

# City of Beverly, Massachusetts

## Public Meeting Minutes

**Board:** Library Trustees

**Subcommittee:**

**Date:** January 25, 2021, 4:00 P.M.

**Place:** Remote Meeting on Zoom

**Board members present:** Margaret Altman, Mary Behrle, Marshall Handly, Cathryn Keefe O'Hare, Ivy Mahan, Kevin O'Reilly, Joanne Panunzio, Myron Schirer-Suter

**Board members absent:** Colleen Michaels

**Others present:** Allison Babin, Meghan Karasin

**Recorder:** Meghan Karasin

Kevin O'Reilly presided. Meghan Karasin stated that the meeting was being recorded.

Marshall Handly made the motion, seconded by Cathryn Keefe O'Hare, to accept the minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2021. Roll call vote approved, 8 to 0. Motion passed.

### **Public Presentation**

None.

### **Committee Reports**

Personnel: No report.

Administration: No report.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Planning: No report.

### **Report of the Library Director**

1. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: The budget is on track but does not yet show the impact of union negotiations. The library unit has negotiated a 2.25% raise for its 15 members. The full time budget line can absorb about 1.25%, but not the whole raise. Allison Babin is in discussions with Bryant Ayles about this and expects a transfer in to the budget to cover the shortfall.

In addition to the raise, the union has negotiated a \$150 training stipend annually; a \$500 one-time retention payment; and an optional \$350 First Aid/CPR stipend annually for those who qualify. These stipends can be partially absorbed in the training budget line. Allison Babin is in discussions with Bryant Ayles regarding the shortfall and the transfer needed for the raises of the

Director and Assistant Director. There should be significant changes to the budget report next month.

Cathryn Keefe O'Hare asked how staff development differs from training. Allison Babin explained that the staff development line covers professional memberships and courses or meetings staff members may choose to attend. The training stipends are separate and each union staff member will definitely receive the stipend.

2. Building Issues: In December, the Department of Public Service (DPS) rented a 60ft lift to do repairs on the roof and some window trim. There still are a number of leaks that they couldn't address and additional work will need to be done.

For the snowstorm on Friday January 7th, the initial directive from the Mayor was to open the library and Allison Babin informed the staff of this. All other NOBLE libraries were delayed or closed and the timing of the storm was concerning for staff's commute and the ability of the custodians to manage snow clearing for two buildings. After some phone calls, the Mayor changed his mind, and staff were informed of the new decision. Allison Babin had a follow up discussion with the Mayor about the impact of this and how things could be improved going forward.

The Sohier Room is the library's biggest meeting room and the only one with a built-in audiovisual system. While the library had been planning an upgrade before COVID, it is now even more apparent that the system needs replacement. Allison Babin has met with two vendors so far and is working on getting a total of three quotes, with the goal of upgrades in the next 6-12 months.

The library has purchased a 50" TV for digital signage in the main library to direct patrons to meeting rooms and programs, and to advertise other library programs.

3. Routine Review of Challenge Procedure with Staff Librarians: There has been an increase in book challenges across the country. Allison Babin reviewed the challenge procedure with the staff. The staff workshopped some items for clarity but made no significant changes to the procedure. If a challenge did escalate to a certain level, it would involve the participation of at least one member of the Trustees. Cathryn Keefe O'Hare asked if the library has ever received a challenge and how it was resolved. Allison Babin stated that it did happen once and the book was kept in the collection.

4. Update on New Website for Library: The library has obtained three quotes from vendors to revamp the library's website. Ona Ridenour, Head of Communications, is the project lead and has done a great job negotiating needs and prices. A contract with a preferred vendor is under review with the city. The bulk of the funds to pay for the website will come from trust funds, with a portion from the municipal budget.

5. State Aid: At the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) board meeting in December, Beverly was officially certified in the Fiscal Year 2022 State Aid to Public Libraries

Program. The initial payment of \$35,723.94 has already been received by the city and the second payment is expected in late March or early April.

