or 2016. Connecticut was the pilot state for the entire report (action guide) which initially began in Middlebury in February of 2015. Mrs. LaValle stressed the importance and benefits of this library director having the full support of the library board and added that having the support of the First Selectman is "phenomenal". She thanked Mrs. LoRusso and the entire Library Board of Trustees for being the first library to launch the entire effort.

Mrs. LoRusso expressed her appreciation to the board for their constant support. Mrs. Smith in turn reciprocated and noted "this is a partnership we have here". Mrs. Smith also thanked Mrs. LaValle.

Trustee Reports

Treasurer's Report – Mr. Stowell noted that from September 8, 2015 through October 12, 2015 \$200.00 was deposited in the Brick Sales and Room Naming Opportunities accounts from the sale of two (2) standard size 4 x 8 bricks. There were no expenditures. Total brick sales to date = \$43,735.00, Total Expenses to date = \$22,676.43. The balance in Fund 61 = \$21,058.57. Mrs. Engelman MOTIONED to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted, SECONDED by Mr. Desmarais, unanimous approval.

Mr. Stowell noted there are currently seven (7) standard size (4 x 8) and three (3) regular size (8 x 8) brick orders pending since May. Although ten (10) does not meet the minimum required order, the Trustees agreed that because these date back to May, and since cold weather is fast approaching, the order should be placed regardless of an additional minimal fee of (\$15.00).

Mr. Desmarais MOTIONED to forward payment for ten (10) bricks, with fee included, (unless two additional bricks are sold), Seconded by Mr. Clark, unanimous approval.

Secretary's Report – Mr. Vaccarelli read for the record the following correspondence (see attachments):

1. Stephen L. Lewis, Pres., Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation, Inc. – Oct. 6, 2015;
2. JoAnn Alix Gagain, Middlebury Garden Club – Oct. 3, 2015;
3. Elizabeth B. Bartholomew – former member and co-chair of Friends of the Middlebury Library;
4. Barbara Leonard, President, Friends of Connecticut Libraries – Oct. 7, 2015.

Mr. Vaccarelli thanked Mrs. Bartholomew for her bravery, honesty and attempts in making a difference. “Mrs. LoRusso along with the entire Board of Trustees has made strenuous efforts to improve the relationship with Friends of the Middlebury Library.”

Mr. Stowell noted that when Mrs. Bartholomew came on board he “saw a very positive change” and was optimistic that a healthy working relationship with the Friends would continue. It was Friends who brought to the attention of this board the storage space below and potential safety issues. Recommendations were made and implemented. “At that time it was two way communications.” Mr. Stowell expressed his sadness in the way things turned out and thanked Mrs. Bartholomew.

Mr. Clark agreed with Mr. Stowell in that he saw an improved relationship with Friends and hoped a good working relationship could exist. He thanked Mrs. Bartholomew for her honesty.

Mr. Desmarais stated that “it is obvious there is a problem within the Friends organization”. He acknowledged Beth’s efforts in trying. He thanked her for her efforts and he “hopes that as a group the Trustees can work towards resolving this issue”.

Mrs. Smith also thanked Mr. Bartholomew and expressed her hopes that she will continue to volunteer for “in house things”. “Hopefully things will change in the future and the Trustees would welcome you back in that capacity again”.

Mr. Clark MOTIONED to approve the Secretary’s Report as submitted, Seconded by Mr. Stowell, unanimous approval.

Director’s Report – Mrs. LoRusso began with Statistics for September (Circulation = 5,399, 75 Programs with 587 in attendance). This drop in programs and attendance from last month was due to the Friends of the Middlebury Library Book Sale (Larkin Room) from September 9, 2015 through September 28, 2015. Although programming continued those attending were fewer

based on alternate rooms used and its maximum capacity. Study Room Usage = 60 times / 92 number of attendees; Library Cards = 19 / 2400 Active Cards; Collection Size = 72,156.

