

# City of Beverly, Massachusetts

## Public Meeting Minutes

**Board:** Library Trustees

**Subcommittee:**

**Date:** May 25, 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.

Marshall Handly, made the motion, seconded by Margaret Altman to accept the minutes of the meeting of April 27, 2021. Roll call vote approved, 8 to 0. Motion passed.

### **Public Presentation**

None.

### **Committee Reports**

Personnel: Joanne Panunzio reported that the staff survey for the Director's Review was completed by 22 staff members. There are approximately 45 staff members, 19 of whom are full time. Once Joanne Panunzio receives the outstanding reviews from 3 trustees she will consolidate the results and meet with Kevin O'Reilly and Allison Babin to discuss the review. The Board of Trustees thanked Joanne Panunzio for her work on this project.

Administration: No report.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Planning: No report.

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

1. Fiscal Year 2021 Budget: Allison Babin stated that the budget is on track. There is currently a leak in a sprinkler system in the Farms building but it appears that the cost of the repair will be minor. Other sprinkler repairs could be as much as \$4000 but the repair line of the budget has adequate funds. The book & subscription line is mostly spent and will be almost completely spent by the next meeting. Kevin O'Reilly asked what happens if there are remaining funds left over (currently about 9% of the budget is not yet spent). Allison Babin replied that there is still a month left and some additional spending will come through. Some lines will not be spent fully as

this was an unusual year. Marshall Handly asked if remaining funds are returned to the city. Allison Babin replied that they are.

2. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: The Mayor will present the full city budget to City Council on May 26. The library will present its budget on June 2 at approximately 7pm. The Trustees are welcome to attend. Colleen Michaels asked if Allison Babin would like support for this meeting. Allison Babin said she feels that she'll have support from the Mayor and Finance Director but additional support from the Board of Trustees would be appreciated. She will send the link to the trustees.

3. Phased reopening: Front Door Service ended on May 9. On May 10, the library opened with a new model - no appointments needed and a 1 hour time limit on visits. It's gone very smoothly. There is a capacity limit in the Children's room but that limit hasn't been reached yet. There was a greeter for the first 2 weeks to help patrons understand the new system. Staff are comfortable with this change. Patrons are returning to the library, but not at the numbers we saw in 2019. This Saturday May 29 the state will lift all restrictions on businesses and the state's mask mandate will end. Our staff would like masks to remain required for the time being. Staff will not be fully vaccinated until late June. Allison Babin reached out to the Mayor's Office and city buildings will require masks for the time being. The library will continue to require masks and a 1 hour time limit on visits. The library will return to its normal operating hours and restore some seating on June 1. The time limit is expected to be lifted by July and meeting rooms will be reservable by then as well.

While furniture is limited, the library will host a poster display called The Black Women of the Suffrage Movement, from the North Shore Juneteenth Association for the month of June.

The bookmobile will be going back on the road on June 21. The schedule has been reworked to better manage the workload of the bookmobile librarian. Vertical grab-poles will be installed to aid patrons in getting onto the truck.

Margaret Altman asked if the City or the library will require the staff to be vaccinated. Allison Babin stated that is not the case at the moment. Margaret Altman asked if the public would be made aware if some staff are unvaccinated. Allison Babin replied that she would follow up with the answer to that question. The city has asked the administration to collect the vaccination status of the staff. But right now that information remains only with the administration. Ivy Mahan asked why some staff aren't yet vaccinated. Allison Babin declined to answer that question. Cathryn Keefe O'Hare asked if the law could require vaccination. Marshall Handly responded that, with this particular pandemic, there have not yet been court decisions or legislative direction. Allison Babin said it is possible that the city may decide to require the vaccination but it is not yet decided. Meghan Karasin added that the library staff is grateful to have the mask requirement remain as it allows the staff who were eligible with the general public the time to achieve full vaccination status.

4. Building Issues: B2Q has retrofitted all the pendant light fixtures in the library to LED. This will result in significant cost savings in electricity, ballasts, and bulbs. Some lights had become so hot over the years that repairs to the wiring was needed. There was no cost to the library for

the work. It is reimbursed by National Grid through on-bill financing. There are a couple areas of the library - over the reference desk and children's picture book area - that aren't quite light enough. New bulbs have been found for the children's area. There are no other bulbs available for the reference area so the custodians are brainstorming possible additional lighting sources. The new flooring for the Arts and Crafts Room will be installed on Saturday, June 5. The teen renovation project is almost complete. The furniture was delivered on May 11 and will be put out in late June or July.

5. Community Engagement: The first BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Voices was held on the Common. This was the first in-person program held at the library in a long time. There were 17 participants and they held a very engaging and respectful discussion. Allison Babin is working with Abu Toppin, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director for the City, on this program. The next meeting will take place in June and feature a title geared to teens. The Head of Teen Services, Katie Nelson, hosted the 25th Annual Teen Poetry Contest Ceremony virtually in April. There were 472 entries from 7 schools and the Salem News ran an article about the program.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) is launching a hot spot program to distribute hot spots to libraries to lend to patrons. They will pay all the costs (hardware and data) through September 2022. Allison Babin has requested 15 devices. These devices provide internet service, and can connect to phones, tablets, and computers. They have been very popular in the community.

Allison Babin was asked to join the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) Executive Board as an at-large member. Her role will involve vetting policy items before they get to the membership for a vote, approving NOBLE financial transactions and use of capital, and so forth. Allison Babin thanked Myron Schirer-Suter for suggesting her name to the board.

6. Personnel: A part-time Children's Librarian position has been posted, after a current employee had a change to their availability.

Kevin O'Reilly asked if there are any updates related to the library's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) project. Allison Babin said there are no further updates but that she believes the project is progressing.

7. Programs: Adult programs include Cookbook Club and book discussion groups that will be held on the lawn if the weather is nice. Teen programs include a BIPOC Voices book discussion as well as browsing days for summer reading books. The Children's department will host MaryBeth Maes for a Music and Movement program.

Joanne Panunzio asked if the librarians coordinate with the schools. Meghan Karasin replied that the teen and children's librarians meet with the middle school and high school librarians and school literacy specialists to develop book lists for the school reading lists.

## **Communications**

None.

**Unfinished Business**

None.

**New Business**

None.

The next regular meeting of the board will be held virtually on Tuesday June 22, 2021 at 4 PM.

Allison Babin stated that, with the end of the State of Emergency on June 15, there's the possibility that the Board will be required to meet in person. The June meeting will include the annual review of select library policies and is the last meeting until the Fall.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 PM.