

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

February 27, 2025

DATE: March 24, 2025
TIME: 8:20 AM

Chair Kathy Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology. Also attending were Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted and Trustees Mark Carthy, Gail Mann and Mary Stearns. Trustee Stephanie Cahoon did not attend the meeting. Library Director Peter Struzziero and Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfendner attended the meeting. Circulation Director Grainne Griffin and members of the public Ed Barker and Tara Donner, both candidates for Library Trustee, also attended the meeting.

Director Struzziero noted that Jack Clark, technology librarian, has moved on from the library to realize a new opportunity. An additional technology librarian is in the budget in connection with the opening of the new building; the library will search for a replacement for Jack Clark as well as the newly approved position. We thank Jack for their service to the library and wish them the best in future endeavors.

Report by Ed Barker, President of the Belmont Library Foundation

Ed Barker, President of the Belmont Library Foundation, discussed with the Trustees the BLF's work on the "Wall for All" – the new Library's donor recognition plan. He discussed the location of the Wall in the new building, work to date on naming conventions for individual and corporate donors, and honoraria and in memoriam donations. The BLF plans to seek further guidance in this regard from the expert firm with whom it is working on the project. Chair Keohane noted that the BLF's recommendation, with input from the firm, will be presented to the Board of Library Trustees for approval. The Trustees requested time to review the preliminary recommendation before it is submitted for final approval. Chair Keohane noted that the BLF, which is funding the Wall, will be gifting the Wall to the Library.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the January 16, 2025 Trustees meeting, as amended, were approved on a motion made by Chair Keohane and seconded by Trustee Carthy. Chair Keohane abstained from the vote because she did not attend the January meeting.

Library Director's Update

1. Director Struzziero referenced his detailed Director's Report included with the meeting materials which includes information on collaboration with the schools, Friends' funding of additional new museum passes, and programming.
2. Assistant Director Pfendner noted the use of iPads by staff to monitor the collection and reduce use of paper.
3. In response to a question, Director Struzziero reported that the Library is on track to satisfy state-mandated materials acquisition. He also reported that like other Departments in Town, the Library has experienced an increase in telephone system allocated charge but that he does not anticipate a problem with the overall FY 2025 budget at the Library.

FY 2026 Budget

Director Struzziero reported on the budget meeting with the Warrant Committee. The Committee recognized the Library's strong fiscal management. The budget package highlights the role of the Trustees and the accreditation requirements of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).

Chair Keohane noted that the Town Administrator and Facilities Director are planning to attend the March Trustees meeting to discuss a shared service model for facility maintenance and repairs. A lengthy discussion ensued about this model, including budget implications and the importance of the Library maintaining supervisory responsibility for custodial support, given the unique needs of the Library and the increased hours of operation as compared with other Town buildings.

Building Project Update

1. Chair Keohane reported that the chair of the Library Building Committee is coordinating with the Belmont Voice to provide a project update.
2. Chair Keohane noted that the project is largely insulated from the risk of future tariffs because the contract is in place and the steel has already been delivered. The LBC monitors progress carefully. There are still contingency funds available.
3. The current project schedule calls for the building to be substantially complete in October, with move-in work taking approximately two months.
4. The project team is working on MOAs with community partners who will have dedicated space in the new building, including the Belmont Media Center, the Belmont Historical Society and the Friends of the Library. Steve Rosales is the representative for the Historical Society. The working group for the BMC MOA intends to seek clarification on certain issues from Town Counsel.

Library Policies

The Trustees discussed a proposed revision to the Library's Privacy Policy. Director Struzziero noted that much research was done in connection with the revision, with a focus on how patron information is protected and response to government requests for information. Guidance from the American Library Association and the Minuteman Library Network was reviewed. After discussion, on motion by Trustee Stearns, seconded by Chair Keohane, the Privacy Policy, as amended at the Meeting, was approved unanimously.

Director Struzziero noted that Mary Stearns will be leaving the Board at the end of her term in April, mentioned her willingness to continue working with staff and trustees on policy review and revision, and the Trustees concurred. Trustee Stearns' decades long involvement with the Library in various volunteer capacities was acknowledged.

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Trustee Stearns reported that the Friends membership response exceeded that of the prior year. She noted that members of the Friends would be willing to lead tours of the new building. The Friends intends to once again support the summer reading program, possibly including the popular ice cream truck. She noted that the Friends and the BLF are in active discussions for how they can best support the new library and its programs and services going forward.

Schools' Liaison Update

Vice Chair Olmsted reported that the School Committee continues to work through its proposed FY 2026 budget. February 1, 2025 K-12 enrollment figures were 4,396 students, with kindergarten and first grade enrollments smaller than other grades. The first day of the next school year is scheduled for September 3, 2025. The School Committee has put off its discussion of a later school start time for older children until the fall. Christmas break next year will be a full two weeks.

Library Logo Update:

Director Struzziero noted that a core team comprised of staff and two trustees have been working with the Library's consultant on choosing a new logo for the library. Discussions are ongoing and decisions should be made soon.

Next Meeting: March 20,2025

Adjourn

Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Carthy seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, February 27, 2025
- January 16, 2025 meeting minutes
- January 2025 statistics
- Owner's Project Manager Monthly Update February 2025
- Owner's Project Manager Total Project Update