“Arts Escape: Mozart’s Effect on Us: Inquiries into Music, the Brain and the Mind presented by Vincent deLuise, MD was held on September 30th and was well attended. This was an “Outreach Opportunity” at no cost to the Library

Mr. LoRusso continued by briefly informing the Trustees of the following *programs and upcoming events*.

1. October 18, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. is the 2nd Annual Rock’ to Read 5K – participation is encouraged and welcomed.
2. October 8, 2015 7th Annual Bake Your Best Cupcake Contest was a great success with much community spirit. This contest consisted of 20 participants. Judges were Jan LeDuc of the Middlebury Public Library, Jeremy Braddock, Hardcore Sweet Cupcake owner, Connie Brunswick, Town of Middlebury Employee, Ann Fienberg, Friends of Middlebury Library, and Bob Desmarais, Middlebury Public Library Board of Trustee. This event was sponsored by the following local businesses: 1st place – Hardcore Sweet: g.c. 1 doz cupcakes and a tee-shirt; 2nd place – LaBonne’s Market: \$25.00 gift certificate; 3rd place – Sweet Maria’s: g.c. \$20; 4th place – Hello Sweetie Bake Shop: \$16 value of ½ dozen cupcakes or merchandise.
3. *Dog Photo Contest* during October – Winners will receive a special gift from Oliver & Company, a natural and organic pet store. Five by Seven (5 x 7) photos are posted of dogs in costume and all pennies are proceeds are donated to a local dog shelter.
4. *Halloween Family Portraits* – October 29th from 3-7PM. The Library will provide a Halloween back drop and treats. Photos will be uploaded to snap shot and parents can download at their own expense various sizes.
5. *Dog Listener* – October 29th 4:00 PM. Although dogs are not allowed, dog owners can learn training skills.

Connecticut Small Business Development Center (CTSBDC) along with the Middlebury Public Library will offer at no-cost, confidential consulting services in local libraries statewide. Through the use of laptops and Google Hangouts, this program allows business owners to virtually meet face to face and share documents, work on applications for funding and update progress, all within a confidential and focused environment. If anyone is not familiar with Google Hangouts, the library staff is available for assistance.

Friends of the Middlebury Library - Mrs. LoRusso noted the Annual Book Sale for 2015 was held from Saturday September 19th through September 22, 2015 with an extension granted until Monday, September 28, 2015. Since the Friends did not meet their obligation to vacate on the 28th, program commitments were impacted. This matter was referred to the Board of Trustees and resolved the same day.

Friends of the Middlebury Library co-chair Beth Bartholomew's Resignation Letter: Mrs. LoRusso stated the Library was looking forward to working with the Friends of the Middlebury Library co-chairman Beth Bartholomew. Beth brought new ideas, energy, and professionalism and selflessly was giving of her time for the good of the Library. She has agreed to stay on as a volunteer as needed, strictly for the Library. Her experience with the Friends Group was not a positive one to say the least. On several occasions she sought out the Library for guidance. As the Director, Mrs. LoRusso offered words of encouragement and stated that the Middlebury Public Library, Trustees included, really do not get involved with internal Friends' issues. Mrs. LoRusso's recommendation to Beth was that she would be better advised by the Friends of Connecticut Libraries President, Paul McIlvaine. Contact information was provided.

Grant Applications – The Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) in partnership with the Arts & Culture Collaborative, Waterbury Region was denied. Future applications will be resubmitted for a grant for projects that experiment with new ways to apply the arts within the community.

Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation - Awarded \$1,000 and \$1,500. Applications submitted for two grants to support tools needed for a makerspace in the Library and the upcoming 5KRun/Walk.

Mr. Stowell MOTIONED to accept the Director's Report as submitted, Seconded by Mrs. Engelman, unanimous approval.

Old Business "Buy a Brick Campaign" Thank-You Letter - Mrs. Smith presented two sample thank-you letters for the Trustees' review. Mrs. Engelman expressed an interest in including within the thank-you letter when the brick orders are placed. Discussion ensued. Mr. Desmarais suggested including "due to minimum order requirements the delivery of your brick may be delayed". The first sample presented was favored by all.

