

Island Readers & Writers Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, April 10, 2025  
Zoom

In attendance: Lauren Jennings, Susan Peck, Deborah Jamieson, Elizabeth Hodder Corbus, Jan Coates, Andrea Gilmore, Kelsey E. Buckley

Lauren Jennings called the meeting to order at 4:37pm.

Lauren moved to approve the minutes of the 1.11.25 Board Meeting. Andrea seconded. All approved. No discussion.

#### Executive Director's Report

Jan Coates shared that she recently attended a meeting of the Downeast Nonprofit Network, the focus of which was the current political and economic climate and impacts on regional nonprofits. Jan cited cuts to programs in Maine that support families, especially food insecurity and heat assistance. As we see needs increase, we may see individual donors and foundations alter their priorities to support "front line" causes. Jan also cited conversations she has scheduled with foundations to better understand the Maine philanthropy landscape during this time. IRW's lack of reliance on state and federal funds is to its immediate advantage, but we need to keep a close eye on the landscape.

Elizabeth Hodder Corbus commented on cuts to the Maine State Library, and that we will be one of the organizations stepping in to help fill these gaps. This is also a fundraising opportunity for IRW to demonstrate how essential our services are for rural access to books and support for literacy.

Lauren Jennings asked about nervousness around donors and if the timing of gifts has changed. Jan indicated that she has not observed this; we have already received some larger foundation gifts. We will continue to keep an eye on the landscape and be proactive.

Elizabeth indicated that an important strategy is to come out early as an important organization that can take action and accomplish goals aligned with their values. People want to help and we can work to capture this audience.

Lauren suggested that this may be a good time for the Purple Crayon Society—donors who may not feel comfortable helping now may still be looking to the future.

Jan shared slides updating the group about the Forever Books initiative.

Elizabeth acknowledged how much work has gone into fact finding and research around the Forever Books initiative. Lots of opportunities for us to get involved, keep convening these groups.

Kelsey Buckley shared slides updating the group about the upcoming website renovation.

Andrea gave a report on the August 16 event to be held to celebrate Jan. To be held at the

Treasurer's report

Search Report (Closed Session)

The Search committee gave a confidential update on their progress.

Governance

Lauren opened the discussion about IRW's current lack of a Governance committee and our desire to build Governance and continue to develop our pipeline and possibly recommend and elect new members. Lauren invited members to work with her to organize gatherings to introduce possible candidates to IRW and other Board members.

Lauren introduced a motion to alter bylaws to alter dates for elections and opened the floor for discussion.

Jan moved to put aside the bylaw, Article II. Board of Directors, section 2.2, requiring Directors to be elected at the annual meeting of Directors on the first Friday in August, in favor of holding the same on June 12, 2025.

Andrea seconded. No discussion. All approved.

Next meeting: June 12—4:30-6:30pm.

Save the date, August 7.

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm. Susan moved, Elizabeth seconded. All approved.

