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BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 26, 2021

TIME: 10:55 AM

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

February 25, 2021

Chair Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology as a result of the Covid-19 related order preventing gatherings. Also present were Trustees Mark Carthy, Gail Mann, Corinne McCue Olmsted, Mary Stearns and Director Peter Struzziero. Members of the Library staff attending the meeting were Ellen Girouard, Gráinne Griffin, and Amy Loustau.

Paul Roberts ITAC Rep:

Paul Roberts is one of eight members appointed by the Select Board to the Town's IT Advisory Committee. He represents the Library's concerns on the ITAC and meets with the Trustees and the Library Director to get input about the library's IT issues. The Library Director reported that he will ask for input from the ITAC on the eventual website update, which may take place later this year. The Chair mentioned that the library would like the ITAC's guidance as to how to prevent data hacking.

Review of Minutes:

Chair Keohane abstained from the review of the minutes. Trustee Olmsted requested several changes to the minutes as submitted. The revised minutes were approved on a motion by Chair Keohane, seconded by Trustee Alligood and voted unanimously.

Library Operations:

Service Model and Next Steps

As of March 1, the town and the library ended work from home for staff and all staff will work on site, except for staff over age 65 or with preexisting conditions, according to Town policy.

The Library Director asked the Town's Board of Health to vaccinate the staff. The Board of Health is not able to do this because the State defines vaccine eligibility. The Mass Board of Library Commissioners and library advocacy groups have asked the Governor to make library employees eligible for vaccines. The Trustees asked the Library Director to continue to advocate to get the library staff vaccinated.

The Library Director will assess what steps other libraries are taking to move toward full reopening.

The Library Director reported library usage is high as seen in the volume of materials provided and returned.

FY22 Budget Update:

At the Town's request the Library provided two FY22 budgets with 10% and 20% reductions in the event that the April override vote fails. The Library Director provided a memo to accompany the proposed budgets describing the reduction in services required by each draft budget. The budget drafts narrowly

maintain the funding level (<1%) necessary to meet the state Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR) for state funding

Discussion of the Future Building Project:

The Belmont Library Foundation (BLF) is in a quiet phase. Some capital fundraising is going on. The BLF plans to ask for the Trustees' view of the library building project. Trustee Mann suggested that the Trustees discuss the building project at a future dedicated meeting after the override vote. The Chair will contact the Select Board to discuss the timing of the future of library.

Update from MBLC:

The MBLC has 17 projects on the waiting list in anticipation of the legislature issuing bonding to fund them.

The MBLC does not expect to announce a new grant until the end of the 2020's for projects to be conducted in the 2030's. The next round will have a different format. The MBLC will participate in the planning stage through the funding of a new building.

Friends/Foundation Update:

The Friends of the Belmont Public Library are developing a long-range public relations program around the new building emphasizing everything that will be available to users. They are also working on new ideas for fund raising.

The Library Director is working with the Friends to document citizen testimonials about the library.

School Committee Update:

Trustee Olmsted reported a Return to School Working Group has been convened.

Key Topics:

Teen Board Member

The Trustees discussed this topic and will follow up at the April Trustees' meeting. The Library has a Teen Advisory Board in place. It was noted that the School Committee has two teen advisors providing their perspective.

Trustee Review of Policies:

Exhibit & Display Policy

The Library Director has asked his department heads to review this policy. This policy will be discussed and voted on at the March Trustees meeting.

Director's Report:

Building Maintenance Issues

The Library Director reported there have been several serious maintenance issues at the library recently involving the HVAC system (original equipment) and the electrical service. The HVAC system had burst pipes and failing pumps. Replacement parts are no longer available for the 1964 HVAC system. Technicians are hoping to fabricate replacement parts.

The library had to install 25 air purifiers and space heaters which may have overloaded the electrical systems. The electrical systems shorted and tripped breakers.

Library Programs

“Better Through Books – A Community Read.” Community Read Flyers have been distributed. and the library is receiving considerable support for the Community Read from its sponsors.

The “Cook’s Corner” program, held in collaboration with the Beech Street Center, has had several guest cooks including members of the select board and Jennifer Struzziero with her husband (our Library Director).

In coordination with the Newton Public Library, the library hosted a talk by a Pulitzer Prize winner, Frederik Logervall, author of “Embers of War” as well as a new book, “JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956.”

The Library’s launched its first ever Winter Reading program with 122 participants.

Minuteman Library Network

The Minuteman Library Network has 42 participating libraries allowing reciprocal borrowing. Olin College of Engineering has recently joined the Minuteman network which allows increased access to engineering books.

The Library Director is a member of the Network’s 9 person Executive Board and has an 3 year term.

The Minuteman Library Network provides Belmont access to >6M items, 1.5 M of which are unique copies of items.

The Belmont Public Library is a net borrower from the Minuteman Library network. In FY 20 the BPL lent 34K items and received 46K items. In FY 19 Belmont lent 48K items and received 64K items.

Trustee meetings will be held on April 15 and May 20.

Next Meeting – March 25, 2021, 7:00 pm Via Zoom

Adjourn:

Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Alligood seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary D. Stearns, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda –February 25, 2021
- Minutes- January 21, 2021
- Buildings and Grounds Spreadsheet
- Director’s Report, February 2021
- January Statistics
- Memo on Library Budget Cuts
- Exhibits and Display Policy