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BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

May 16, 2024

DATE: August 22, 2024

TIME: 3:48 PM

7:02 p.m. The meeting

Trustee Mary Stearns, acting chair for the meeting, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology. Also attending were Trustees Stephanie Cahoon, Mark Carthy and Gail Mann, Library Director Peter Struzziero and Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfindner. Chair Kathleen Keohane and Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted did not attend the meeting. Members of the public Prashant Jeloka and Larry Link (directors of the Belmont Library Foundation) and Susan Lewis also participated in the meeting.

### **Review of Minutes**

The minutes of the April 25, 2024 Trustees meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Trustee Mann and seconded by Trustee Stearns.

### **Library Director's Update**

Director Struzziero referenced his Directors' Report furnished with the meeting materials. He reported that a Belmont author, Ronald Kessler, had donated a collection of his books to the Library and that they would be placed with the Belmont authors' collections in the new building.

Director Struzziero advised that he was reviewing Library policies and had furnished a policy review grid with the meeting materials. He suggested that Trustee Cahoon replace retired Trustee Alligood on the ad hoc policy working group and work with Trustee Stearns. Director Struzziero noted that staff professional development strategy was part of his annual goals and that he was working with Assistant Director Pfindner to create a more formal plan that supports the new library and increases morale. The plan will include a three-pronged approach, including general training, library specific training and locally provided safety and lifesaving training, with programs generally available for all staff and others targeted and specialized for individualized development. In response to a question from Trustee Stearns, he advised that state aid would likely fund development and he did not think it likely that new funding would be required in the shorter term. He also noted that he collaborates with human resources and other Town departments, insurers and the like to access generalized training.

Director Struzziero said there were no updates to the status of the Library's FY 2025 budget to be included in the Town Meeting materials but he and Chair Keohane had met with Town Administrator Garvin about accessing funds in the operating budget for items that will be required for operation of the new building. He then requested that income generated by the Jane Dustan Children's Educational Fund be moved to an expenditure account to cover expenses anticipated for children's programs and services for the balance of the calendar year. On motion by Trustee Mann, seconded by Trustee Stearns, it was voted unanimously to transfer \$10,000 from the Jane Dustan Children's Educational Fund to the Jane Dustan Children's Expenditure Account.

### **Building Project Update**

Trustee Stearns provided an update on the building project on behalf of Chair Keohane. She noted that the construction start date is now May 20, due to required testing of top soil at the site. The target completion date has been pushed out and should be available by the date of the next Trustees' meeting.

She reported that there were weekly meetings with the contractor and a separate process to review change orders. There is a meet and greet with the contractor scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup> focused on neighbors and abutters, and a groundbreaking ceremony is being scheduled for the week of June 12. A furniture working group is in place; Director Struzziero has engaged the staff's assistance and the goal is to complete selection before the end of the calendar year. Fundraising efforts are ongoing.

### **Key Topics**

Director Struzziero provided an update on the recent survey designed to take a pulse check on the operation of the temporary locations. Respondents noted they would like additional hours at the Benton library. He noted that he and the Chair would like to propose to the Select Board that the Benton remain open until 7:30 p.m. one additional evening (Tuesday) and that the two-hour closure from 12:00-2:00 to accommodate staff break/lunch time and neighborhood congestion be changed to one hour from 12:30-1:30. The modifications are sensible, and provide consistency for patrons. Trustee Cahoon noted the importance of consistency. On motion by Trustee Mann, seconded by Trustee Carthy, the proposed revised hours for the Benton library were approved unanimously.

### **Schools**

Assistant Director Pfindner reported that she and Vice Chair Olmsted attended the May 7<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting. They provided a building project update, a summary of operating hours and services at the temporary locations, and information on the summer reading program. The student representative inquired about teen pop-up space; the library is trying to offer young adult services in temporary locations. They highlighted the intergenerational programming at the Beech St. Center during April vacation and in response to questions from Chair Moriarity described the library card initiative.

In response to questions about young adult books and services and the attempted collaboration with the Middle School staff, Director Struzziero noted that the initiative is on hold as discussed at the April meeting but that the library continues to look for ways to be helpful.

### **Friends/Library Foundation Update**

Trustee Stearns reported that the book bins around town have been filled with books and have provided some revenue to the Friends. The Friends organization is providing the Chenery book awards.

She reported that there would be a new slate of officers up for election at the June 11 in-person annual meeting. Trustee Cahoon is a director of the Friends and Trustee Stearns is an ex-officio member of the Board. There were no applicants for the annual scholarship sponsored by the Friends. The Friends will support the ice cream truck on June 22 for the summer reading program at the same time as the Recreation Department's splashdown event at the Town pool.

Trustee Mann noted that the BLF continues to receive donations, and mentioned again the generous contribution from the Reardon family in memory of long-time librarian Emily Reardon.

### **Other Business**

A question was raised about offering additional book return bins at different locations in Town. Director Struzziero noted that would require additional custodial services not currently available.

Director Struzziero noted that he would be conducting a review of an FY 2025 goal setting for Assistant Director Pfindner now that a new coordinator of reference librarian has been hired.

Director Struzziero noted that he would be taking time off later in the month.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Joleka inquired about volunteering with the Friends organization, with a goal of having broader demographic representation. It was noted that some volunteer opportunities were event driven and that there were fewer of those volunteer opportunities during this transition time in temporary spaces. Director Struzziero added that the website has made it easy to volunteer with the friends, and that many non-event related opportunities exist. Residents are encouraged to join the Friends and provide contact information.

**Next Meeting:** June 20, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

### **Adjourn**

Trustee Stearns moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

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Exhibits:

- Agenda, May 16, 2024
- Director's Report May 2024
- April 25, 2024 meeting minutes
- April 2024 statistics
- Draft Policy review guide