Mr. Stowell MOTIONED to approve the following "Buy a Brick Campaign" Thank-You Letter (Sample 1), Seconded by Mr. Desmarais, unanimous approval.

Dear _____

On behalf the Middlebury Library Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for your generous contribution of \$_____ to our commemorative Brick Fundraiser.

This fundraiser will help us to continually improve our facility, enable us to expand our technology further and enhance the services we proved for all of our patrons.

We truly appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Your gift may be tax-deductible.

Due to minimum order requirements the delivery of your brick may be delayed.

Mr. Vaccarelli noted that during the week of October 26th the front walk will be removed. To accommodate this, additionally, the first two rows of bricks will be temporarily removed. Photographs of the brick layout will be taken to ensure proper replacement.

New Business

Lower Level Space - Mrs. Smith wished to inform the entire Board that all shelving is bolted and is very secure. Tape is on order for lines on the floor and upon arrival the public works crew will complete this project. Mrs. Smith recommends that upon completion it would be prudent to arrange a meeting with Mrs. LoRusso, Trustee Members and Friends of the Middlebury Library to do a walk through, reiterate the Guidelines and to make sure there are no other questions. At that time the Friends may begin utilizing that space. Mr. Stowell expressed his thank you to the Public Works Department for their hard work and efforts.

Friends of the Middlebury Library – Mrs. Smith provided to each member a copy of a Memorandum from Connie Wood to Jo-Ann LoRusso, First Selectman, Board of Trustees and to members of Friends of the Middlebury Library dated October 3, 2015 sent via email on October 6, 2015 (see attached). Mrs. Smith provided the following statements regarding said Memo: "Mrs. LoRusso had no responsibility at all in the removal of those books that were in the Larkin Room on September 28th. The Friends of the Middlebury Library did not fulfill their obligation. They stated the Larkin room would be empty prior to Jo-Ann having any type of programming in there. The Friends violated the agreement. Therefore, the Library Board of Trustees were notified by Jo-Ann and we made the arrangements to have the books removed and recycled.

I was hoping that the Friends would be here this afternoon. I also hope this clarifies that situation for them. Throughout this memo they name blame Jo-Ann and there should be no blame. As the Board of Trustees, we are Jo-Ann's support line. When something happens and she notifies us, we take care of it. This is what happened. No one acted inappropriately. We took a situation and rectified it." Once again Mrs. Smith hopes this statement will give clarification.

Mr. Clark read the memo and agreed that Jo-Ann had nothing to do with this. "This has been an ongoing problem and should be addressed in a way that there is a clear understanding of what they (Friends) are entitled to do, and how rules should be followed. Until this understanding is realized, this 'cat and mouse' game will continue. It is not in the best interest of the Library, it is not in the best interest of the Friends." Mr. Clark also expressed his concern regarding Beth Bartholomew's letter. "There seems to be almost a dysfunctional aspect of the Friends in that they are supposed to support us (in the Library) but it seems like they are almost an entity to themselves." Mr. Clark has reviewed State Statutes and information from the State Friends Guidelines.

Mrs. Engelman noted a prior Memorandum of Understanding. Mrs. Smith suggested this be reviewed in November and have the Friends Members sign it. "The Friends do not have administrative authority over the Library or Board of Trustees." Mrs. Smith also confirmed that Beth Bartholomew in the past introduced the By-Laws to the Friends which were met with resistance.

Mr. Stowell wished to clarify that the Memo states the "removal and destruction" of unsold books when in fact the books were not destroyed but rather recycled, a process by which the town receives financial gain.

Mr. Vaccarelli offered the following: "It didn't take this email from Connie to realize that Jo-Ann has been the 'target' all along." He has personally overheard people making that very point. "Why the Friends cannot come to a meeting and address whatever their issues may be makes no sense whatsoever. It just shows a lack of cooperation and effort to really get involved with the Library. They have their own agenda and this will continue until it is addressed."

