



Portsmouth Athenaeum
203rd Annual Meeting

THE PORTSMOUTH ATHENÆUM

203rd Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 16, 2022

3 p.m.

In the Shaw Research Library and Via Zoom platform

Agenda

- Welcome by the President
 - Approval of Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting
 - Necrology 2021
 - Approval of revised bylaws
- Finances
 - Report of the Treasurer
 - Report from the Finance Committee
 - Approval of 2023 Assessment
- Reports on the Year
 - Report of the Keeper
 - Report of the President
- Report of the Nominating Committee
- Election of Officers and Directors
- Recognition of outgoing Directors
- Other Business
- Adjournment

Please note that Subscribers, spouses, and partners are welcome at the Annual Meeting, but only Proprietors may vote.

THE PORTSMOUTH ATHENAEUM

Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 24, 2021, at 3:00 pm

1. **Call to Order:** President Brad Lown called the 202nd meeting of the Proprietors of the Portsmouth Athenaeum to order at 3:00 pm. On the motion of Bill Wieting, seconded by Tom Watson, the minutes of the 201st annual meeting were approved.
2. **Necrology:** Brad Lown read the names of the Proprietors and former Proprietors who died in 2020. A moment of silence was held to honor those we lost during the year.
3. **Finances:**
 - A. **Report of the Treasurer:** Treasurer Jeff Keefe presented the financial summary for 2020, noting that it was a challenging year. He is excited, however, to share the positive results of our cash flow, investment portfolio, and bottom line. The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating effect on local retail, which affected the Athenaeum through a \$37,000 decrease in rental revenue from the Irish Shop. However, our able office manager, Stephanie Tabit, secured a \$40,900 Payroll Protection Program loan for the Athenaeum through the CARES Act, which has been forgiven. Frugal spending and saving where possible delivered additional financial security. Jeff negotiated a 43% (\$2000) reduction in our accounting and tax prep service fees, retaining the same services and the same company. Our strongest financial support, however, came from the Proprietors, with a record-high response to the 2020 Annual Fund campaign, raising \$116,358 where \$45,000 had been budgeted. As a result, we ended 2020 in a strong cash flow position. Total annual revenue was \$522,448, and total expenses were \$435,026, for a positive net income of \$87,422.
 - B. **Report of the Investment Committee:** Treasurer Jeff Keefe reported that after a difficult first quarter, the Athenaeum investment portfolio had a strong finish, up from a beginning value of \$1.848M to a year end value of \$1.939M. This represents a net gain of \$112,024, net of fees, delivering an investment result of 6.24%, also net of fees. Going forward, the current allocation of the investment portfolio is 60% equities, 40% cash and fixed income. Jeff thanked his fellow committee members, Steve Desmarais, Gail Drobynyk, and Lauren Buxton for their time and effort over the year. Jeff summarized, noting that as a direct result of the Proprietors' generosity, we were able to grow our bottom line by \$155,000, a 3.5% increase, during an extremely challenging time.
4. **Approval of the 2021 Assessment:** Douglas Aykroyd made a motion to approve the 2021 Assessment, which will remain unchanged at \$250; Bill Wieting seconded; motion passed.
5. **Report of the Keeper:** Keeper Tom Hardiman addressed the membership with these comments: "Many have compared the COVID-19 pandemic to the influenza pandemic of 1918. I see a parallel with 1816, the Year of No Summer, the result of a massive buildup of ash in the stratosphere following the eruption of Mt. Tambora in Indonesia. Altered weather patterns caused June snowstorms, food shortages, and financial collapse worldwide. That December, a group of Portsmouth citizens formed a new library and reading room, incorporated the following summer as the Proprietors of the Portsmouth Athenaeum. In that time of unprecedented uncertainty and

