

City of Beverly, Massachusetts

Public Meeting Minutes

Board: Library Trustees

Subcommittee:

Date: May 24, 2022, 2:00 P.M.

Place: Remote Meeting on Zoom

Board members present: Margaret Altman, Mary Behrle, Ivy Mahan, Colleen Michaels, Kevin O'Reilly, Joanne Panunzio, Myron Schirer-Suter

Board members absent: Marshall Handly, Cathryn Keefe O'Hare

Others present: Allison Babin, Meghan Karasin, Bruce Doig

Recorder: Meghan Karasin

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

Mary Behrle made the motion, seconded by Ivy Mahan, to accept the minutes of the meeting of April 26, 2022. Roll call vote approved, 5 to 0 with Altman, Behrle, Mahan, O'Reilly, and Panunzio voting in favor. Schirer-Suter abstained. Motion passed.

Public Presentation

None.

Committee Reports

Personnel: Joanne Panunzio explained that the Trustees should have gotten a link to the Director's review. With the Open Meeting Law rules, the review will be presented at the June Meeting, but sent to the Director ahead of time. Trustees should complete their reviews by the first week in June.

Administration: No report.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Planning: No report.

Report of the Library Director

1. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: Allison presented the budget to the screen. As mentioned before, the full time staff line and custodian salary line will come up short due to raises and stipends. Bryant Ayles reported today that the transfers will be coming. Repairs to HVAC at Farms and sprinkler repairs will be paid from the repair line. The heating line is almost spent, due to fuel costs, but the electric line is fine. Allison will be transferring funds from the electric line to heating.

2. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget: Allison Babin will go before council on Wednesday, June 1 at 6:30 PM. Any Trustees are welcome to attend in person in council chambers. Allison presented the Mayor's recommended budget to the screen. There have been no changes from the initial budget request, except a small increase (\$500) in the custodial holiday pay line. Kevin O'Reilly asked why the electric line is not spent. Allison Babin explained that Bryant handles the billing for that.

Colleen Michaels joined the meeting at 2:15 PM.

3. Building Issues: The House passed a \$200,000 earmark for the library's HVAC system. The total projected project cost is \$3.7 million. Erina Keefe, City Sustainability Director, is working on coordinating the funding plan for the project. It will involve a combination of free cash, incentives, and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds

4. Community Engagement: Our Teen Services Librarian and Head of Children's Services will be at Holcroft Park on June 2 to promote Summer Reading to the Gloucester Crossing to the community. They'll be promoting our Summer Reading Kick Off which will take place on the Beverly Common on June 16. We will be distributing the annual Summer Reading Brochure. Copies will be available for the June meeting.

As a partner of Beverly Arts District, the library had an opportunity to sponsor a banner on Cabot Street. Local artist Patrick O'Donnell, who is also an avid library user, designed the piece.

The Story Walk is almost complete. The librarians designed a background page that goes underneath the book page, describing an activity to do (ex. dancing). The project will be ready for placement on the common by June 16.

5. Upcoming Holiday Closure. For the past year, library administration has been in discussion with the City Solicitor and Mayor's Office on how to handle Juneteenth. Last year, the custodians qualified for overtime because the library was open and their contract stipulates this. On April 19 the library learned that all other city buildings, besides Police and Fire, were to be closed for the holiday. Discussions continued. On May 11 the library finally got word that it will be closed on June 20 for observation of Juneteenth. Had this decision not been made, it's expected that this would have become a union issue. The library expects to be closed for the holiday going forward.

6. Annual Survey: The library recently completed an annual survey. Allison Babin shared the results to the screen. There were 479 respondents, with 96% of respondents rating the library's customer service either excellent or good. When asked what they valued most about the library, patrons responded with materials, staff, programs, online services. When asked about improvement, 46% of respondents said they were satisfied. Other patrons asked for "more" - more books, more programming, more digital services. Some patrons mentioned the smell of marijuana in the building, lack of social services. This year only, a question was asked about the website. This information will be turned over to Stirling to influence their work on the new website. Next year we'll implement a question to ask for contact information to allow staff to follow up on comments. Joanne Panunzio asked for the survey results to be sent to Trustees

Kevin O'Reilly asked about the chipping paint on the library stairs. Allison Babin stated that she has been continuing to talk to Mike Collins and the Mayor about this. Kevin O'Reilly suggested finding a way to publicly respond to suggestions in the survey.

Communications

None.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

The library's Exhibit Policy hasn't been reviewed in almost 20 years. The goal is to bring the policy in line with the practice. Art exhibits are coordinated by Ona Ridenour, the Head of Communications, who does a tremendous job. The equity piece of the policy has been strengthened, removing "first come first served". Going forward there will be an application form, available on the website. Most of the rest of the language of the policy is the same.

Joanne Panunzio asked how many applications are received a month. Allison Babin explained that right now there's no organized system. Artists have to know to ask. Sometimes the Head of Communications does a call for exhibits and schedules up to a year at a time. This will change with the application process. Ivy Mahan asked how she does a call for exhibits. Meghan Karasin explained that she has used the newsletter and social media in the past. Colleen Michaels suggested a universal deadline for applications, as the Cultural Council does. Allison Babin will discuss this with Ona. Kevin O'Reilly asked how the policy compares with those of other libraries and if other libraries have had problems. Allison Babin explained that it's very similar and 5-10 policies of other libraries were consulted. She stated that she hasn't heard of any problems. Allison Babin pointed out that the policy states that space is open to all and not restricted by age and that the content of the display must remain within the broad standards of community acceptability. After understanding this, there have been artists who have decided this is not the right venue for them.

Ivy Mahan asked how Allison is notified when there's a list of exhibitors. Allison Babin stated that Ona takes full responsibility for the list and has great judgment. She comes to Allison only if there are any concerns.

Myron Schirer-Suter made the motion, seconded by Colleen Michaels, to accept the revised Exhibit Policy. Roll call vote approved, 7 to 0 with Altman, Behrle, Mahan, Michaels, O'Reilly, Panunzio, and Schirer-Suter voting in favor. Motion passed.

List of Documents/Exhibits

- Fiscal Year 2022 budget to date as of May 23, 2022.
- Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 budget
- Photograph of art by Patrick O'Donnell to be on Beverly Main Streets Banner
- Current Exhibit Policy
- Proposed Exhibit Policy

The next regular meeting of the board will be held in person on Tuesday June 14, 2022 at 4PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.