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BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

August 24, 2023

DATE: September 25, 2023
TIME: 3:44 PM

Co-Chair Kathy Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference through Zoom technology. Also attending were Co-Chair Elaine Alligood, Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted, Trustees Mark Carthy, Gail Mann and Mary Stearns, Library Director Peter Struzziero, staff member Grainne Griffin, and members of the public, Barbara DuBois and Susan Lewis.

Public Comments

None.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the June 29, 2023 Trustees meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Co-Chair Alligood. The minutes of the August 2, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Trustee Carthy.

Director's Report

Director Struzziero referred to his Directors' report included with the meeting materials, without further discussion.

Library Operations Update

Director Struzziero reiterated that building maintenance continues to be a challenge and as previously reported, until move-out the focus will be principally on items affecting health and safety.

Director Struzziero noted that he was now serving as President of the Minuteman Library Network. He reported on an ongoing e-card project that includes an on-line verification process that will give the cardholder's home library credit for circulation of materials. He also reported that the network was searching for new integrated library system software.

Director Struzziero discussed first amendment audits and noted that the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) is educating library staff about such audits and responding to them. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is taking steps to protect libraries and library staff.

Director Struzziero reported that the Library had completed its Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS). The annual statistics show an increase in foot traffic and a slight decrease in physical circulation but demonstrate continued strong usage of the Library's programs and services.

Chair Keohane inquired about the implications of the e-card system for patrons. Director Struzziero noted that it should be easier to access digital resources. With respect to a potentially new ILS system, he noted that the catalogue interface might change and that service times might be affected as the staff gets up to speed. Chair Keohane also suggested that Director Struzziero and the Trustees consider any policy changes that may be necessary or appropriate given network-wide changes, as well as the new building.

Budget Review

Director Struzziero reported that the Library turned back budget dollars to the town for FY 2023, due to lower than anticipated plant management spending. He noted also that part-time services spending was lower, and that is expected to continue in FY 2024 given the move to temporary space during construction. Initial discussions relating to the FY 2025 budget have begun, with a request for level service budgets. FY 2025 is a transition year. It will include the first full year with an Assistant Director, given that the position is expected to be filled mid-year in FY2024. Director Struzziero discussed the timeline for the FY 2025 budget approval process, noted that he would be working with Co-Chair Keohane and Trustee Olmsted as he has in the past, and confirmed that the Trustees would have an opportunity to review the budget before it is presented.

Temporary Space

As previously reported, plans for temporary space are now in place. The Select Board formally approved use of the Benton Library for children's services at their August 7 meeting. Memoranda of Agreement have or will be signed for the three temporary locations.

Director Struzziero will be briefing staff on the transition and will be exploring coverage options for part-time staff. He is considering the schedule for closing down the Library and arranging for the move to temporary space. He noted that data bases should remain available and staff will likely be able to provide on-line services during the transition to temporary space. The building will likely remain open until Thanksgiving.

The trustees stressed the importance of clear and regular communication as the process unfolds. Co-Chair Keohane reported that CHA, the owner's project manager, has considerable expertise and will assist with the move.

Building Project Update

Co-Chair Keohane referred to the project time-line included with the meeting materials.

She reported that there will be working groups that will meet monthly to address issues that may arise relating to the Library's temporary services at the Beech Street Center and the Benton library. Co-Chair Keohane will continue as the Trustee representative to the Benton working group and Trustee Stearns volunteered to work with the Beech Street Center.

Co-Chair Keohane noted that cost estimates were in flight, with increases expected due to the new energy code, stormwater management regulations and electrical hook-ups. The Belmont Garden Club has proposed an accessible Woodland Garden. She referred to a history of the garden included with the meeting materials. The work will be done by the Garden Club; the Trustees will co-sponsor the effort and Trustee Carthy will serve as Trustee representative.

Co-Chair Keohane noted that a resident had spoken at the Select Board meeting about the ownership of historical artifacts and the relationship between the Town, the Library Trustees and the Historical Society. She noted that the Select Board was also thinking about this. She suggested that any space used by the

Historical Society in the new building should be subject to a license agreement similar to other independent non-profit organizations that use public buildings, including terms of use and suitable contributions. These discussions are ongoing.

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Co-Chair Keohane reported that the Belmont Library Foundation would be mobilizing the recognition process in the fall, including naming conventions. They will also be seeking satisfaction of remaining pledge payments and generally creating renewed interest as the project approaches the demolition and construction stage.

Trustee Stearns advised that the Friends were looking for a secretary and co-treasurer to join their executive team. They will be accepting donations of books until September 23, the date of the next book sale and town-wide yard sale.

Schools Update

Director Struzziero met with the new Superintendent, Dr. Jill Geiser. He discussed the possibility of the Young Adult librarian possibly working out of the new high school library during the transition period. No decision has been made.

Other Business

Trustee Carthy noted that the Office of Community Development is receptive to adding another crosswalk on Concord Avenue to facilitate safe access to the new library for those parking on the opposite side of the street, assuming funding challenges can be met. He will continue to pursue this with the appropriate Town departments and committees.

Next Meeting: September 21, 2023 7:00 p.m.

Future Meetings: October 19, November 16, and December 14, 2023

Adjourn

Co-Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, August 24, 2023
- Director's Report, August 2023
- June 29, 2023 meeting minutes

- August 2, 2023 meeting minutes
- June 2023 Statistics
- July 2023 Statistics
- Building Project Update, August 22, 2023
- State Aid Expenses April 1-June 30, 2023
- Director's Report August 2023
- Wildflower Garden History