social disruption, the first Proprietors banded together to affirm that the best remedy for the devastating effects of the global darkness was the light of learning, literature, and “natural philosophy,” or science. We have been well served by following their example. Following our 2020 version of the Year with No Summer, we have not surrendered to the shadows, but worked to keep the flame alight. We have circulated books by mail, answered a flood of phone and email research requests, embraced new technology, and built new connections with our sister institutions. The Athenaeum staff has been able to stay productive working largely from home, with their salaries covered by the PPP loan secured by the Treasurer and office manager. Stephanie also uncovered a check spoof fraud attempt on the Athenaeum bank account, saving us thousands of dollars. Informed by member surveys, interviews and board retreats, the Long-Range Planning Committee has developed a Strategic Framework to guide work groups that will look more deeply into specific issues. Most of what we needed to do for near-term stability is done or well underway. The next step is to examine and define our ambitions, so that we can map a clear path to achieve those goals. An affirming bright spot of 2020 was the active engagement of our members. While many nonprofits struggled, our Proprietors, Subscribers, and Friends rallied to more than double the amount of Annual Appeal unrestricted gifts from a year ago, making up for losses in earned income. I believe that our founders were intentional in incorporating the library they started in December of 1816 not as an inanimate building or collection, but as the Proprietors of the Portsmouth Athenaeum. They recognized that in dark, even volcanic days, while it may be comforting to curl up with a good book, it is better to build a library together, and spread the light. Thank you all for all you have done for the Athenaeum.”

6. **Report of the President:** President Brad Lown addressed the membership with these comments: “We’re making history today, holding the annual meeting via videoconference for the first time in 202 years. The annual meeting has never been canceled for any reason, despite Civil and World Wars and the 1918 epidemic. There’s been talk of the aging membership of Athenaeum; three-quarters of our members are over the age of sixty. This has its advantages; many of our members are financially well-off and accomplished. The membership’s response to the 2020 annual appeal is evidence that the well-to-do are more generous and philanthropic than ever. As a result, one year into the pandemic, the Athenaeum is financially healthy. The mission of the Athenaeum is to facilitate convivial interchange and intellectual discourse. This is not easy to achieve via Zoom; it’s been frustrating to have to cancel in-person events. I thank Tom and our excellent staff, who have done a great job this year. We held some in-person events, including a strategic planning board retreat before the pandemic hit. Thanks to Peter Tarlton, Ellen Fineberg, and Sally Gayer for a fine job shepherding us through the long-range planning process. I thank all board members for their patience and good work. We have some interesting issues coming up in 2021, including the fate of the Irish Shop; we are not sure the business will survive the winter. Upgrading HVAC and fire suppression to protect our buildings and collections, improving space use, and applying the Strategic Framework to subsequent strategic planning will also be addressed in the coming year. 2021 promises to be an interesting and productive year.”
7. **Report of the Long-Range Planning Committee:** Peter Tarlton, Chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee, referred attendees to last year’s annual meeting minutes for background on the committee’s previous work. He thanked Ellen Fineberg, Sally Gayer, and Tom Hardiman for their

work on the committee, which conducted several interviews and member surveys, as well as an in-person board retreat before work was suspended by the pandemic. The committee was back on track by mid-year, with three more meetings and continuing efforts. The committee, working with consultant Alan Cantor, developed drafts of the 2020 Strategic Framework for board review. The board approved the final version unanimously on September 30, 2020. A copy of the Strategic Framework was sent to all Proprietors in advance of three Zoom presentations and feedback sessions. More than fifty Proprietors provided creative ideas and valuable comments. The framework identifies over twenty key areas that need attention, arranged in four broad categories:

- a. Ensure effective governance
- b. Strengthen connections to the community and individuals
- c. Maintain and develop facilities and collections
- d. Ensure sustainability

We are about two-thirds of the way through our ongoing process that will lead to specific goals, actions, and timelines. The board will appoint the work groups Brad mentioned to explore each of the four categories and their related key areas. The work groups will then make recommendations to the board for targeted action. The work groups will be composed of board members, Athenaeum Proprietors, Subscribers, and Friends. You will be hearing more from us during the first half of 2021.

8. Report of the Nominating Committee: Committee Chair Maryellen Burke presented the following slate of 2021 Officers and Directors:

Treasurer (one-year term)	Jeff Keefe
Secretary (one-year term)	Peggy Hodges
Director (renewed three-year terms)	Peter Rice
	Peter Tarlton
Director (substitute one-year term)	Richard Adams

Maryellen thanked Don Margeson and Ronan Donohoe for their service on the nominating committee. Bill Wieting made a motion to accept the slate of 2021 nominees, seconded by Tom Watson; the motion passed unanimously. President Brad Lown offered thanks to outgoing board member David Borden, a level-headed, wise consensus-builder who was instrumental in the success of the 1817 Capital Campaign.

