

# City of Beverly, Massachusetts

## Public Meeting Minutes

**Board:** Library Trustees

**Subcommittee:**

**Date:** March 23, 2021, 4:00 P.M.

**Place:** Remote Meeting on Google Meet

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

**Board members absent:**

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

**Recorder:** Meghan Karasin

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

Mary Behrle, made the motion, seconded by Joanne Panunzio to accept the minutes of the meeting of February 23, 2021. Roll call vote approved, 7 to 0, with Altman, Behrle, Mahan, Michaels, Keefe O'Hare, O'Reilly, and Panunzio voting in favor. 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 2021 Budget: Everything is on track for the year. One item to note is a \$500 transfer from the bookmobile maintenance line to the vehicle allowance line because bookmobile services are provided in a personal vehicle and this reimburses for those mileage costs. Kevin O'Reilly asked if the budget being about 66% spent with 75% of the year gone is normal for this time. Allison Babin replied that it is an unusual year. For example the repair line is not spent yet, though we are awaiting an invoice for the circulating pump in the boiler room. The needs are a bit different this year, with, for example, less use of paper but more spent on supporting technology use. Overall, spending is a little down.

Joanne Panunzio asked if more was being spent on supplies for items such as Take & Makes. Allison Babin said that Take & Makes are a library program so they are paid for by the Friends of the Beverly Public Library, with additional support from trust funds. There is no line on the budget for programming.

Cathryn Keefe O'Hare asked what the fiscal year is. Allison Babin stated that the fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30.

Marshall Handly joined the meeting at 4:10 PM.

2. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: Allison Babin stated that she has been asked to prepare a level service budget for Fiscal Year 2022. We do need to meet the Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR) for Fiscal Year 2022, which will be \$2,117,025 and we are not expecting the library to need another waiver. The minimum wage increase to \$13.50 per hour will require that a significant number of employees be bumped up - both those making minimum wage and those just above minimum wage. The union for the librarians will be out of contract as of June 30th. The city is starting negotiations with them now and it is not clear what raise, if any, they will get in 2022. The draft budget is due at the end of this week and the Director will meet with the mayor on Wednesday, April 7th. There will be more to report next month.

Myron Schirer-Suter joined the meeting at 4:13 PM.

3. Update on State Aid: We were certified with a waiver at the March 4th board meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). Due to COVID they did not print the award letters this year. They were sent by email. The initial award for state aid this year was \$34,187.55. This is the half payment and we will receive another payment later this year, in late March or early April. The state aid that the library receives is still going to the City to pay down the debt on the Farms Branch renovation. In the future we can start using it for projects such as carpeting or programming. Joanne Panunzio asked if there are one or two years left on the debt payment. Allison said that she is tracking it and plans to check in with Bryant Ayles, City Finance Director, on this.

4. Phased reopening: Massachusetts has entered Phase 4 of the reopening process. As of this meeting, the guidance for libraries has not been released, so we don't know the requirements for Phase 4. We are confident we are currently meeting the requirements, but are interested to see if there are things we no longer must do - like collect the contact information of anyone entering the library.

Effective March 22nd, we have expanded the hours of Front Door Service to 7pm Monday through Thursdays at the Main and 6pm at the Farms. Appointments have been expanded to seven days a week at the Main library and six days a week at the Farms. Most appointments are for browsing as this has the greatest demand and is the easiest to accommodate. On Monday April 5th, we plan to add evening appointments and expand Front Door Service to 8pm. Further expansion could include browsing without appointments. We won't have seating and plan to have a time limit on visits. Library workers, as an occupation, have not been prioritized for vaccines so primarily are eligible with the general public.

Colleen Michaels asked if outdoor space falls under the library guidelines. Allison Babin stated that this space is different. We are bringing two tables back to the Winter Street courtyard,

while one side of the courtyard will remain clear for pop-ups. We are planning outdoor programs for the summer and will follow the outdoor guidance. We have reserved space at Beverly Common for some programs.

We have reduced the length of quarantine time of returned materials from one week to two days. The state requirement is 24 hours. What we know now is transmission from surfaces isn't the main driver of COVID transmission. Staff are comfortable with this change. We had the highest circulation numbers in the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) for February 2021.

Museum passes are temporarily unavailable. Our current software, Library Insight, is aging and will cease to exist at the end of 2021. We use a platform called Assabet to manage meeting rooms and they offer museum pass software. Staff are getting museum passes set up on the new system. Myron Schirer-Suter asked if the new system will be easier to administer. Allison Babin said that it would and that it also presents better on the website and the company provides good customer service.

5. Building Issues: Much progress has been made on the Arts and Crafts Room and we expect to put an order in for flooring within the month. Progress is being made on the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) system. Mike Collins expects construction to begin before the winter.

Kevin O'Reilly asked if carbon emissions are part of the discussion. Allison Babin replied that the general idea is to replace the system with one that is more efficient and relies less on fossil fuels. Allison will ask for more information about this.

6. Community Engagement: The library is planning a Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Voices program with Abu Toppin, the city's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director. Abu reached out to Allison about starting a reading program. It will be a book discussion group, serving all ages. The first title is an adult title: *So You Want to Talk About Race*. The second title is a teen title: *Dear Martin*. And the third is geared towards grades 4-6: *Black Brother, Black Brother*. The program will meet outside, on the Beverly Common, with the goal of having an open and honest discussion about disrupting racial inequalities, racism, systemic racism, privilege, and biases. The program starts in the summer and aims to continue at least a year. Programs will not be restricted by age. It will be promoted heavily in the community and schools. Colleen Michaels and Myron Schirer-Suter offered to promote the program through their colleges.

The Teen Poetry Contest received 427 entries this year. Thank you to Colleen Michaels for volunteering as a judge again. The ceremony will be virtual again and will be released on April 28th.

7. Personnel: Eddie Negrón has been hired for the Library Assistant Circulation position. Eddie has been with the library since January 2020 and is very dedicated and professional. They are currently applying for library school.

8. Programs: Upcoming programs include a presentation by the Museum of Bad Art for Monday Mornings, and Farm to Table Cooking and Introduction to Essential Oils for the Health and

Wellness Grant. There's a viewing of the movie *Jump*, as part of the Salem Film Festival. Attendees at this screening have the opportunity to win tickets to the Salem Film Festival. Teens have multiple book clubs and gaming afternoons. Children's story times continue, as well as the very popular Katie Bug Craft program.

**Communications**

None.

**Unfinished Business**

None.

**New Business**

None.

Allison Babin reported that the city website has been updated to reflect the correct meeting time and trustee terms.

The next regular meeting of the board will be held virtually on Tuesday April 27, 2021 at 4 PM. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:34 PM.