

City of Beverly, Massachusetts

Public Meeting Minutes

Board: Library Trustees

Subcommittee:

Date: February 28, 2023, 5:00 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, 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 Marshall Handly, to accept the minutes of the meeting of January 24, 2023. Roll call vote approved, 7 to 0, with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Mahan, O'Reilly, Panunzio, and Schirer-Suter voting in favor. Motion passed.

Public Presentation

None.

Election of Officers

Marshall Handly made the motion, seconded by Mary Behrle, to nominate Kevin O'Reilly to serve as Chairman. Roll call vote approved, 6 to 0, with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Mahan, Panunzio, and Schirer-Suter voting in favor. O'Reilly abstained. Motion passed.

Ivy Mahan made the motion, seconded by Mary Behrle, to nominate Joanne Panunzio to serve as Secretary. Roll call vote approved, 6 to 0, with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Mahan, O'Reilly, and Schirer-Suter voting in favor. Panunzio abstained. Motion passed.

Appointment of Subcommittee Members and Chairperson(s)

Kevin O'Reilly reappointed all members to their previous committees:

1. Personnel - Panunzio (Chair), Behrle, Schirer-Suter, Michaels
2. Administration - O'Reilly (Chair), Behrle, Handly, Panunzio
3. Finance - Handly (Chair), Altman, Schirer-Suter, Mahan
4. Long-Range Planning - Behrle (Chair), Altman, Handly, O'Hare, Mahan, Michaels, O'Reilly, Panunzio, Schirer-Suter

Committee Reports

Personnel: No report.

Administration: No report.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Planning: Allison Babin stated that the library is about to embark on the strategic planning process for FY 2025-2030. Mary Behrle is the chair of the committee and will also take on a facilitator role, as she did previously.

Report of the Library Director

1. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget: Allison Babin shared the FY2023 budget to the screen. Everything is on track. The repair line has a little over \$33,000 remaining. There have been some issues with the north elevator and it is out of service. This is not the elevator that most patrons use, nor is it what would be used by EMTs. It has been leaking oil, and needs a new hydraulic cylinder, which will cost \$85,000. The library doesn't have the funds in the budget for this. There may be a possibility of folding the cost into the HVAC repair.

The city has upgraded to a new version of MUNIS, which is the software that manages the budget. It is web-based, and staff are adjusting to the new system. The city will move to a requisition process in FY2024, which is best practice, but a change. The new budget (FY2024) will have a new style, incorporating mission statements, pictures, and a narrative.

Joanne Panunzio asked if the requisition process will slow down staff purchasing. Allison Babin stated that it will be more administrative work, but she believes we can make larger purchase orders (POs) and pay multiple invoices against them. This will be used for the library's major vendors. There's time to work out a process before July 1, but it may require more hours from the library's administrative staff.

Cathryn Keefe O'Hare joined the meeting at 5:24 PM.

2. Building Issues: The library was designated as a warming center on February 3 and 4, a Friday and Saturday. There were no issues on Friday, but on Saturday the building temperature was only 54 degrees. The Department of Public Services determined that there was nothing wrong with the equipment, but that it was the best it could do. Allison Babin called the Mayor prior to the building opening but the Mayor did not want to close or delay the opening. The Farms branch and police station were also open, but their heat was working adequately. Staff had to work as usual and were very uncomfortable. The union filed a grievance. Ivy Mahan asked what the grievance process entails. Allison Babin stated that she receives the grievance first. Upon consultation with the City Solicitor, she responded that there was nothing she could do to resolve the situation. The union then sends their complaint to the Mayor.

As part of the HVAC project, envelope testing was conducted on the building on February 19. The library was closed for the day, though the two custodians worked a 14.5 hour shift that day to provide support. This testing should provide comprehensive data to guide the design of the new system. Drilling of the test well is scheduled for the week of March 13. The parking lot will be impacted the entire week. There's a possibility of a police detail for traffic control. Allison Babin has a meeting with the company performing the drilling on March 6, and should have additional information after that.

The bookmobile generator was repaired and reinstalled on February 3. It has been working well so far.

