

City of Beverly, Massachusetts

Public Meeting Minutes

Board: Library Trustees

Subcommittee:

Date: April 26, 2022, 4:00 P.M.

Place: Remote Meeting on Zoom

Board members present: Margaret Altman, Mary Behrle, Marshall Handly, Ivy Mahan, Colleen Michaels, Cathryn Keefe O'Hare, Kevin O'Reilly

Board members absent: Joanne Panunzio, Myron Schirer-Suter

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 Mary Behrle, to accept the minutes of the meeting of March 15, 2022. Roll call vote approved, 7 to 0 with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Mahan, Michaels, Keefe O'Hare, and O'Reilly 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. Budget Updates: The Fiscal Year 2022 budget is on track. The annual sprinkler inspections will take place in early May and this will spend down this budget line. There have still not been any transfers into the full-time line. There is expected to be transfers to cover the recently-settled DPS contract. The contract provides a 2% raise and \$500 retention stipend.

Regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 budget, the initial meeting with the Mayor, Finance Director, Chief of Staff, and Head of Community Services went well. Some budget lines show on the report that aren't used anymore. There is a significant increase in the full-time line due to contractual raises and step increases. The custodial line will need to increase due to raises, as does the overtime line. There is a small increase in longevity payments. The training line

increased due to contractual obligations. Each library union employee receives a \$150 stipend and the option to qualify for a CPR stipend of \$350. The part-time budget increased due to minimum wage increases and adjacent wage increases. Going forward, these increases will take place on January 1.

Mary Behrle asked if the City requested a level-funded budget. Allison Babin replied that they asked for a level-service budget.

Margaret Altman asked why the telephone and equipment lines are zero. Allison stated that the library doesn't pay telephone costs out of its budget and that the equipment line is only used when there's a specific request, like a snowblower.

Kevin O'Reilly asked if the library has experienced any labor shortages. Meghan Karasin replied that there are less applicants for open positions than usual and that part-time staff are able to find higher wages elsewhere. Ivy Mahan asked how the wages compare to neighboring libraries. Allison Babin explained that wages are competitive for full time staff and for part time professional staff. Pages are paid minimum wage, which is something the library may have to look at in the future.

The books and subscriptions line needs to be at least 13% of the whole budget. Allison mentioned to the Mayor a desire to increase the salary of the Assistant Director as it is too close to the top salary of senior librarians. Allison Babin also emphasized the concerns about snow on the roof over the Winter Street entrance. Staff have been tracking the number of hours this entrance has needed to close this year (65.5 hours). In addition, they discussed the need to replace the 1996 van and the 30-year-old carpeting.

Colleen Michaels made the motion, seconded by Marshall Handly, to accept the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 budget. Roll call vote approved, 7 to 0 with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Mahan, Michaels, Keefe O'Hare, and O'Reilly voting in favor. Motion passed.

2. State Aid: The second payment of state aid to libraries was dispersed this month. Beverly received \$35,776.56, making the total award \$71,500. Fiscal Year 2023 will be the final year of debt repayment to the City for the Farms branch renovation. The library will be able to use the state aid funds for other purposes starting Fiscal Year 2024.

3. Building Issues: The elevator at the Farms branch was out of service for a few weeks because it didn't pass inspection due to a broken phone. Haley Elevator didn't make the repairs within the required 60 days so the state locked the elevator. It is now back in service.

Mike Collins & David Gellineau are starting the process to procure an architect to design the HVAC system at the main library. The Mayor says this is the last summer with this system. Allison Babin was asked for letters of support for the new system. These were to be forwarded to Congressman Moulton's office. Kevin O'Reilly has drafted a letter of support. This was shared to the screen. The letter was amended for minor typos and to reflect it being sent by the entire board.

Marshall Handly made the motion, seconded by Colleen Michaels, to accept and approve the letter, with suggested amendments, to be sent to Congressman Moulton. Roll call vote approved, 7 to 0 with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Mahan, Michaels, Keefe O'Hare, and O'Reilly voting in favor. Motion passed.

The larger of the two rooftop AC units at the Farms branch is not working. AMS will try to replace the two control boards to see if that works. This repair should cost about \$1000, out of the repair line. Eventually the system will need to be replaced.

Joe Bonaiuto and Mike Spiridigliozzi were able to make small modifications in the plexiglass in the Children's room. They also brought the patio tables back to the courtyard.

4. Community Engagement: Allison Babin shared a few library valentines submitted by patrons for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners's Love Your Library campaign. The library's annual survey is underway. It is only 4 questions, with the first 3 being the same as in 2019. The fourth question is about the website, which may influence the current redesign. The responses are overwhelmingly positive. More details will be shared at the May meeting.

The Bookmobile will be participating at the Touch-a-Truck event on May 15. The Mayor has approved the StoryWalk and Joe Bonaiuto has started construction. Allison met with the Executive Director of Beverly Main Streets about potential collaborations. The Bookmobile will participate in Arts Fest on June 18. Thank you to Katie Marsh for her willingness and enthusiasm in bringing the Bookmobile to these events.

The Annual Teen Poetry Contest is tomorrow. This year there were 446 entries, with 26 finalists. Thank you to Cathy Keefe O'Hare for helping to judge the submissions this year.

