

City of Beverly, Massachusetts

Public Meeting Minutes

Board: Library Trustees

Subcommittee:

Date: April 25, 2023, 5:00 P.M.

Place: Remote Meeting on Zoom

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

Board members absent: Marshall Handly

Others present: Allison Babin, Meghan Karasin, Bryant Ayles

Recorder: Meghan Karasin

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

Cathryn Keefe O'Hare made the motion, seconded by Mary Behrle, to accept the minutes of the meeting of March 28, 2023. Roll call vote approved, 8 to 0, with Altman, Behrle, Mahan, Michaels, Keefe O'Hare, O'Reilly, Panunzio, and Schirer-Suter voting in favor. Motion passed.

Public Presentation

None.

Committee Reports

Personnel: Joanne Panunzio stated that the staff survey will close this evening and she will send out the results to the trustees at the end of the week.

Administration: No report.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Planning: Thank you for providing names for the committee. Allison Babin and Mary Behrle will meet next week to discuss the suggestions.

Report of the Library Director

1. **Budget Updates:** Regarding the FY23 budget, the buyback sick time line is overspent by \$975. A full time staff member resigned in September and was paid out on their sick/vacation time. A transfer will be made. The binding line will be used to responsibly dispose of old microfilm.

Bryant Ayles, City Finance Director, stated that the FY24 budget year is his most difficult budget year, due to an imbalance driven by cost increases, particularly in healthcare. The city is self-insured for healthcare, covering employees and retirees, and they are seeing a pent-up demand for typical services, driving up costs. The city expects to adjust premiums by about 16%, which for the city's portion is a \$3.2M increase in healthcare costs alone.

Funds for the library's elevator repair will be requested through a free cash allocation for FY23, and that money will be removed from the FY24 operating budget.

Now that service on the Farms building debt has ended, the library's State Aid will go to a revolving fund for the library's use. It looks to be about \$90,000 for next year (though it's not yet passed by state). Though Allison had planned to use these funds for a van replacement, it may be possible to fund the van another way.

Joanne Panunzio asked if this budget issue is just for one year. Bryant Ayles said they are hopeful to return to a more reasonable growth in costs for the following year. Mary Behrle asked if the library budget would be ok for certification with MBLC. Bryant Ayles said it would be. Kevin O'Reilly asked about using the city's rainy day funds. Bryant Ayles stated that they have been debating that internally. The reserves were designed for a specific purpose - a deterioration in revenues. The city revenues are currently strong; it's that costs are jumping. If they use one-time revenues to meet higher expenditure levels, eventually the revenues are gone and there's a cliff. They are looking at other things - short and long term debt, etc - for ways to provide expenditure relief. In addition, they are getting more aggressive at revenue projections - but that means there's less that will go into reserves at the end of the year.

Margaret Altman asked if there's an overall cut to the budget. Allison stated it's about a 2% cut. Bryant Ayles stated that he knows how tight the library's budget is and how well it's managed. Allison Babin stated that over the past 5 years the library hasn't relied on trust funds to meet the materials requirement for the state, but that could be part of the discussion. Ivy Mahan asked if they anticipate a cut in staff for the city? Bryant Ayles stated that this would be a last resort and he doesn't expect that to happen. Joanne Panunzio asked if health care costs for employees will increase. Bryant Ayles stated that premiums will go up for both. The city pays 80%, employees pay 20%. Myron Schirer-Suter asked if there would be an impact on the geothermal project? Bryant Ayles stated that there would not be.

Bryant Ayles left the meeting at 5:32PM

Allison Babin stated that overall, Bryant Ayles has asked her to cut her request by \$50,000. She has been anticipating the state aid, with plans as to how best to use it, including carpeting, the bookmobile, etc., but is now wondering if part of it should be built into the operating budget. She has queried other libraries and their responses varied. Allison Babin explained that she was confident they could level-fund the part time line for FY24. The city's budget has covered the book line in entirety for a few years. This year, the library could use approximately \$6000 of trust funds to meet the expenditure requirement.

Colleen Michaels stated that using trust funds or state aid to supplement the budget feels like the right idea, as it mimics the correction at the city level. Kevin O'Reilly stated that there is a concern about setting a precedent about how state aid is spent.

2. State Aid: The second and final payment of State Aid to Libraries for Fiscal Year 2023 was disbursed last week. This payment was in the amount of \$44,318.20, bringing the library's total state aid this year to \$88,479.32.

Myron Schirer-Suter left the meeting at 6PM

3. Library Collection: Allison Babin showed a listing of the most popular books, currently, at the library.

4. Building Issues: The design phase continues on the HVAC project.

5. Community Engagement: The Heads of Teen Services, Reference, and Childrens Services, as well as Allison Babin will film a 5-minute segment on Summer Reading for BevCam. The Bookmobile will attend the Y's Healthy Kids Week and Touch a Truck events. The main library and the Farms branch will serve as collection sites for Bootstraps' Back-to-School Backpack program in June & July. The 27th Annual Teen Poetry Contest Ceremony is tomorrow at 7pm. There were 391 submissions this year. A special thank you to Colleen Michaels for serving as a judge again this year.

6. Staff Development: Officer Lane provided Narcan training for 19 staff members. The trainer for the staff's active shooter training needed to cancel the night before the training. Allison Babin was able to find a webinar and provided additional training and drills herself.

Ivy Mahan left the meeting at 6:13PM

Allison Babin and Meghan Karasin attended a Crisis Communication training, focusing on topics such as meeting room challenges, book bans, etc. The presenter suggested building up a network of supporters, who can give soundbites supporting the library. In the annual survey, the library asked for contact information. Many of those who leave this information are those who love the library so this is helpful. Chris Sherratt, part time reference librarian, will be attending the Massachusetts Library Association Conference in Falmouth.

7. Programs: Adult programs include Living Room Conversations, with Wangari Fahiri, the City's new Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Monday Mornings, and a Local Author Fair. Teens have the Annual Poetry Reading & Awards Ceremony, Downtown Cleanup, and Bake it Till You Make It. Childrens has story times, Science Squad, and Lettuce Grow at the Farms branch.

Communications

None.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

None.

List of Documents/Exhibits

- Draft minutes from the March 28, 2023 meeting
- Fiscal Year 2023 budget to date (4/25/23)

- Most popular books in April listing

The next regular meeting of the board is May 23, 2023 at 5pm via Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.