9. Adjournment: There being no further business, Richard Adams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Peter Rice. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Hodges
Secretary

In Memoriam 2021

Evangeline Brawn
Thomas Catalano
Richard E. Winslow III

Share 287
Share 195
Share 80

Mary Lou Hogdon
Shirley L. Hodgdon
Richard E. Holland
Robert Margeson
Dr. Sally Mirsky
Renee Silverman

formerly Share 197
formerly Share 173
formerly Share 159
formerly Share 1
formerly Share 342
formerly Share 193

Elria Ewing
Elizabeth Sturges

spouse Share 284
spouse Share 324

Portsmouth Athenaeum 2021 Preliminary Financial Summary						
					2021 Preliminary	2020 Actual
REVENUE:						
	Proprietor Assessments				\$ 106,754.00	\$ 104,065.00
	Annual Appeal				\$ 114,922.00	\$ 116,258.00
	Miscellaneous Contributions				\$ 106,084.00	\$ 40,149.00
	Investment Income				\$ 131,963.00	\$ 98,626.00
	Other Operating Income				\$ 114,426.00	\$ 105,742.00
	Gain (Loss) on Sale of Investments				\$ 77,241.00	\$ (63,414.00)
	Receipts for Special Purposes				\$ 32,131.00	\$ 48,734.00
			(including gifts and grants)		\$ 683,521.00	\$ 450,160.00
EXPENDITURES:						
	Staff & Related Costs				\$ 210,491.00	\$ 208,527.00
	Collections				\$ 26,105.00	\$ 22,788.00
	Utilities				\$ 45,294.00	\$ 43,165.00
	Building, Maintenance & Renovations				\$ 38,145.00	\$ 72,398.00
	Insurance, Office, Printing				\$ 49,221.00	\$ 49,242.00
	Depreciation				\$ 49,547.00	\$ 49,464.00
	Special Purpose Expenditures				\$ 24,286.00	\$ 38,905.00
					\$ 443,089.00	\$ 484,489.00
NET SURPLUS					\$ 240,432.00	\$ (34,329.00)
ENDOWMENTS & RESERVE ADDITIONS:						
	Reserve Additions				\$ 7,225.00	\$ 10,875.00
Balance Sheet						
ASSETS:						
	Cash, including Savings Reserves				\$ 560,297.00	\$ 352,897.00
	Invested Funds				\$ 2,123,498.00	\$ 1,937,057.00
	Accounts Receivable				\$ 562.00	\$ 125.00
	Prepaid Expenses				\$ 7,301.00	\$ 9,331.00
	Fixed Assets				\$ 1,102,301.00	\$ 1,134,599.00
					\$ 3,793,959.00	\$ 3,434,009.00
LIABILITIES:						
	Prepaid Proprietor Assessments				\$ 60,000.00	\$ 54,100.00
	Deferred Income				\$ 19,713.00	\$ 2,862.00
	Security Deposit				\$ 4,398.00	\$ 4,398.00
	Accounts Payable				\$ 1,062.00	\$ 1,270.00
					\$ 85,173.00	\$ 62,630.00
NET ASSETS					\$ 3,708,786.00	\$ 3,371,379.00

THE PORTSMOUTH ATHENAEUM
Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee of The Portsmouth Athenaeum submits the following nominations for officers and directors for terms commencing in 2022 for consideration by the Proprietors at the 203rd Annual Meeting scheduled for January 16, 2022.

