

Chair Kathy Keohane called the regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Flett Room of the Library. Also present were Trustees Elaine Alligood, Gail Mann, Corinne Olmsted, and Mary Stearns and Director Peter Struzziero. Trustee Mark Carthy was absent. Two members of the Library staff attended the Meeting. Jessie Bennett of the Traffic Working Group participated in the first item for discussion.

Traffic discussion:

Jessie Bennett discussed with the Trustees the efforts of the Traffic Working Group, particularly with respect to Concord Avenue and the 7-12 school building project. When thinking about traffic calming initiatives such as additional cross walks and/or pedestrian-enabled traffic lights, she noted the importance of considering the entire road from the Cambridge line to Belmont Center. Ms. Bennett reported that a traffic consultant's study was in process. She suggested contacting Glenn Clancy, Director of Community Development, staff contact to the Belmont Traffic Advisory Committee, with respect to traffic issues affecting the existing library and the new building project.

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Trustees' September 26, 2019 meeting were approved, as amended, on a motion by Trustee Stearns, seconded by Trustee Alligood, and voted unanimously.

Director's report:

Director Struzziero thanked the Trustees for their support and condolences after the recent death of his father.

Director Struzziero reported that in response to feedback, he would focus on reserving more time at Trustees meeting for consideration of strategic matters.

Director Struzziero reported that the year-over-year usage/circulation statistics were very positive.

Food for Fines: Director Struzziero noted that certain cities and towns around the country have done away with late fines, as they serve to inhibit Library usage and deter the return of materials. Director Struzziero then proposed that Belmont begin to accept non-perishable food and toiletry items as an alternative to cash payment of fines. He noted his belief that it would improve patron retention and usage of the Library. The Trustees highlighted the importance of careful storage and rapid delivery of food for health and safety reasons. Trustee Stearns noted her objection, as food collection is not part of the Library's mission. Trustee Alligood moved that the Library begin to accept non-perishable food in lieu of fines as an option for patrons to satisfy overdue material fines, which motion was seconded by Chair Keohane. The motion passed by a 4-1 vote, with Trustee Stearns opposed.

Library Gift Funds: Trustee Mann referred to the recap of library gift fund activity in FY 2019. It was agreed that Trustee Mann and Chair Keohane would meet with the Town Treasurer's office to better understand fund performance and accounting, report back to the Trustees at a future meeting, and request transfer of income to expenditure accounts after such report.

FY 2021 operating and capital budget: Chair Keohane reported that the Library's FY 2021 budget was submitted, which reflects a 2 % increase, lower than in prior years. The capital budget submitted requests money to extend the useful life of existing air conditioning units, as well as funds to replace the fire alarm system, in consideration of the assessment letter about the system from the Town's Fire Chief.

Chair Keohane referenced a proposal received from the architect that was prepared in response to a request to provide an assessment of and cost estimate to replace or repair the Library's systems. Chair Keohane noted that she would continue to discuss and negotiate pricing with the architects, but the Trustees concurred that the assessment was important to better understand current building condition and risks.

2020 holidays: Director Struzziero referenced the materials circulated in advance of the meeting. He presented a proposal for earlier closing in 2019 for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve, with other recommended closures the same as in 2019. It was noted that the union contracts provide for holiday and/or early closures, but not with respect to the two evenings referenced above or Easter Sunday. Director Struzziero and the Trustees concurred that all holiday closures, whether full-day or early, should be specifically reflected in upcoming union contracts. Both of the existing contracts expire July 1, 2020 and negotiations will commence shortly.

After discussion, Chair Keohane moved to close the Library at 6:00 p.m. on November 27, 2019 (Wednesday before Thanksgiving) and December 31, 2019, and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Trustee Mann then moved that the Library be closed on Easter Sunday 2020 and Trustee Stearns seconded the motion. The motion passed by 4-1 vote, with Trustee Olmsted opposed.

Policies: Director Struzziero suggested re-naming the Unattended Child Policy to the Safe Child Policy. He discussed the reasons why and noted that other public libraries in Massachusetts use the suggested nomenclature. Chair Keohane moved that the Unattended Child Policy be re-named the Safe Child Policy, and the motion was seconded by Trustee Stearns. The motion passed by 4-1 vote, with Trustee Olmsted opposed.

Director's Annual Goals: Director Struzziero provided an update on progress in meeting the staff development goal. Chair Keohane suggested that the Long Range Plan goal be discussed at a Trustee meeting before the end of the calendar year.

New Business/Key user reports:

School Committee: Chair Keohane reported that she, Trustee Olmsted and Director Struzziero attended the October 15, 2019 School Committee meeting where they highlighted the Library's many interactions with educators and students and introduced Trustee Olmsted as the Board of Library Trustees' liaison to the School Committee, noting that she would attend meetings periodically to promote regular communication. Director Struzziero discussed his interactions with the Superintendent and the school principals. With respect to use of school modular units as potential temporary space for the Library's activities during construction, Chair Keohane reported that the units are Town property and not under the auspices of the School Committee.

Building Committee: Chair Keohane reported that the schematic design and final cost estimate for the project, assuming January 2024 construction start, would be discussed at the Building Committee's scheduled public forum on Tuesday, November 12, 2019. Chair Keohane is meeting individually with members of the Select Board. Chair Keohane noted the schedule of meetings with respect to the project:

November 7: Early look at schematic design for organizations that supported the Library Foundation's Better Together effort.

November 13: Town Meeting update

December 2: Select Board meeting

The Belmont Library Foundation is scheduling a kick-off meeting for the major gifts committee; November 6 was suggested but it may be a different date. The Foundation is committing to a multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign.

Chair Keohane reported that three trustees had met with the founders of the Library Land Project. The two men are visiting public libraries in the Commonwealth and elsewhere and have a rating system based on user experience, with an emphasis on the library facility.

Friends: Trustee Stearns presented a Friends' report. She commented on new leadership bringing energy and new ideas to the organization. The "mingle" at Patou restaurant on October 5th had great attendance and was very well received. The annual book sale was held October 18-20 and while a final accounting is not complete, it appeared to be a successful event.

Future Trustees' meetings: November 21, 2019

December 19, 2019

January 16, 2020

February 13, 2020

Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Alligood seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Flett Room at the Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda- October 24, 2019
- Minutes- September 26, 2019
- Director's Report – October 24, 2019
- Current Fiscal Year Data Comparison (Key Performance Indicators)
- BPL Expenditures FY 2019 year-to-date (dated October 22, 2019)
- Work Orders currently in process (October 24, 2019)
- Calendar for Trustee meeting items by month
- Fine Free Library article – WSJ October 2019

- Letter to Trustees' from BLA and SEIU re: 2020 Holiday request
- FY 2019 Library trust funds' data and recap