

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

December 14, 2023

DATE: January 30, 2024
TIME: 2:33 PM

Co-Chair Kathleen Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference through Zoom technology. Also attending were Co-Chair Elaine Alligood, Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted, and Trustee Mary Stearns, Library Director Peter Struzziero, Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfindner, and Head of Circulation Grainne Griffin. Trustees Gail Mann and Mark Carthy joined the meeting in progress. Belmont Middle School Principal Russ Kupperstein joined the meeting in progress.

Public Comment

Head of Circulation Griffin reported that there has been no interruption of service to the public with the move of adult materials to the Beech Street Center. Co-Chair Keohane said that the public is pleased with the library's operation at the Beech Street Center.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the November 16, 2023 Trustee meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Co-Chair Alligood.

Library Update – Operations, Director's Report

The Concord Avenue Library closed just before Thanksgiving. The doors are locked but phones are answered. Staff are packing materials. The temporary libraries at the Beech Street Center and the Benton Branch Library provide adult and children's services, respectively. Vice Chair Olmsted asked how the public is notified about the library's closure. The Library Director said there are signs on all the library doors telling patrons to go to the Beech Street Center or the Benton Branch Library. After the move from the Concord Avenue library is completed in early January, the temporary libraries will have more materials and IT equipment.

The Town of Belmont is setting up a new phone service and it will be placed into service at the temporary libraries. Co-Chair Keohane asked to get the timeline for installing the new phones in the temporary locations.

- Introduction to Assistant Director

The Library Director introduced Lauren Pfinder, the recently appointed Assistant Library Director. He acknowledged the efforts of Co-Chair Keohane, Vice Chair Olmsted and the administrative team in establishing the Assistant Director position.

- Staffing Updates

There are 3 open full time positions and 5-7 open part time positions due to attrition and promotions. Trustee Carthy asked if the library has lost any staff members because of the moves. There has been no staff loss other than the attrition described.

- State Aid

The Library Director provided the state aid spending report for Q 3 and will provide the Q 4 report at the January Trustee meeting.

FY25 Budget Update

Co-Chair Keohane and Vice Chair Olmsted are working with the Library Director to prepare the FY 25 budget. The Library Director and Trustees Olmsted and Keohane met with the Town Administrator and the Select Board to review the library's proposed FY 25 budget which has a 2.81% increase. They will meet next week to plan for a no-Override budget in case the Override vote does not pass in April. The Library Director and Co-Chair Keohane discussed the requirements for state certification. Co-Chair Keohane will send an update to the Trustees after the meeting the week of December 18th.

Co-Chair Keohane asked that the Trustees have a mid-year review of the FY 24 budget at the January meeting.

Moving and Transition Services Update

The moving timeline has been pushed forward. The moving contract is expected to be signed on Tuesday December 19, assuming completed review by Town Counsel. The move to the Benton Branch Library is scheduled to be completed by December 22. The OPM and the moving company do not work after 12/22 and resume work 1/2/24. The move into the Beech Street Center will occur during the first week of January.

The Assistant Director said that the collection at the Beech Street Center will have new books, periodicals and select nonfiction books.

Co-Chair Keohane commended the library staff for how quickly they have mobilized to move and set up the temporary locations.

Building Project Update

Co-Chair Keohane said that the RFP for the contract to demolish the library building has been announced and the Building Committee is waiting to receive bids. She expects that demolition may begin by January 22, 2024.

Policy Vote – Surplus Goods

Trustee Mann prepared a draft policy for the disposal of pre-demolition surplus equipment for review by the Trustees in the absence of a Town of Belmont policy. The draft policy referenced state laws regarding the disposal of assets. The Trustees reviewed and amended the draft for the disposal of surplus property.

The policy states that surplus items will first be offered to other town departments, to other libraries and charitable organizations and then sold at a "yard sale." The Library Director will prepare an inventory of the items to be disposed of, record their disposition, and funds received. Co-Chair Keohane asked for a sunset provision of 12/31/25 for the policy.

Trustee Mann moved, and Trustee Stearns seconded, the motion to approve the Belmont Public Library Policy to Dispose of Surplus Items, as amended, and to delegate authority to each of Co-Chair Keohane

and Director Struzziero, or either of them, to act on behalf of the Trustees under said policy. The motion was passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Olmsted asked that, when the Veterans' Memorial on the first floor is removed, it be disposed of respectfully. Co-Chair Keohane has met with representatives of the veterans' organizations to ensure this is done.

Key Topics

Co-Chair Keohane, a member of the Library Building Committee, reported that the construction documents for the new library are being finalized and should be released in the late January or early February.

Using Community Preservation Act funding, the library's historical artifacts will be removed for cleaning, restoration, and storage.

Prior to demolition, Belmont Media will create a video of the inside and outside of the library building using its drone.

The Library Building Committee is preparing a detailed project plan with a timeline.

Liaison Updates

- Friends/Library Foundation Update

Trustee Stearns said that the Friends of the Belmont Public Library will meet January 9 at 9:30 at the Beech Street Center. The Friends will continue to support adult, young adult, and children's programming, as well as the museum pass program, while the library is in temporary spaces.

- Schools Update

Trustee Olmsted described efforts to provide young adult services during construction of the new library. She and the Library Director met with Belmont Middle School Principal Kupperstein and the School Superintendent Geiser to discuss how to provide these services. The Belmont Public School Department has requirements that may constrain provision of young adult library services in the middle school building which Trustee Olmsted summarized as union issues and building access restrictions.

Co-Chair Keohane said that Library Trustees want to partner with the Belmont Public Schools and asked Vice Chair Olmsted, the Library Director and Principal Kupperstein to look for ways to provide students access to library expertise. The Library Director will set up follow-up discussions with Principal Kupperstein. Co-Chair Keohane said the move out of the library building requires a decision during the week of December 18 as to where to put the young adult book collection. The discussions will continue as both parties explore possible scenarios. Co-Chair Keohane asked for updates on this matter as it progresses.

Principal Kupperstein asked to continue to explore ways for students to access the Belmont Public Library librarians' expertise. Co-Chair Alligood suggested consideration of a hybrid model where students could make appointments with a Belmont reference librarian using Zoom.

- Belmont Library Foundation

Co-Chair Keohane reported that the Trustees and the Belmont Library Foundation have submitted a joint application for a Massachusetts Cultural Grant.

The Belmont Land Trust will sponsor the first floor conference room in the new library to be named the “Waverly Oaks Room.”

The Belmont Library Foundation and the town fund for the building project overseen by the Trustees continue to receive honored pledges for the new building. The Trustees will transfer an additional \$550K to the town bringing the total contributions to date to \$2.9 million.. The next monetary transfer is anticipated to be in February. All pledge donations are expected to be received.

Collectively, the Trustees and the Foundation are on track to meet our commitment of \$5 million in private funding towards the new building.

Next Meeting: January 25, 2024 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Co-Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Stearns seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary D. Stearns, Acting Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, December 14, 2023
- Director’s Report, December 2023
- November 16 meeting minutes
- 2023 State Aide Expenses Q3
- Building Project Update 12/12/23
- November 2023 Statistics
- Surplus Asset Disposal Policy Draft