

DATE: August 24, 2022
TIME: 9:13 AM

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY

BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

June 17, 2022

Call to Order:

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 Vice Chair Kathleen Keohane, Trustees Gail Mann, Corinne McCue Olmsted, Mary Stearns, Mark Carthy and Library Director Peter Struzziero. Staff Members attending were Brittany Campbell and Gráinne Griffin.

Review of Minutes:

Vice Chair Keohane made a motion to accept the May 19 minutes, seconded by Trustee Mann. The motion to accept these minutes passed unanimously.

Library Operations Update:

The Library Director said the Town of Belmont's mask policy has not changed. The library is a mask friendly place and has masks available on request. The library resumed offering some in-building programs in March and continues to expand in building programs and online programs

Circulation of library materials continued at a high-level in May.

The Library Director prepared a timeline of library operations during the ~two year-long Covid period" detailing when operations were in person, hybrid or virtual. Vice Chair Keohane said this information will be useful in interpreting annual circulation statistics, and asked that it be shared with the Board.

Building Project Update:

- Budget and Fundraising Review

Vice Chair Keohane said that the Library Building Committee held an open public forum to discuss the need and plan for a new library. There were 58 attendees in the public forum on Zoom. Belmont Media also broadcast the forum. She made a presentation about the need and plan for a new library to 35 people on May 20 at the League of Women Voters luncheon meeting.

- Prep for Upcoming Meeting

Vice Chair Keohane provided the updated cost estimate of \$39.5M for the new library. This estimate will be submitted to the Select Board.

- Timeline for Ballot Certification

Vice Chair Keohane said that the Trustees will meet with the Select Board on June 27 to give them the cost estimate for the new library and to formally request that the Select Board vote to place the library

building project on the November ballot. Trustee Mann made a motion that the Trustees request that the Select Board approve the library project prior to the deadline to be placed on the November ballot. Trustee Olmsted seconded this motion. The Trustees approved this motion by a unanimous vote.

Summer Hours and Trustee Meeting Schedule:

Library summer hours are the same as they have been for the last few years, but Director Struzziero explained a desire to see them increased to include Sundays. He mentioned that once Sunday hours resume, he hopes he can keep them year round permanently. The current plan is for Sunday hours to resume in October, but Peter is hopeful that he can bring them back sooner in September or August depending on staff availability.

The Trustees will meet on July 21 and August 18 but will focus the meetings on the Building Project updates and any needed actions to support a Select board action of placing the project on a November Ballot.

Job and Volunteering Opportunities:

The Library Director has several full time and part time positions open including the new position for a full time Children's Librarian.

Trustee Olmsted asked about using volunteers in the library, such as teenagers or senior citizens performing work in lieu of a portion of their property tax bill. The Library Director said he cannot use volunteers to do jobs currently done by employees, as he has 3 separate staff unions with well-defined contracts and job descriptions. He hires high school students to work part time shelving books. He stressed the importance of paying people to work in Libraries, that the library is a place that employs many people, at various skill and education levels.

The Library Director will check with the Town Treasurer re status of the program for senior citizens to work off a portion of their property tax bill.

Vice Chair Keohane said that high school students have community service requirements and asked if the library might offer a way to meet that requirement.

Trustee Mann mentioned that the library should be compliant with the state labor laws re voluntary service. The Library Director and Trustee Mann will check with the town's Human Resources Department to get information on the possibilities and restrictions surrounding the use of volunteers.

The Library Director said that the library does not have a budget item for the maintenance of the library grounds. Volunteers including the Belmont Garden Club, Friends of the Belmont Public Library and motivated citizens carry out activities to enhance the library grounds. Volunteers also manage book donations, book sales (both daily and annually) and that we also have many boards and committees made up of volunteers.

Process of Responding to Trustee Emails:

The Library Director updated the Trustees on the status of the Library Trustees email account (BelmontLibraryTrustees@minlib.net) which was established one year ago. It is posted on the library web site and, to date, has been used infrequently. The Library Director reviews incoming emails and assesses who needs to be aware of this email and who should follow-up. He forwards the email to the

appropriate Trustee for follow-up and will make all other trustees aware of the communication.