Mr. Desmarais affirmed "The Friends must realize they are not actually a formal part of this Library. They are a separate free standing organization. The only connection to this Library is their mission statement (to be of assistance to us in whatever way possible). It appears that over time they have managed to get themselves into a position where they believe they have authority over not just Jo-Ann, this facility, this board of trustees as if they own it. This is simply not the case. They must realize this. They must get their own internal organization into

position to function properly. To understand where they are and what they need to do. If they have a bad apple in the crowd, they need to deal with that. We can't fire someone."

Once again, the Memorandum of Understanding was discussed and considered the most useful tool for a resolution. Mrs. Smith added "We cannot tell them what to do nor do we want to. That is not our job as Trustees. We can guide them and help them but we cannot fix their problems." Mrs. LoRusso confirmed this Memorandum of Understanding was in draft form only and obtained at the State level which needed to be customized to Middlebury.

Mrs. Engelman stated the Board has appreciated the Friends for many years. These problems have never surfaced before.

Mrs. Smith confirmed that all Trustee members have a copy of the draft Memorandum of Understanding. This should be reviewed, customized to Middlebury and the Friends will be invited to a future meeting. All Trustee Members were in agreement.

Public Comments

Beth Bartholomew mentioned she does not think this Board will have much luck with the By-Laws. There appears to be by-laws from the State and by-laws from The Friends of the Middlebury Library. When she questioned why monies in the account were so high and why this money wasn't turned over to the Library for their use, "I was told that 'that was the policy'. She is at a loss as to how to change it. "One thing is said to you, then there are side meetings, there are side documents... the twelve year leadership has not stepped down." Mrs. Bartholomew offered that perhaps the Library Trustees can attend a Friends' meetings but acknowledged she is not certain this is allowed. "Members of Friends are relentless in hanging on to problems of the past. The storage room will never be what they really want because there is always one step beyond...and I don't know how to help you. It's a very difficult situation."

Dawn LaValle who is the Connecticut State Library Liaison for Friends of Connecticut Libraries and who is also deeply involved in Friends consulting issues across the State affirmed that "Mr. Desmarais is correct in that when you look at the Friends group, it is a separate organization (501(c)(3) and not part of any Library Administration no matter how much they profess they are. They are subject to the non-profit and financial statutes in the State of Connecticut." She also noted that since there exists two sets of By-laws, there may exist potential legal issues. Mrs. LaValle confirmed that the concerned Memorandum of Understanding is standard in that it is used in United for Libraries Organization. As noted it can be customized to Middlebury and it clearly states the Director, Trustees and Friends expectations. She offered the support of herself and Barbara Leonard, President of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries. She also recommended the "United for Library" website which provides information about organizational structure, by-laws, finance and governance.

Adjournment

Mr. Clark MOTIONED to adjourn the meeting at 4:04 PM, Seconded by Mrs. Engelman, unanimous approval.

These minutes are submitted subject to approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Brigitte M. Bessette
Recording Clerk

Cc: Library Board of Trustees
Town Clerk
Web Master



**Thomaston
Savings Bank
Foundation, Inc.**

203 Main Street, P.O. Box 907
Thomaston, CT 06787
P: 860.283.1874 | F: 860.283.2529
www.thomastonsavingsbank.com

Stephen L. Lewis, President

October 6, 2015

Jo-Ann LoRusso
Town of Middlebury Public Library
1212 Whittemore Road
Middlebury, CT 06762

Dear Jo-Ann LoRusso:

All of us here at the Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation, Inc. are honored to present your organization with the enclosed grant award. This grant presentation is a true testament to your commitment to community service. I can safely say that the Foundation's grants awarded in 2015 will have a positive effect on hundreds of people's lives in our local communities.

I believe we have witnessed today the kindness and charity of many of the individuals that make a distinct difference in our local townships. I wish you the best with your continued efforts to make a difference to people's lives, to share with others your time and talents.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Lewis
President

THOMASTON SAVINGS BANK
FOUNDATION, INC.

Town Of Middlebury, CT.

