

Chair Kathleen Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology. Also attending were Trustees Stephanie Cahoon, Gail Mann and Mary Stearns. Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted joined the meeting for the budget discussion. Mark Carthy did not attend the meeting. Library Director Peter Struzziero and Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfindner attended the meeting. Circulation Director Grainne Griffin and member of the public, Susan Lewis, also attended the meeting. Children's librarian Deborah Borsuk attended the meeting through the conclusion of her remarks.

Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC)

Paul Roberts, member of ITAC and liaison to the library, presented an update. He reported on the committee's current initiatives, noting a focus on cybersecurity and efforts to encourage Belmont to prepare and implement a cyber incident response plan. Mr. Roberts described security steps the library could take to reduce risk, such as double authentication and back-up. Director Struzziero noted that the minuteman library network largely handles security issues and this has been an area of focus for them.

The recent incident in Arlington involving infiltration of contractor business e-mail accounts and requests for rerouting of wire transfers was mentioned. Careful monitoring is essential. Chair Keohane requested that the department heads be alerted of this risk. She noted that the Library Building Committee also communicated with the assistant town administrator about potential vendor vulnerability.

Mr. Roberts noted that the committee hopes to work with the Town's new IT director and is interested in promoting community engagement on these issues. He also noted that a "fix-it" clinic is scheduled for November at the Beech Street Center and that the person who started these clinics and promotes grass roots repair culture will visit our event.

Public Comment

Deborah Borsuk, children's librarian, remembered Shirley Gerber, a long-term volunteer who died on September 6th at the age of 99. Ms. Gerber was passionate about the library and about inspiring creativity in children.

Ms. Borsuk reported on activity at the Benton temporary location. The summer season was busy. They continue to respond to logistical questions. Community feedback is regularly solicited and has been positive. Ms. Borsuk described the walking and biking program, designed to reduce vehicle congestion in the Benton neighborhood. She also noted that a new book club was being started.

Review of Minutes

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

Library Director's Update

Director Struzziero referenced his Directors' Report furnished with the meeting materials. He reported on activities related to the start of the school year, including the 5th grade library card initiative, kindergarten parent letters, and library staff attendance at the various back to school nights.

Director Struzziero noted that the town-wide yard sale is scheduled for Saturday, September 28th. He reported that he attended the Belmont Center Business Association meeting, noting the Library's desire to support this community. Director Struzziero commented on the changes to the layout of the temporary space at the Beech Street Center, with more materials now upstairs and more seating on the first floor. Chair Keohane noted that Select Board member Elizabeth Dionne complimented Director Struzziero and the staff for covering the desk at the Beech Street Center during a recent meeting.

Building Project Update

Chair Keohane reported that foundation work continues and is on schedule and budget. She highlighted the tight process for reviewing change orders and noted that the building is still on track for a late fall 2025 move-in date. The furniture working group continues to work on selection with final recommendations to be presented at an upcoming building committee meeting. .

Key Topics

Staff Development Day

Director Struzziero noted that he was targeting a Friday in January, a relatively slow time at the Library, for an all-staff training day. He would bring the entire team together and schedule all-staff general and specialized department heads training. He intends to reach out to the police chief for safety related offerings. Assistant Director Pfindner referenced neuro-diversity training, which is being done by the Lark Center in Norwood. On motion by Trustee Mann, seconded by Trustee Stearns, it was voted unanimously to approve closing the Library's various locations for one day in January 2025 for a staff development day, the actual date to be finalized by Director Struzziero and Chair Keohane.

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Trustee Stearns reported that the Friends participated in Town Day, joining the Library table. They plan to have a table at the Belmont Farmers' Market in October and their membership drive will start in November. The Friends' fundraising goal for the last fiscal year was exceeded. The book donation process (bins around town during the transition) is going well. The Friends were pleased with summer reading program participation, particularly among young adults. The organization is working on its mission statement. Trustee Stearns mentioned Friends' publicity considerations, including possibly regular articles in the Belmont Voice. Chair Keohane noted the importance of coordinated communications from the Library and support organizations.

Trustee Mann reported on the most recent meeting of the Belmont Library Foundation. The BLF received a proposal from Selbert Perkins, a marketing and branding firm also working with the Library, regarding design and administrative services for the "Wall for All". Ed Barker, the President of the BLF, has met with the president and vice president of the Friends to discuss the organizations' respective missions and cooperation.

Library Policies

Director Struzziero reported that the policy review work continues. A further conversation about the review process will be undertaken at a future meeting.

FY 2026 Budget

Vice Chair Olmsted joined the meeting for this discussion, having attended back to school night earlier in the evening. Chair Keohane commented on the shortened preparation cycle this year as the Select Board considers collapsing the May/June Town Meeting schedule. She noted that compensation assumptions were provided after the initial preparation of the budget and were input directly by the Town. Chair Keohane and Director Struzziero highlighted that the FY 2026 budget shows a significant increase from the prior year because the Library is currently occupying temporary space with reduced hours and services. The move to the new building, with the full resumption of hours and services, will of course require more funding, with the line items in the draft FY 2026 budget prorated to reflect the move in FY 2026. Town officials are aware of this. Director Struzziero also noted the importance of maintaining the new building.

Director Struzziero referenced the Trustees' prior discussion about consolidating facilities maintenance and noted the desire for a revised consolidation agreement that addresses the Library's unique needs and concerns. He mentioned utility costs and the benefit of energy efficiency factors and the solar panels in the new building.

Vice Chair Olmsted inquired about the second technology librarian, and Director Struzziero confirmed that it was reflected in the draft budget. Director Struzziero noted that two union contracts will be renegotiated and the results will be reflected in the budget; currently available information, such as step increases, are already reflected in the line items.

Vice Chair Olmsted noted again the truncated schedule and the plans for three budget summits. She mentioned the goals for budget growth rates for the school and the municipal departments. Chair Keohane noted the key messages for the Library's submission, including return to normal operations and custodial and building maintenance needs. She noted that the experts involved with the project have provided input.

On motion by Chair Keohane, seconded by Trustee Mann, it was voted unanimously to submit the Library's initial budget submission to the Town for review, with further details about the custodial roles and responsibilities to be forthcoming.

Next Meeting: October 17, 2024 7:00 p.m.

Note: Chair Keohane to reach out to Trustee Carthy on his availability for the October meeting.

Adjourn

Trustee Mann moved to adjourn the meeting and Chair Keohane seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, September 19, 2024
- Director's Report September 2024
- August 15, 2024 meeting minutes
- August 2024 statistics report