

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

March 21, 2024

DATE: May 13, 2024
TIME: 11:56 AM

Co-Chair Kathleen Keohane called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology. Also attending were Co-Chair Elaine Alligood, Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted, Trustees Gail Mann and Mary Stearns, Library Director Peter Struzziero, Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfindner, and member of the public and candidate for Library Trustee, Stephanie Cahoon. Trustee Mark Carthy did not attend the meeting.

Co-Chair Keohane opened the meeting by acknowledging that this would be Co-Chair Alligood's final meeting as a member of the Board of Library Trustees. Co-Chair Keohane acknowledged her many contributions to the Library over her 18 years of service and the entire Board thanked her.

Co-Chair Keohane then welcomed Stephanie Cahoon and the Trustees noted they were looking forward to her joining the Board.

Future meetings

The Trustees agreed to the following future 2024 meeting dates: April 25, May 16, June 20, and July 18. The Trustees are also holding May 23 as an alternate date, subject to confirmation of quorum attendance for the earlier date.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the February 15, 2024 Trustees meeting, as amended, were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Trustee Mann.

Library Director's Update

Director Struzziero referenced his Directors' Report furnished with the meeting materials. He noted receipt of two e-mails addressed to the Trustees' e-mail account, and summarized the content. One referenced the status of the middle school Library and the other was about an artist who could provide services to the Library. Currently there are young adult books in the Beech Street Center. Vice Chair Olmsted noted efforts to set up a temporary young adult library in the new middle school, but this turned out not to be feasible due to various school policy and other limitations. Director Struzziero and Vice Chair Olmsted will continue to explore options for young adult library services during construction.

Director Struzziero confirmed that he regularly monitors the Trustees' e-mail account and consults with the Co-Chairs about appropriate response and/or action. Vice Chair Olmsted noted that individuals sending e-mails to the Trustees' account expect that they will be forwarded to all the Trustees. After discussion, Director Struzziero noted that e-mails sent to the Trustees' account would be forwarded to all the Trustees along with the Co-Chairs' recommendations.

Library Policies

Director Struzziero reported that he is reviewing the various library policies in light of the planned move to a new facility. He will be bringing to the Trustees at a future meeting a priority list for policy review and modification.

Library Operations Update

Co-Chair Keohane reported that the Benton working group met to provide feedback regarding the operation of the temporary location of children's services at the Benton library. Vice Chair Olmsted suggested the possible expansion of hours at the Benton location. Co-Chair Keohane noted that no request was made for expansion of hours at the most recent meeting. Co-Chair Keohane suggested a presentation and discussion at the next meeting on how the various temporary locations are working.

Library Trust Accounts

Trustee Mann reported that she and Co-Chair Keohane, along with Director Struzziero, Assistant Director Pfindner, and Deitra Barnes, met with the Town Treasurer, a member of her staff and the Assistant Town Administrator to review the various Library trust accounts held by the Town. The accounts have now been reconciled, including the transfer of monies to the Town for the new library. The various entries for income and principal appreciation were explained. The Town does not have a specific policy outlining how and when income earned on the accounts must be spent. The Treasurer's office will be sending a mid-year recap and the Trustees will then consider whether to transfer income into expenditure accounts.

Building Project Update

Co-Chair Keohane reported that the date for submission of construction bids has been extended to March 27 to accommodate the potential bidders. The Library Building Committee plans to award the contract at its meeting on April 9.

The old building is now substantially demolished. Co-Chair Keohane reported that there was a theft at the site of the medallion over the front door. A police report has been filed and a detective is looking into it. Stakeholders have been notified. She also reported that the granite has been harvested for reuse.

Co-Chair Keohane stressed the importance of consistency in signage, the website and branding across various media and support organizations. She and Marcie Schorr Hirsch, another member of the Library Building Committee and former President of the Belmont Library Foundation, are seeking a proposal from a firm that might be able to help with this effort.

Key Topics

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Co-Chair Keohane noted that she and Trustee Stearns met with the President of the Friends and Trustee Mann attended the most recent meeting of the Belmont Library Foundation. She noted that both the Friends and the BLF are looking for the Trustees' views on combining the two organizations. Vice Chair Olmsted noted that Ed Barker's (President of the Belmont Library Foundation) presentation on this subject was informative and that it would be helpful to hear from the Friends as well. The duplication of effort with respect to newsletters, accounting matters, and databases, in addition to limited volunteer staff and leadership and patron confusion, were raised as reasons for a possible combination. Trustee Stearns concurred that coordinated messaging is very important. The Trustees will consider putting

together a position document on integrating the Friends and the BLF. Co-Chair Keohane also noted that the current President of the Friends intends to step down in June.

School Update

Vice Chair Olmsted noted that although the Library Update originally scheduled for the February 13 School Committee meeting had been hoped to be rescheduled for March, it has been rescheduled to May by the school administration.

Other Business

Trustee Stearns reported that the Friends of the Council on Aging will hold its annual fundraiser, a big band concert, in September on a Thursday evening, and asked if the Library would close early that day to facilitate set-up. On motion by Trustee Mann, seconded by Vice Chair Olmsted, it was unanimously voted to approve closing the Beech Street location at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 26, 2024.

Next Meeting: April 25, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Co-Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, March 21, 2024
- Director's Report March 2024
- February 15, 2024 meeting minutes
- February 2024 statistics