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DATE: October 25, 2021

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BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
September 23, 2021

Chair Elaine Alligood called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 Kathleen Keohane, Mark Carthy, Gail Mann, Corinne McCue Olmsted, Mary Stearns and Director Peter Struzziero. Trustee Carthy moved that the meeting move into Executive Session for the purpose of presenting and discussing Director Struzziero's FY 2021 performance review, and the motion was seconded by Trustee Mann. A roll call vote on the motion was held with voting as follows: Chair Alligood: aye; Trustee Carthy: aye; Trustee Keohane: aye; Trustee Mann: aye; Trustee Olmsted: aye; and Trustee Stearns: aye.

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, Chair Alligood called the regular meeting back to order at 7:53 p.m. Gráinne Griffin, staff member, and Larry Link, member of the Board of the Belmont Library Foundation, joined the meeting.

**Director salary increase:** Chair Alligood summarized Director Struzziero's performance review, noted that he had foregone an increase in FY 2021, and recommended a merit increase of 2.5% for FY 2022. On a motion by Trustee Keohane seconded by Chair Alligood, the Trustees voted unanimously in favor of a 2.5% merit increase for Director Struzziero effective July 1, 2021.

**Review of Minutes:**

The minutes of the August 12, 2021 Trustees' meeting, as amended, were approved on a motion by Trustee Keohane, seconded by Trustee Mann and voted unanimously.

**Library Operations:**

Director Struzziero reported that starting in September the Library is open to patrons Monday-Thursday until 9:00 p.m., although the last hour of the day is quiet. Sunday hours may return in October. He noted that the staff were staying away from indoor programming because of Covid and the Delta variant.

**Key Topics:**

**Knotweed:** Director Struzziero reported that Trustee Carthy was working him on arranging for removal of the invasive knotweed around the Library. He noted that paperwork had been submitted to the Conservation Commission and that the project would likely be delayed until spring.

**Building Project/upcoming joint meeting of Select Board and Library Trustees:** Trustee Keohane reported that the Trustees and Select Board would be meeting jointly on October 4, 2021 to discuss the current state of the Library facility.

Trustee Keohane reported that CHA Consulting (successor to Daedalus Projects) had updated the Library's five-year capital budget plan, as well as the estimated project costs included in the 2017

Feasibility Study. She emphasized that this work provides revised estimates but that no formal RFP for any work or project has been issued.

Regulations limit the amount of capital that may be spent over a rolling three-year period without triggering ADA compliance. The repairs noted in the revised estimates and plan would not bring the building into ADA compliance.

Trustee Keohane also reported that the renovation option estimates in the 2017 study were updated, noting that the renovation option is principally an upgrading of major systems and ADA compliance changes; it doesn't reflect a complete renovation and would reduce the useable space of the building by approximately 25%.

Trustee Keohane addressed questions that have been raised by Town officials, noting that available extra space in the new building will be largely dedicated to functions not being performed today in the existing building. She reported that she and Chair Alligood had met with the Town's Facilities Manager who noted that the building needs immediate attention.

The cost of and limited access to funds for capital improvements, and the cost and limitations of a building renovation, suggest that new construction continues to be the preferred option for the Library. The project team is considering all potential funding sources, including fundraising, the Kendall fund, Covid funds, and CPA money.

Trustee Keohane noted a preference for broad representation at the joint meeting October 4, including former trustees and persons involved with earlier feasibility studies. She emphasized the deteriorating state of the facility while acknowledging taxpayer hesitation to additional debt.

#### **FY22 Budget Update:**

Director Struzziero reported that there would not be an additional capital appropriation this fall for a fire suppression system for the Library or for the Chenery roof. The Library system is continually monitored. He noted that the Library's electrical system may be a bigger priority in the future. Director Struzziero reported that the FY 2023 operating budget process will start quite early this year, and that we need to be cognizant of satisfying the MAR (materials acquisition requirements). He noted that he would be seeking a larger increase than in the past and intended to prioritize children's services.

**Patron Issue:** Director Struzziero reported that he had revoked a patron's computer and printing privileges because of inappropriate content access. He noted that the Patron had appealed formally to the Trustees. After discussion, the Trustees concurred with Director Struzziero decision to revoke these privileges from the patron, noting the repeated policy violations.

#### **Policy Review:**

*Materials Selection Policy:* Director Struzziero requested that this policy be retired because it is a practice rather than a generally applicable policy. After a brief discussion, the Trustees requested that his request be deferred to a future meeting.

#### **Director's Report:**

Director Struzziero referenced the report included with the meeting materials. He highlighted relationships he has developed with School and Police Department personnel, as well as a new relationship with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) located just a block away from our Library.

**School Committee/Friends/Foundation Updates:**

Trustee Olmsted reported that MCAS scores were down from prior years. She reported on Covid related policies, including a requirement that all volunteers be vaccinated and the schools' test and stay policy. Trustee Olmsted noted that students parking on Concord Avenue may limit available parking for library patrons.

Trustee Olmsted and Director Struzziero met with the School Committee on September 21 to discuss library/school collaboration, including card programs and reinstating librarian visits.

Trustee Keohane reported that the Friends would be having an outdoor book sale on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends is in October with a future celebration being planned. The Belmont Library Foundation has launched a flash fundraising drive that will be ongoing through the end of October.

**Next Meeting – October 21, 2021 at 7:00pm**

Trustee Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Acting Secretary

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**Exhibits:**

- Agenda – September 23, 2021
- Minutes- August 12, 2021
- Director's Report, September 23, 2021
- August 2021 statistics
- August 2021 patron traffic
- Materials Selection Policy