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DATE: February 3, 2026
TIME: 11:22 AM

Trustees of the Belmont Public Library
Board Meeting
September 16, 2025

Trustee Chair Kathy Keohane called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. Those in attendance were Chair Keohane, Vice Chair Corinne McCue Olmsted, Trustees Ed Barker, Tara Donner, Gail Mann and Stephanie Cahoon as well as Director Peter Struzziero and Assistant Director Lauren Pfendner.

Also present were Town Administrator Patrice Garvin and Selectboard member Matt Taylor.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Renewable Energy Credit Proposal

Patrice Garvin provided background regarding the Town's proposal to engage with Belmont Light on solar credits (SRECS). Solar panels installed on the High School, Chenery, Rink and the Library are included in the proposal. The town wishes to direct revenue from the sale of these credits to the Capital Stabilization Fund, which is used for future Town expenses. The board discussed the use of the library's credits as a potential subsidy for its electric costs, which are likely to increase as the building is all electric. Members also asked that departments be treated equally regarding solar credits and installation expenses. There is some concern that the cost benefits of solar energy will decline due to changes in federal policy. Chair Keohane stressed that as the town is Belmont Light's largest electricity user that the town should receive a favorable rate from the Belmont Light Department.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Keohane motioned to approve the August 14, 2025 minutes as amended. Corinne McCue Olmsted seconded the motion and the board voted unanimously to approve.

Library Update -

Director Struzziero reported that the Library provided numerous successful summer programs, including the summer reading program. Some drew larger crowds than others, but board members noted that success should be measured in ways other than numbers. The library seeks to provide a broad array of programming to meet the needs and interest of all patrons, even niche groups.

The director noted the passing of long-time staff member Fred Dooe, who worked at the library for 47 years and was a valuable friend and mentor.

Budget Update

Director Struzziero shared the current draft of the FY 27 budget, which is higher than the previous two years due to the move into the new building and the return of full services. He noted that the main drivers of the budget numbers include restoring library service hours to previous levels, but largely due to increased maintenance and building costs. Building maintenance and custodial costs are increasing 81% over prior year with full time custodial staff, the building cleaning contract and the expiration of warranties from the construction of the building. The Board is working in partnership with the town to revise the current consolidation agreement. The significant change with the new agreement would see the building maintenance expenses move to the shared service side. The Director noted that we are moving into a new and larger building, but we are not looking to increase staff. This is possible due to the careful planning of the staff and the board to implement automation efforts.

Early work on mapping out a FY28 budget shows a more typical run rate with a target increase of 3.5%. The changes in the 26 and 27 budgets compare against a less than full service budget and staffing.

Chair Keohane moved to approve the draft budget with the understanding that the building and facilities maintenance costs are assumed to transfer to the shared service budget. Trustee Cahoon seconded the motion and the board voted unanimously to approve.

Building Update

The construction of the new library continues to be under budget, despite increased construction costs, in large part because of skillful planning and project flexibility. November 20 will mark substantial completion with the grand opening scheduled for January 10 and 11.

The Trustees will accept two gifts on behalf of the library, one from the Belmont Land Trust as well as the Wall for All from the Foundation.

The Town administration has requested that the library pay for refurbishing of the Beech Street and Benton facilities, although such an arrangement was not provided for in the MOA signed by the Town administration and library trustees. It was noted that the Library has made substantial investments in each of these facilities during our time in those spaces with costs in excess of \$100,000. The Director will provide a detailed list of the improvements and investments made already in both locations.

Historical Society MOA

In the review process, in response to a request from BHS, the timeline of the agreement for the initial term has been modified to four years. In future terms, the duration will be three years. As part of the agreement, the library has included a provision that the BHS host at least 4 programs per year and that they consider as well a contribution in materials or technology. The MOA has been approved by the Historical Society Board.

Ed Barker moved to accept the MOA contingent upon review of any changes. Vice Chair Olmsted seconded the motion and the board voted unanimously to approve the measure.

2020 Fund

All contributions to the construction of the new building were deposited into this fund, which will close at the end of the 3rd quarter. The remainder will be gifted to the Selectboard to be used exclusively for the building project. The board will vote in October on this measure.

Behavior Policy

The Policy Committee updated the language of this policy, specifically regarding food and drink, and cellphone use. The policy is consistent with those of peer libraries.

Gail Mann moved to approve the policy as amended and Tara Donner seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve.

Key Topics

The proposed Belmont Center Overlay district would allow a 350 bed hotel on Concord Ave. across from the library. The hotel would provide traffic and parking challenges for the library. This topic was raised for awareness. A Comprehensive Plan is being redone. Chris Ryan will attend the October meeting to review.

Revolving Fund — At the prior library board meeting, the trustees voted unanimously to request that the town create a new revolving fund for rental revenues from the new building. The trustees had requested that the by-law language include specific mention of the use of revenue to pay part time staff who may be required for rental events. Although the Bylaw review committee reviewed and approved the new revolving fund language including the provision for expenses associated with part time wages, there was not support for this from the Select Board. The Trustees discussed the proposed revised language from the Select Board Chair Matt Taylor. It was noted that this restriction would result in decreased rental revenues. The Board felt that it was important to accept the revised language to establish the fund so that it is available as the building opens.

Chair Keohane motioned to approve the current language regarding the revolving fund. Gail Mann seconded the motion and the board approved it unanimously.

Next meetings

October 16 via Zoom

November 13 via Zoom

December 18 in person

Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m. with a second from Trustee Mann and unanimous approval from the board.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Cahoon, secretary

Attachments:

Meeting Agenda

August minutes

August Statistics

Administrative Report
LBC Budget for August
Agreement for Purchase and Sale of REC
Behavior Policy Draft
CHA monthly update