Attention:

**Mr. Edward St. John, First Selectman,
Mr. Dan Norton, Public Works Director
Mrs. Jo-Ann LoRusso, Library Director**

October 3, 2015

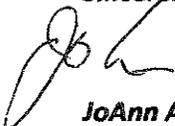
Ed, Dan and Jo-Ann,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Middlebury Garden Club. It is with regret that the Middlebury Garden Club officially informs you that the group has disbanded effective today. As you all are aware the club developed and maintained the garden near the exit driveway at the public library commonly known as the Children's Garden or more recently the Monarch Butterfly Garden. This will no longer be the case going forward.

In the current environment it is difficult to get folks to join and regularly participate in the activities of a group like the MGC. We know the challenge of building and maintaining active volunteer participation in the community is shared by town programs as well as our local civic groups.

As we know that the resources of the town are stretched, we hope that in the near term individuals will step up to keep the gardens looking great. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Alix Gagain

(For the Middlebury Garden Club Members)

cc: Sophie Kelly

Elizabeth B. Bartholomew
49 Chesham Drive
Middlebury, CT. 06762

Jo-Ann LoRusso, Head Librarian
Middlebury Library
30 Crest Rd.
Middlebury, CT

Dear Jo-Ann,

On September 1, 2015, I resigned both as co-chairperson and board member of The Friends of the Middlebury Library. I came to this decision after realizing that the goals Connie and I have for this organization will not happen. Following are some examples :

At the Annual Meeting on June 11th, I was surprised at the disregard for Roberts' Rules and the fact that non-board members were allowed to make and second motions. This was deemed inappropriate, but no one seemed concerned or corrected the action. This correction request was not reflected in the minutes as has happened previously with not all conversations being completely noted.

After the Annual Meeting, you and I met and decided it would assist both of us and benefit The Friends organization as a whole, if we could meet with Paul McIvaine, the State Friends president and brain-storm concerning ways to make the organization more viable. He was contacted and a date was set for the end of June. Then there was a change in circumstances and we decided the meeting was not necessary. I e-mailed Paul that we were cancelling the meeting; thanked him for his support and advised him that should we need his assistance we would contact him. Mr. McIvaine called me on numerous occasions after receiving the e-mail requesting the meeting be re-scheduled.

I firmly requested he stop contacting me as I was no longer interested in meeting with him for any reason at any future time. I shared this incident with a very limited number of people as I found it disturbing.

Upon being elected co-chairperson, I requested that Chris Parker provide myself and Connie Woods with all previous records for the Friends of Middlebury Library. Since Chris had been Chairperson for 12 years, we expected a mountain of paperwork. So with the assistance of a library board member, we placed a file cabinet in near the area of where the new shelving will be placed. This way, we would have all Friends' records central to anyone who required access. We need not have bothered as he only has turned over records for the last year and any requests for records of the previous years has been ignored.

The list of members and volunteers was provided promptly. Connie and I were dismayed to learn that there were only 23 members and 33 volunteers. We decided to start an active membership/volunteer drive. In early July, we met with Donna and Dunyan to brainstorm how to do this in the middle of planning a book sale. It was decided to include the membership/volunteer request in the book sale publicity and contact the people on the lists via a telephone drive.

The results of these two efforts were fruitless. Telephone messages were not returned; people who were spoken to were not interested and flyers for sign-up were not taken.

I had truly believed that with you, your staff and the Library Board of Trustees, Connie and I would make a difference. I now realize that changes will not happen as long as Chris Parker and his team are involved in the Friends of Middlebury Library. The Friends reputation has become tarnished and until that

reputation is polished, I hold out little hope for the future of this organization.

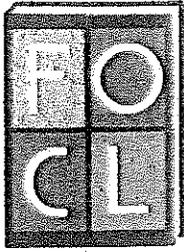
Jo-Ann, with all this being written, I want to thank you and Karen for all your support and positive input during my short time as co-chair. I look forward to volunteering for the library in the future in a different capacity.

Please feel free to share this letter with the Board of Trustees and should there be any questions, call me.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial 'B' and a cursive 'h'.