6. COVID-19 Impact: The library has had a number of employees with close contacts in the home, or who have contracted COVID-19 themselves. This has put a strain on scheduling. Thus far, staff have been able to make it work without discussing closing or cutting hours. The Children's Department has paused in-person programming for the youngest patrons, especially those who can't yet be vaccinated. They hope to resume in-person programming with this age group in March. The library still has in-person programming for older children, teens, and adults. The library was able to obtain 200 rapid tests through FEMA/MEMA at no cost to us. These have been helpful for staff who have been exposed, and have allowed peace of mind for returning to work. The library has obtained N95 and KN95 masks for staff from the emergency management department at the airport. Mary Behrle asked if these masks are just for staff. Allison Babin said that they were, but that the library continues to offer surgical masks to the public.

7. Community Engagement: The Black Lives Matter mural was delivered on Friday January 21, 2022. The custodians are working on building supports for its hanging, ahead of the unveiling on Tuesday February 1, 2022.

The library partnered with the city's Sustainability Director to be a collection point for styrofoam recycling from January 4 to January 7. Marshall Handly asked what happens to the styrofoam. Allison Babin stated that there was a special arrangement with a facility that can break down and reuse that particular type.

Katie Nelson, Teen Librarian, is offering monthly chess nights in collaboration with the Beverly Recreation Department. Additionally, she just launched the 26th Annual Teen Poetry Contest. Allison Babin thanked Trustee Cathryn Keefe O'Hare for serving as a judge once again.

The library is hosting an author visit this weekend for local authors JR and Vanessa Ford. They will be reading from their picture book, *Calvin*, which features a transgender boy as he prepares for the first day of school and introduces himself to his family and friends for the first time.

8. Security: On Wednesday November 17th there was an assault and battery on the Essex Street steps and sidewalk involving a man and woman who attacked a disabled, unhoused man. The library was open but staff were unaware of the incident until the police notified Allison Babin the next day. No Trespass letters were issued to the perpetrators through the Chief of Police. The Chief also offered to increase walkthroughs of the building. Cathryn Keefe O'Hare asked if the man was ok. Allison Babin stated that he was.

Sergeant Dave Costa was promoted and is no longer part of the Beverly Police Department's Community Impact Unit. He connected Allison Babin with Sergeant Brown, the new supervisor of the unit, who has talked with both Allison and Meghan.

The state offered a Cybersecurity Training Awareness Grant Program. The city received the grant and the library has requested 25 seats for the training.

9. Friends of the Beverly Public Library: The Flynn Family Foundation has once again donated \$5000 to the Children's Room. These donations, which come to us through Sylvia Fermin, have already funded the renovations of the Story Time Room and the Arts and Crafts Room. The library is hoping to use this new donation as part of a larger renovation to the Children's Room, funded mostly through State Aid.

The Friends are now actively accepting book donations, as pre-pandemic. They are asking patrons to limit donations to two bags or boxes and they are no longer accepting DVDs.

There are three book sales tentatively planned for the year, in March, June, and November. They will be using a Thursday-Sunday model, which they found was successful for their November 2021 sale.

10. Personnel: In November, a part-time children's librarian resigned to take a full time position elsewhere. The library used this opportunity to look at how it is staffing all departments. One deficiency is that there is only one full-time librarian in the Children's Room. Two other full-time employees split their time between Children's and elsewhere. It was decided that one of those split positions would move to Children's full time, with the approval of the union and Human Resources. This has been beneficial to the Children's Department and has created a second-in-command in Childrens.

The library then posted for a part-time reference librarian position and has hired Jianna Christopher, previously a substitute librarian.

11. Trustee Appointment: The Mayor recommended Cathryn Keefe O'Hare for reappointment to the Board of Trustees and this was approved by the City Council earlier this month.

12. Programs: For adults, the library is hosting *Black History: Northshore Perspectives* and is collaborating with the Beverly Council on Aging for *Exploring and Collaging Our Stories*. For teens, there's Chess Night at the Library, Valentines, and Dungeons & Dragons programs. For children, there's Music & Movement with MaryBeth Maes, KatieBug Crafts, and the author visit by JR and Vanessa Ford.

### **Communications**

None.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

### **New Business**

None.

The next regular meeting of the board will be held virtually on Tuesday February 15, 2022 at 4PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 PM.