President (to 2024)	2 year term	Sally Gayer
Vice President (to 2024)	2 year term	Margaret F. Hodges
Secretary (to 2023)	1 year term	Richard G. Adams
Treasurer (to 2023)	1 year term	Jeffrey W. Keefe
For Director (to 2025)	3 year term	Ann Beattie
For Director (to 2025)	3 year term	Susan Lassen
For Director (to 2025)	3 year term	Rear Admiral Craig Steidle
For Director (to 2024)	2 year term	Curtis H. Springer
For Director (to 2024)	2 year term	Anne Weidman

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryellen Burke, chair
Ronan P. Donohue
Donald S. Margeson
Nominating Committee

2021 Library Committee Annual Report

While the Library Committee was largely quiescent during this second pandemic year, the Athenaeum library's dedicated, professional, and undaunted staff continued to assist researchers, both in-person and remotely, and maintain library services to our readership. I extend sincere thanks to our staff: Librarian Robin Silva; Research Librarians Katy Sternberger and Carolyn Marvin; Archivist Susan Kindstedt, currently on extended leave; and Photographic Collections Manager and social media guru extraordinaire James Smith.

Reference Library: The importance of the Athenaeum's archival, reference, and photographic collections is increasingly recognized by researchers locally and worldwide. Our staff has really risen to meet the challenge of maintaining effective in-person and online research services to a growing flood of patrons, even as the pandemic landscape shifts unpredictably.

- In 2021, Athenaeum staff serviced 1,757 patrons worldwide by answering reference questions in person, by phone, and online; opening the gallery for two exhibitions; and providing tours of our beautiful historic building. This represents a staggering 145% increase over 2020 numbers—all despite the disruptions from the pandemic.
- The Athenaeum fully reopened to the public on July 16, 2021. Sixty percent of all 1,757 interactions were in person.
- Fifty-six percent of all 1,757 interactions were reference related.
- About three-quarters of visitors to the Research Library were nonmembers.
- Forty-six percent of reference services were conducted in person. Thirty-eight percent of reference services were conducted online.
- Researchers from Connecticut to California, as well as across the pond in England, emailed 222 questions.
- We received an average of thirty-seven in-person reference requests, nineteen online research requests, and thirteen image requests per month—all numbers significantly increased from 2020.
- Our busiest months were May, June, and July, with an average of 25 research inquiries received online per month.
- Athenaeum staff assisted numerous other libraries, archives, and allied organizations, including the Portsmouth Public Library, Strawberry Banke Museum, New Hampshire Historical Society, Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire, Historic New England, Old York Historical Society, Old Sturbridge Village, New York Historical Society, and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Circulating Library. Readership was up substantially, from 705 books checked out in 2020 to 753 in 2021. Numbers are still lagging pre-pandemic totals, as our members continue to be mindful of potential exposure in shared spaces. Librarian Robin Silva and the book selection subcommittee continue to maintain a well-curated and cost-effective library of contemporary fiction and nonfiction for our readership.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Hodges, Chair, Library Committee

Performance Committee Annual Report for 2021

In 2021 the Performance Committee presented fewer concerts than usual, but, despite the coronavirus pandemic, those concerts were great successes although no parties or receptions were held.

On October 10, Portsmouth Athenaeum Chamber Music, the subscription series arm of the Performance Committee, presented a concert by the ASMI Piano Trio, featuring Emil Altschuler, piano; Allison Eldredge, cello; and Thomas Pandolfi, piano. The Boston-based group actually filled in for an originally scheduled piano trio who had had to cancel because of travel difficulties related to the pandemic. Despite being new to each other, the ASMI trio was able in a matter of about twenty days to prepare a full program of demanding music, which they played with easy skill and infectious panache (the program is attached). The audience was large (filling St. John's Church comfortably), attentive and enthusiastic.

On October 24, PACM returned to St. John's to present the Noree String Quartet, returning to play works by Mozart and Dvôrák (the program is attached). Once again, a sizable audience responded energetically to a beautiful program played with maturity and distinction. It should be noted that PACM ended the truncated season well in the black, thanks to the unstinting generosity of our patrons.

The Performance Committee presented the annual Memorial Concert at North Church on Sunday, November 14. Obituaries of those Proprietors who died during 2020 were read to a sizable audience, and as usual there was general agreement that our Proprietors are fascinating and accomplished people. The concert featured Peter Sykes, an extraordinarily gifted harpsichordist from Boston who has played the Memorial Concert before. Mr. Sykes played brilliantly a program notable for its careful and illuminating progression from one composer to another, all of them linked by musical, political, and geographic influences.