Library Foundation and Friends Reports:

Vice Chair Keohane reported that the Trustees have made pledges in support of the new library building.

Vice Chair Keohane, as the Trustee representative to the Belmont Library Foundation (BLF), described recognition options for donations to the new library. The Trustees and the BLF defined six missions that the new library will serve. Donors can direct their donation to a specific mission. Donors' giving will be categorized as sponsors or sustainers and will be appropriately recognized.

The BLF will do a direct mail fundraising activity starting in July. This fundraising effort will provide information about how to donate to the new library using the BLF web site and describe giving levels.

Vice Chair Keohane reported that State Representative Rodgers submitted a bond bill that includes \$1m to support the new Belmont library and an additional sum to support a new rink. He will advocate for passage of this bond bill.

Vice Chair Keohane offered to provide periodic updates to the Trustees on donations and recognition requests over the summer months.

The Friends of the Belmont Public Library will hold their Annual Meeting on June 21 at 10:15 in the Assembly Room. There will be a guest speaker named Jen Greenleaf, a Belmont resident and Librarian from the MIT Library.

School Committee and Rink Committee Updates:

The Library Director and Trustee Olmsted attended the June 7 School Committee meeting and provided information about the library's upcoming summer programs and plans for fall activities.

Trustee Olmsted reported on the status of plans for a new ice rink. Ice rink plans were presented to the Select Board on May 25 and later to the Town Meeting. The ice rink effort is now called the Belmont Athletic Complex Feasibility Study. The School Committee has withdrawn its request for 90 parking spaces as part of the ice rink proposal. The cost estimates available to date only include the construction of the ice rink. The Town Meeting approved formation of a Building Committee responsible for the design and construction of the rink and the design of the field.

Director's Report:

Fiscal Year 2022, ending June 30, will be the second busiest in the library's history in terms of Collection Use.

Vice Chair Keohane and Trustee Olmsted will meet with the Library Director to review the execution of the fiscal year 2022 budget.

Library staff will conduct a story hour at the Farmers' Market each week weather permitting.

Library Children's Room staff will conduct Poolside Story Times this summer.

The Fiscal Year 2023 budget will make it possible to open the library the following hours; 9 am to until 9 pm Monday through Thursday (Thursday morning opening at 11 am for staff meetings), 9 am to 5 pm

Friday and Saturday with Sunday hours (1 pm to 5 pm as of October 1).

The Library Director reported that all staff meetings take place on Zoom. These meetings are intended to increase staff communication. The library closure from 9-11 Thursdays is posted on the first page of the library web site. The Library Director also has weekly meetings with his department heads and individual departments meet once a week also..

There was an incident of defacing library materials and the Belmont Police Department was informed. This vandalism was specifically hate speech targeted at LGBTQ+ residents and Library employees. The Library Director spoke about this at length, and stressed that he has a no tolerance policy on this subject. If anyone is caught defacing materials, or creating messages of hate they will be prosecuted. Trustee Mann referenced a Mass General Law citing this issue, and Trustee Chair Alligood suggested it be displayed in the Library.

Director Struzziero mentioned that longtime Minuteman Library Network Librarian and friend to Belmont Rick Taplin had recently passed away suddenly. Rick was a lifelong Librarian who worked for the last 10 years of his career for the Minuteman Network. He had recently retired and the Library community mourns his loss and sends thoughts and best wishes to his family. He was a great librarian and a huge Celtics fan. Peter thanked him for all he'd done for Libraries and for Belmont. He will be missed.

Adjourn:

Chair Alligood moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Olmsted seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Next Meeting: July 21 at 7:00pm: Via Zoom

Exhibits

-Agenda – June 17, 2022

-Minutes- May 19, 2022

-Director's Report-June 2022

-Statistics May 2022