Beth Bartholomew



Friends of Connecticut Libraries

October 7, 2015

Dear Jo-Ann,

Thank you for contacting FOCL with your concerns. Mr. McIlvaine has resigned as President and Board member of FOCL. Consequently, the issue is now closed.

We wish the best to you and your library, and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Barbara Leonard
President, Friends of Connecticut Libraries

Jo-Ann LoRusso

From: Connie <czct08@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2015 11:32 AM
To: Jo-Ann Lorusso
Subject: memorandum

Begin forwarded message:

From: Connie <czct08@comcast.net>
Date: October 6, 2015 11:00:32 AM EDT
To: First Selectman <firstselectman@middlebury-ct.org>
Cc: Rita Smith <rhsmith417@sbcglobal.net>, Marilyn Engelman <marilyn.engelman@gmail.com>, Bill Stowell <bill.stowell1947@yahoo.com>, Bob Desmarais <rdesmarais9@att.net>, Ron Clark <rclarkrn@sbcglobal.net>, peter vaccarelli <pcav1237@att.net>, Molly & Chris Parker <painlessparker@mac.com>, Danyun Peng <dpengy@gmail.com>, Donna Pierpont <donna pierpont@me.com>, Ann Feinberg <amfeinberg46@gmail.com>, Bill Stopper <bstpr@comcast.net>
Subject: memorandum

MEMORANDUM

To: Ed St. John, First Selectman
Middlebury Library Board of Trustees
Jo-Ann LoRusso, Director, Middlebury Public Library

From: Board of Directors of The Friends of the Middlebury Library (FOML)

Re: Removal of Boxes of Unsold Books on September 28, 2015

Date: October 3, 2015

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Middlebury Library is deeply distressed by the unilateral removal and destruction of the unsold books after the Annual Book Sale without our knowledge or permission.

The Friends of the Middlebury Library will not accept donations of used books and materials for the foreseeable future.

We look forward to continuing to provide funding for new and existing programs at the Library.

Background:

Over the past 30 years, FOML has provided tens of thousands of dollars to the Middlebury Public Library, ranging from the sound system in the Larkin Room, discount passes to attractions such as Mystic Seaport to summer reading programs. The primary fund raiser is the annual Book Sale.

Books are donated and entrusted to the FOML by the community to provide an income stream to support the library. Volunteers spend hundreds of hours sorting, categorizing and pricing the books in preparation for the sale. Setting up, managing and breaking down after the sale takes the time and talent of many volunteers. After the sale, unsold books are donated to one or more charitable organizations. This year, the children's books went to an organization associated with Literacy Volunteers which will distribute them to children in Waterbury through other nonprofits and adult books to the local chapter of the Salvation Army for resale.

FOML contacted Salvation Army to arrange for the pick-up which could not take place until Monday, September 28 between 12-2 pm. FOML was permitted to keep the boxes of books in a corner of the Larkin Room since the space in the basement was not yet available to the Friends. The Salvation Army truck arrived but was unable to take all the boxes, leaving about 100 boxes in the Larkin Room when they departed around 2 pm. An FOML board member was there during this time and immediately contacted others FOML board members to resolve the challenge of removing the books prior to a scheduled use of the Larkin Room on Tuesday, September 29 at noon. FOML acted swiftly to make alternative arrangements.

At 2:39 pm, Jo-Ann LoRusso sent an e-mail alerting FOML board members and others about the need for the FOML to remove the boxes prior to an event in the Larkin Room later the next day and charged the FOML with finding a solution.

FOML took this situation very seriously, understanding the Library's predicament and need for the Larkin Room to be cleared. By approximately 3:30 pm, after a number of phone calls, Goodwill confirmed they would welcome the book donations and most importantly, they could receive the books the next morning. Connie Wood, board chair, called to speak with Ms. LoRusso to let her know the plan for removing the books from the Larkin Room, but Ms. Wood was told Ms. LoRusso was unavailable.

At a little after 4 pm, Ms. Wood arrived to take the first load, only to find the boxes had been removed and taken to the Transfer Station. To date, Ms. LoRusso has not communicated to the Board about the removal of the books nor offered any explanation.