During 2021 the Performance Committee reluctantly accepted the resignation of Susan Potters, whose contributions to the musical life of the Athenaeum have been nothing less than immense. Her experienced judgment and extensive network of contacts in the world of music were invaluable to the work of the PerfComm, and we have discovered that it will take two people to replace Susan, who was an indefatigably hard worker with a sharp eye for details. Happily, we can announce that two other alert and willing workers have joined us: Chris and Alice White. They join the other stalwarts on the Performance Committee: Andrew Moore, Bill Wieting, Sharon Griffin, Sally Gayer, Linda Posson, Kristin Goodwillie, and, ex officio, Keeper Tom Hardiman. Our appreciation of Tom Hardiman, of course, is almost beyond expression – his dignified patience, willing drudgery (chairs, tables, etc.), and endless knowledge make him a treasure beyond price.

We are making plans for both in-house concerts and the PACM subscription series during 2022; obviously we will bow to *la forza del destino* if need be, but if we don't plan, nothing happens!

Respectfully submitted,
William F. Wieting, M.D., Chairman

2021 Annual Report, Athenaeum Social Committee
January 2022

The Social Committee met 7 times, during 2021. Of those meetings, three were held via Zoom, and 4 were held in-Person, from August through December.

This last year seemed more hopeful heading into the summer, and each of us appreciated the opportunity for in-person meetings, and the hope of future social events. That said, we were realistic, and planned dates for each event, knowing the pandemic could alter our schedule.

We planned and held 2 “New Member” events via Zoom. We have found that the Zoom format allows for consistent information to be shared with new members and that committee members and the Board members enjoy the ability to meet all new the members, at the same time.

Unfortunately, there was no reception after the Annual meeting, nor a Holiday Party, this past year. Let’s hope to have one in 2022.

The good news, however, is that we were able to gather for our Annual Summer Picnic, at the end of August, at the Seacoast Science Center.

I am happy to report that it was the best attended picnic in the last 17 years!

It seems everyone was more than ready to socialize, after being isolated since March of 2020. It was a perfect weather day, with wonderful food options contributed by all participants, and a very responsive Bar crew.

This was the first year, the Seacoast Science Center mandated our use of an approved Bar service which held a NH liquor license. We chose to use The White Apron, from their approved list of 3, because we know the quality of their delivery. The fee for the bar was \$4180.

Our committee wishes to acknowledge and thank the Athenaeum Board of Directors for approving our committee’s request that the Athenaeum pay that tab, in celebration of the fact that we could all gather in person, for the first time in over a year!

I would like to thank each member of our committee for their continued support, throughout the year. Committee Members include Douglas and Elizabeth Aykroyd, Mark Ankarberg, Jan Dinan, Curt Springer, Tom Hardiman, new member, Cliff Hodgdon, and myself, Cindy Knapp.

Thank you, Tom, for managing each of our Zoom meetings, and thank you, Curt for assisting with those meetings, as needed and on the spot. Thank you, Douglas, for designing and producing our 2021 Holiday Card, and to everyone who assisted in its mailing.

We are all looking forward to more in-person events, as soon as possible, for 2022.

Respectfully Submitted by
Cynthia Knapp
Chairman, Social Committee

Special Collections report for 2021

Richard Candee, chair

The major public purpose of the Athenaeum is to collect and protect original materials documenting the history of Portsmouth. As usual, the Special Collections committee is indebted to J. Dennis Robinson, Kinley Gregg, and Tom Hardiman for following ebay and other websites for such materials. Members of the Athenaeum were again generous donors, especially of local photography.

