

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
August 12, 2021

DATE: October 6, 2021
TIME: 2:49 PM

Chair Alligood called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference through Zoom technology. Also present were Trustees Gail Mann, Kathy Keohane, Corinne McCue Olmsted, Mary Stearns and Director Peter Struzziero. Trustee Mark Carthy was absent. Gráinne Breathnach-Griffin, a member of the library staff joined the meeting. Library Foundation Board Member Larry Link also joined the Zoom meeting.

Review of Minutes:

Minutes, May 18, 2021

Trustee Olmsted noticed that the changes she requested to the May minutes had not been incorporated. She requested that these edits, approved by the Trustees at the June 17 meeting, be inserted. Chair Alligood made a motion to accept these corrections to the minutes, seconded by Trustee Olmsted. The Trustees voted unanimously to accept these corrections.

Minutes, June 17, 2021

Trustee Mann made a motion to accept the June 17 minutes seconded by Chair Alligood. The Trustees voted unanimously to approve these minutes.

Library Operations:

Library Operations Update

The Library Director reported that the library has been increasingly busy this summer. The library now closes at 7 pm on weekdays and permits browsing throughout.

The library has had a limited amount of indoor programming and continues to emphasize outdoor programming to the extent possible.

In response to the recent Belmont Board of Health mandate, everyone over age 2 must be masked regardless of vaccination status when in the library.

The Library Director plans to extend the library hours to 9 pm weekdays starting in September. He may add Sunday hours in October if the budget permits.

Trustee Olmsted asked the Library Director what practices are in place now to ensure the health of patrons and staff besides masks. The Library Director said that the library continues to carry out its more intensive cleaning protocols, operate air purifiers, and maintain multiple hand sanitizer stations and place signage requiring masking throughout the library. To reduce the number of staff in close contact the Director continues to conduct Zoom staff meetings even for staff members in the building.

If a staff member tests positive, they will follow the procedures for town employees which requires checking with the Belmont Board of Health which follows up with their close contacts (within 6 feet). The affected person must leave the library for 7-10 days. They are tested again on the fifth day and, if negative, they can return to work on 7th day-otherwise they can return on the 10th day.

Chair Alligood and Trustee Keohane plan to meet with the Town Administrator and the Select Board library liaison to find out whether money the town expects to receive from the anticipated Covid funding could be used to upgrade the library's electrical system.

Key Topics

Trustee Email Communication

At the June meeting the Trustees asked the Library Director to look into the possibility of having an email account for library trustees. The Belmont Select Board has a generic Select Board email account monitored by the Town Administrator's office. If the query pertains directly to a Select Board member the Town Administrator forwards the email to that person. Select Board members also have individual Select Board email accounts. Chair Alligood suggested that the Trustees pursue the idea of a joint mail address, a format similar to that used by the Select Board. The current trustees are Town Meeting members and their email addresses are public. The Trustees decided to start with an email account addressed to Belmont Library Trustees which the Library Director will monitor.

Knotweed Removal Process

The Library Director reported on Trustee Carthy's efforts to develop a plan to eliminate the invasive knotweed infesting the grounds behind the library. Trustee Carthy met with the town's Conservation Commission to obtain information about vendors capable of removing the knotweed which will take three years to fully remove.

Work has been completed to repair the damaged asphalt berm in the library parking lot with granite curbing. The asphalt berms were damaged by snow plows. The DPT has completed the work and the granite curbs will protect the areas around the library close to the brook.

Budget Update

FY22 Capital Budget

In response to the Capital Budget Committee's request for current cost estimates for the fire alarm system replacement, the Library Director is meeting with four vendors and requesting quotes and scopes of work to bring to the upcoming meeting with the Capital Budget Committee. Prior to this meeting he will review these submissions with the town's Fire Department Chief and the Facilities Director. The vendors have been asked for the costs to replace the current system and if it's possible to service the existing system, i.e., whether it is possible to obtain serviceable parts.

Trustee Keohane asked that the discussion with the vendors include their recommendations as to what a building this size should have and confirmation that the proposed replacements will be code compliant.

New Library Process

Select Board Meeting Goals

The Trustees discussed what information they should present to the Select Board, Capitol Budget Committee and Warrant Committee at the 10/4 meeting. Because the Trustees are responsible for the management of the library facility, they will describe the current condition of the building. They also

plan to discuss potential future funding scenarios. The Trustees requested this meeting in support of the capital fundraising campaign.

CHA Update

CHA and Daedalus are updating the 2017 cost estimates to renovate the current library building and refreshing the schematic design numbers. These estimates will be used in the five-year capital budget to plan for repairs and will be discussed at the 10/4 meeting with the Select Board, Capitol Budget Committee and Warrant Committee

Friends / Foundation / School Committee Updates

Friends

The Friends of the Belmont Public Library have new co-presidents, Stephanie Cahoon and Kristen Carte-Smith. The Trustees greatly appreciate the hard work and creativity of the outgoing Co-Presidents Elaine Westermarck and Marie Mabardi who led the Friends very successfully through unprecedented times.

The Friends will mark its 50th anniversary in October 2021. Friends' leadership plans to mark this milestone with a membership drive.

The library will be well represented at Town Day on September 4, 2021. There will be table for the Belmont Public Library, the Belmont Library Building Committee, the Belmont Library Foundation and the Friends of the Belmont Public Library.

School Committee

The Library Director is communicating with the Belmont School Department to support the curriculum. The library staff plans to visit schools and the Library Director will have quarterly meetings with the superintendent and the high school principal.

Belmont Public School students will have an Overdrive app preloaded on their devices (IPADS for K-2 and Chrome Books for grade 3-12). This will provide the students immediate electronic access to materials and does not require use of a library card.

The Belmont School Committee has decided that students will start the 2021-2022 school year wearing masks.

Director's Report:

The Mass Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) offered free mobile hotspots to member libraries for one year. The Belmont Public Library submitted a request and will receive 50 mobile hotspots to be distributed to citizens as needed.

The Young Adult Librarian created a well-received program called Dungeons and Dragons. Fifteen other community libraries have adopted this program and now form a supergroup.

The Library Director called out the exiting presidents of the Friends of the Belmont Public library, Elaine Westermark and Marie Mabardi for their excellent leadership. They managed to hit and exceed their annual goals for membership and fundraising. They will remain as members of the Friends' board.

Chair Alligood added a personal thank you to the library staff for how well they weathered this Covid year. She noted that the staff has grown from the experience and managed to engage people with new forms of technology and information formats.

Adjourn:

Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Next meeting – **September 23rd at 7:00 pm via zoom**

Exhibits:

- Board of Library Trustees Agenda, August 2021
- Library Minutes, 5/18, 2021
- Library Minutes 6/17, 2021
- Buildings and Grounds
- Director's Report, July, 2021
- July Usage Statistics