The library has partnered with the Zen Center for a meditation program on Fridays. It's been very successful, with approximately 12-15 attendees per week. The Head of Technical Services is launching a new book group called "Modern Love." Recognizing that all other adult book groups meet at night, Laurie Formichella will offer this program during the daytime on Fridays.

The Seed Library will launch at the beginning of May. Patrons make take up to six packets of seeds to sew in their gardens. Margaret Altman asked if the seeds are for native plants and if patrons will return the seeds. Meghan Karasin said they are not limited to local varieties. Patrons are not asked to return seeds. This may be something for next season.

5. Staff Development: Allison Babin and Mary Behrle attended the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners's Trustee training on collection development and intellectual freedom. Some library boards in Massachusetts are changing their collection development policies to restrict the ability to file a formal reconsideration request to the municipality's residents only. The library might consider something like this. As the library's policy stands right now, anyone could request a reconsideration of a book, regardless of the state in which they reside. It is important to remember that any book in the library has been chosen by a librarian, following the collection development policy. Reading & Newton public libraries have already put this into

their policies, with additional libraries in the process. Marshall Handly stated he did not see any legal reason that the library could not do this. Allison Babin stated that she would work on a draft for a new policy.

Mary Behrle, Joanne Panunzio, Meghan Karasin, and Allison Babin attended an Open Meeting Law Training by KP Law on March 31, 2022. One thing that was emphasized was not having any deliberations over email. Anything over email should be restricted to scheduling. Documents can be shared but not discussed. Meeting minutes should include a list of all documents shared in the meeting. The documents don't need to be shared within the minutes, but maintained for later access.

Meghan Karasin explained that sharing an aggregated version of the Director's evaluation constitutes a deliberation. After talking with the City Solicitor, it is possible to return individual evaluations to Joanne, or a third-party, to be aggregated. However, the final version cannot be shared with Trustees, unless in an open meeting. This does not qualify for executive session.

Kevin O'Reilly asked about someone from another state attending a virtual meeting. Marshall Handly stated that you cannot restrict your audience. Allison Babin stated that you can restrict their participation - who talks and how long. Marshall Handly stated that a participant must have standing, that this could be built into the meetings, and that the Trustees should consider what items are more appropriate for in-person meetings. Allison Babin stated that the Trustees could make a public participation policy.

The custodians attended a CPR & defibrillator training through the North Shore Chamber of Commerce and are now certified. Katie Carlson will attend the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training through a partnership with Beverly YMCA. Dorothea Lam held a team building event for the Farms branch.

6. New Digital Resources: The library has added two new digital resources. NewsBank provides online access to the Salem News and Herald Citizen. ValueLine provides research and analysis of stocks. The library has subscribed in print for years, but is now switching to electronic access.

7. Update on Website Redesign for the Library: Stirling Brandworks has provided an initial draft design of the website, which looks great. The actual development starts next month and should be completed by mid July. Kevin O'Reilly asked if the company has worked with other libraries. Allison Babin stated that they have designed the websites of many other libraries.

8: Programs: For adults, upcoming programs include Art Therapy Workshops, Community Zen, the new Modern Love book group, and a Monday Mornings program on street organs. Teens have the poetry reading and awards ceremony, as well as a downtown cleanup. Childrens is presenting story times and Lego club.

Communications

None.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Allison Babin presented a draft ordinance of regulations for the Main library parking lot. Allison Babin explained that Sergeant Hennebury cannot ticket vehicles without an ordinance covering the library parking lot. Allison shared information and documentation regarding the parking lot with Assistant City Solicitor Jesse Dole which states that the Trustees have control over the parking lot. Jesse Dole has drafted an ordinance (shared). Allison Babin stated that she wanted to maintain access to the lot for users when the library is open. She is not looking to tow those parking there when the library is closed, and no snow is forecast. Marshall Handly stated that if the Trustees control the parking lot, then they can authorize towing. If the Trustees, per statute, manage the property, establishing an ordinance could be considered ceding statutory control.

Allison Babin asked if that means the police cannot ticket, but the Board could tow. Marshall Handly said yes and that he would discuss this with Stephanie Williams, City Solicitor. Allison Babin will share previous documents regarding the lot.

Marshall Handly stated that the Airport Commission and Library Board of Trustees are semi-autonomous. Management of airport property is left to the Airport Commission. Management of library property is left to the Trustees. Under the statute, the Trustees control budget and personnel. There can be an ongoing source of friction. Concession on an issue could erode the authority of the Board on other issues. He suggested that all Board members read the statute and that the Board stands as a layer of protection for the Library Director and staff.

The Board decided not to vote on this issue. Marshall Handly will follow up with the Solicitor's Office.

List of Documents/Exhibits

- Fiscal Year 2022 budget to date as of April 25, 2022.
- Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 budget
- Draft of letter to Congressman Moulton
- Example of valentines received through Library Lovers program
- Picture of Seed Library
- Draft parking ordinance for main parking lot
- Background material from 1999-2000 regarding parking lot

The next regular meeting of the board will be held virtually on Tuesday May 24, 2022 at 4PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:43 PM.