Donors of Images

Robert Chase
C.,J. Cogswell
Lynn Crocker
Beverley Armsden Daniel
DOT ME
Ellen Fineberg
Michael Fisher
Sharon Foss (via John P. McGee)
Thomas Hallworth
Susan Kress Hamilton
Thomas Hardiman
J. D. Lincoln
Donald A. Morin
Jane Nylander
Kris Pastoriza
Elizabeth Pettiford
James Smith
Susan Sterry
Gerry Walden
Sandy Warwick
Charter Weeks
Carol White (via Joan Hammond)

Manuscript Collections added by purchase

:
2021.0063 Gerrish Archive of Young Men's Society for Mutual Improvement (dates)
2021.0061 Harriet McEwen Kimball (1834-1917) poem, "The Old Year and New"
2021.0068 Levi Jewell Memorandum Book 1826-1836
2021: 0068? William Fernald Jr. ledger 1844-1851
2021.0097 William Morrison, "baker", pocket account book, 1754-1763
2021.0097? Samuel Hale, Jr. Letter book, 1842-68

Rare Book

2021.0082 William Preston (1742-1818) & George Richards (1755 -1814), *Illustrations of Masonry*, W. & D. Treadwell, Portsmouth, 1804 with bookplate of Col. Samuel Rogers

2021 Portsmouth Athenaeum Photographic Collections & Volunteers by James Smith

In 2021, we welcomed the return of volunteers in the research library. In April, Proprietor Peter Randall resumed scanning the P0024 Wentworth-by-the-Sea collection. For most of the summer and fall, he scanned 1,300+ images from the P0031 Portsmouth Press photograph collection, and he finished the year by scanning the P0011 Richard D. McDonough Collection. Richard Kirkpatrick returned to finish scanning images in the P0057 Portsmouth Housing Authority collection, and he scanned the P0032 Badger Family collection.

In our expansive new P0060 Douglas Armsden photograph collection, we had several people helping to process the material. In the summer, Jess Manning, our 2021 intern from UNH, worked to identify and organize the massive number of photographic prints and color transparencies. Proprietor James Shanley continued his work to re-house negatives in archival sleeves and boxes, and this work will continue into 2022 as we look to raise more money for supplies. Proprietor Robert Chase also continued to identify people, places and events to improve eventual cataloging. As a commercial photographer, Armsden worked for *New Hampshire Profiles* and its predecessor *Shoreliner*. In November, Maddie Beihl took on Armsden's "Home of the Month" banker box, which included about 500 unidentified photographic prints of exteriors and interiors of both old and new homes across the region, c. 1950-1960. Maddie has been arranging and matching these prints (typically 10 photos) to the physical magazine photo spreads found in our collection of *Shoreliner* and *New Hampshire Profiles*. So far there have been about 30 matches! Thank you to all of you!

Work progresses to improve existing collections while adding new collections to the catalog. This includes the P0011 Richard D. McDonough Collection, P0027 Loughton Family Album, P0031 Portsmouth Press Collection, P0032 Badger Family Collection, P0061 Douglas Armsden Transparencies, and the PS Collection.

Images from the photograph collection were featured in most of Proprietor Sherry Wood's 12 "At the Athenaeum" columns in the *Portsmouth Herald*. In April, Sherry highlighted Armsden images in her article *Hold Please: When Portsmouth's phone dialing change 65 years ago*. In December, Sherry devoted her article to the Portsmouth Press collection with *A snapshot in time from the Portsmouth Press*.

Other "At the Athenaeum" articles included the following: *Garland Patch kept the Athenaeum going in its darkest days* by Sherry Wood (January); *That's Amore: Italian weddings in Portsmouth's North End, preserving the history* by Sherry Wood (February); *When history hits home* by Sherry Wood (March); *Planting seeds of history: The Portsmouth subsistence gardens in the Great Depression* by James Smith (May); *Building I-95 Bridge took blood, sweat and tears* by Sherry Wood (June); *Portsmouth's Georgian gardens bloom again at new exhibit* by Tom Hardiman (July); *The man who led Japan in negotiating the Portsmouth Peace Treaty* by Sherry Wood (August); *Yes, Portsmouth, there was beer in the basement* by Katy Sternberger (September); *Tracing the trail of the enslaved to Portsmouth* by Sherry Wood (October); *A family treasure 'The Story of Zephyr' now belongs at the Athenaeum* by Tom Hardiman (November). In April, Katy also wrote *A Salute to Doris Moore* for our website.

In addition to the images featured in the above articles, we shared items from the Athenaeum and its collection on social media. On Instagram, we have nearly 2.2K followers, and for the year, we made 119 posts and received 10,729 total likes. Our Facebook page has about 1.6K likes, and we interacted with over 71,000 people from across the Seacoast and beyond.