Menstrual products have been added to the library restrooms. Custodians replaced the defunct dispensers with new modern dispensers and products have been made available for free. The budget can sustain this.

The restoration of the Gruppe mural is behind schedule. The mural has been at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center since 2020. It is expected to be completed in 2024.

3. Community Engagement: Head of Teen Services, Katie Nelson, in collaboration with Copper Dog Books, applied for a Cultural Council Grant for a series of author talks. While they did not get the full request, they did receive \$1000. One author has already spoken, with 35 people in attendance. The Children's librarians will meet with teachers and school literacy specialists in March to develop summer reading lists and a schedule to visit the elementary schools to discuss summer reading and give book talks. City Hall has provided an iPad to the library to assist with language translation. It is preloaded with translation apps and Janice Shaw, Head of Circulation, has trained her staff on its use. It's available to other departments as needed.

4. Staff Development: Katie Nelson presented virtually at the Massachusetts Library Association's Teen Program Planners Showcase, describing her Downtown Cleanup program. This is a very popular program, low in cost and teens get service hours while keeping Beverly clean. Allison Babin will be attending the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Women Leading Government Conference on March 2. This came at the recommendation of a fellow library director. Katie Nelson will be attending a 2-day Creative Learning Facilitation Workshop at the Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester. Public Library Innovation Exchange (PLIX) leaders from the MIT Media Lab Digital Learning and Collaboration Studio will run the workshop online, while Sawyer Free Library hosts the program. The library will open late on April 7 to allow staff to participate in Active Shooter Training, provided by the police department. The training is not mandatory, but encouraged, for all staff.

5. Programs: The Friends book sale is scheduled for March 25-April 1, with a preview night for members on March 24. Adult programming includes an astrology program about the moon. Teens have Creative Writing Club and Downtown Cleanup. The Children's Room is offering story times, Musical Mornings with Miz Liz and a visit from illustrator Mark Hoffmann.

Communications

None.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Library Director's contract: The Library Director's contract expires on April 26, 2023. Allison Babin has reached out to Human Resources about a contract renewal. The Chair of the board will review the contract and then it goes before the board for approval.

Use of leaf blowers at library properties: Margaret Altman provided the board with information on the environmental impact of gas powered leaf blowers. She proposed that gas leaf blowers be disallowed on library property. Switching to electric is a step in the right direction.

Marshall Handly asked who takes care of the library grounds. Allison Babin stated that the library owns one gas powered leaf blower, used at both properties. DPS does landscaping as well at both properties. Marshall Handly stated that it would be within the Trustees power to determine what is used by library staff but an overstep to determine that for DPS, as well as be burdensome and costly. Bruce Doig stated that DPS takes care of over 40 properties in the city and the speed at which they can clean lets them service all these properties.

Margaret Altman stated that there is an incongruity with what the city is about to do with the new HVAC system and the use of gas powered leaf blowers and that over 100 cities in the country have banned gas powered leaf blowers. Marshall Handly suggested the city could explore this. Kevin O'Reilly stated that it is worthwhile to start a conversation on this and there could be education done by the library on environmental issues. There are two tracks - one is what the library can do, and the other is in the hands of the city council.

Marshall Handly suggested that this may be something to raise with the city council. Margaret Altman stated that she has talked to Jule Flowers and Hannah Bowen. The city has a noise ordinance, regarding decibels. But there's a leaf blower exemption.

Allison Babin stated that the leaf blower that the library owns has a decibel rating of 70. But she can't speak to the DPS ones. 70 is a cutoff as to what can cause hearing loss. Electric leaf blowers are quieter. The library has a quote of \$160 for one that is 59 decibels. The custodians are in favor of continuing to have a leaf blower to maintain the grounds, but would be ok with an electric one.

Allison Babin stated that it's worth remembering what Marshall Handly said: there are three issues: what our staff does here, what is done on city properties, and what is allowed in the city.

Kevin O'Reilly proposed that the discussion continue at the next meeting.

List of Documents/Exhibits

- Draft minutes from the January 24, 2023 meeting
- Fiscal Year 2023 budget to date (2/27/23)

The next regular meeting of the board is March 28, 2023 at 5pm via Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.