

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 6:15 p.m. at the Main Library. By roll call vote, those present were:

Axelrod	Jones	Margolis	Vanderkay (remotely)
Burstein	Livingston	Martin-Page	
Healy (remotely)	Lohe	Mehta	

Also present: S. Slymon, Director; A. Reed, Assistant Director, E. Mitchell, Assistant Director of Technology and C. Wilkins, Collection Development.

I. Approval of Minutes

M It was moved to accept the minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting. This motion was seconded. By roll call vote, this motion was passed unanimously.

II Correspondence

K. Martin-Page read a thank you letter from T. Golden regarding the Staff Appreciation Party.

III. Library Director Annual Evaluation

M A motion was made to accept the Library Director's annual evaluation. This motion was seconded. By roll call vote, this motion passed unanimously.

IV. Library Director's Report

Circulation: The circulation stats were distributed to the Board. The Director noted that the Minuteman auto-renewal policy went into effect January 1, 2020 and has provided a pretty dramatic bump in circulation. This should contribute to inflated circulation numbers all year. The Director did warn, however, that the year over year numbers next year will stabilize.

Financial: The Director reported that the budget is in pretty good shape considering all the upheaval in the Business Manager area since the beginning of the fiscal year and that about 58% of the budget should have been expended but instead 65% was. She did note that some of this is normal as we pay many large annual subscriptions in July. C Wilkins has been updating the spreadsheet, while we continue to look for a new Business Manager.

Library of Things: C. Wilkins discussed how staff make decisions about what gets added or withdrawn from our Library of Things collection. The guiding document is the collection development policy, which outlines the criteria to be used for both adding to and removing library materials. In terms of selection, factors like relevance to the needs and interests of the community, durability, physical space limitations, and price are considered. For withdrawing items, the focus is on condition, age of the item(s), and usage statistics. Some examples are: (1) adding coloring books and colored pencils to the collection around the holidays a couple of years ago because they were trendy among adults. This trend ran its course relatively quickly and usage dried up, so it was removed from the collection. (2) A number of vinyl record players were added to the collection to complement the vinyl record collection. Within a year, it was realized that the players were not durable enough to withstand repeated usage and transport between the library and patrons' homes, so they were slowly decommissioned as parts have broken. In general, staff try to foster a culture of experimentation with items for the Library of Things collection and are always open to suggestions from both staff and the public.

This Month in Libraries: The Director reported that in another ill-conceived move, ALA announced that any and all political activity at the midwinter conference would be contained to a free speech zone, fatuously named “The Square”. The backlash from librarians across the country was swift and damning. Widely viewed as a not very subtle response to the raucous protests that greeted the CIA when they exhibited at ALA Annual in Washington, DC, this attempt to suppress free speech at a librarian conference did not go over well. If you are interested in seeing what librarians had to say about this, you can use this search string to view comments on Twitter: Square + ala + midwinter.

The Director attended all ALA Council meetings and found them extremely alarming. Effectively, ALA is financially insolvent. In 2016, they had an endowment of \$14 million and now have \$2 million, and they are running a \$4 million deficit in their FY’20 operating budget. They have sold their building on the Gold Coast in Chicago for \$5 million and signed a 15-year lease on a facility which costs \$125,000/mo. The administration presented this as a solution to their problems and seemed unable or unwilling to discuss meaningful structural reorganization beyond a drive for “member engagement”. Membership is currently at an all-time low. The Director shared how anyone interested can learn more about ALA’s budget.

Facilities: The painting and the floor have been completed in the IDEASPACE/Rabbit Hole. The space is gorgeous and the Trustees were encouraged to take a look. C. Urbano has designed it almost single-handedly, and it is really coming together. The Director has invited R. MacKenzie and C. Urbano to come to the March meeting to talk about the progress and provide a tour.

The Children’s Room will be closed from February 10-13, 2020. Plans have been made to use Hunneman Hall as an auxiliary Children’s Room. The carpet will be installed in the Children’s Room and the Youth Services offices while it is closed. It will be the same carpet used in the Teen and Tween rooms in green. The old info desk area outside of the elevator will have the same carpet but in orange. New furniture for the Children’s Room (the first in almost 20 years) will be arriving in April. Staff continue to strive towards using color as one means of wayfinding for patrons. C. Urbano has done an excellent job coordinating this project, especially considering the fact that she has only worked here for two months.

Community Education: Last month the Trustees were informed about the wildly successful staff ELL program. The Director also wanted to mention that staff are also aggressively engaging in education around citizenship and participation in the 2020 Census and are experiencing high demand for those services.

Tech: E. Mitchell has ordered the people counters for the Youth Services spaces. After consulting with Kevin Stokes at IT, the Director hopes to have them installed by the March meeting. New TechLogic self-check kiosks for Brookline Village and Putterham have been ordered. The self-checks units are similar to the three units at the Coolidge Corner Branch. E. Mitchell thought to have them made ADA compliant and will retrofit the Coolidge Corner ones as well.

Personnel: A replacement for Rhonda Mah, the Chinese Language Collection Development Librarian at Coolidge Corner, Yawen Kang started on February 4, 2020 and the Director has high hopes for her. One of two possible Chinese speaking part-time Library Assistants for the Children’s Room has been hired. Silvia Lee will start soon, and interviews for a second part-time Library Assistant will begin later this month. Interviews for the Business Manager position will begin during the week of February 10. There have been quite a number of staff who have

applied for the Romanow Fund. S. Sulser, Library Assistant III at the Putterham Branch, has been named the new Union Steward for the libraries.

Social Media: It was suggested that the library send their newsletter to Town Meeting Members and the Advisory Committee. M. Burstein volunteered to send them a link to the newsletter.

Sharaga Garden: This spring, the garden in the back of Coolidge Corner will be spruced up and dedicated to the memory of Paula Sharaga. There will be a plaque installed and some fencing. The Director and Assistant Director will be providing perennials from their home gardens. More details to follow.

Meeting Room spaces: A number of politicians have been reserving library meeting rooms for their political campaigns, and there is a question as to whether this should be or not be allowed, as there is a question on using town resources for a political gain. A motion was made, and by roll call vote, it was authorized to allow the Director to make a decision on using the meeting rooms on advice of counsel. J. Margolis will try to reach out to the Secretary of State and inform the Director of their opinion.

Patriot Act: The library has not been served with any court orders since the last meeting.

V. **Committee Reports**

Programming: The Programming Committee has decided to rule out books as possible Brookline Reads selection that are published by Macmillan Publishers, due to the library's embargo. Brookline Reads has narrowed their choices to three titles: The Friend, by Sigrid Nunez; Talking to Strangers: what we should know about people we don't know, by Malcolm Gladwell; and The Last Train to London, by Meg Waite Clayton. The Brookline Reads Committee will read all 3 books and make a decision on which title to choose.

Brookline Library Foundation

The new Foundation President is Mary Weitzel. The IDEASPACE has been funded by the Foundation. The direct mail piece for the annual appeal was sent to 26,000 households. The Boston Marathon team consists of 5 runners. Museum passes will be expanded to include outdoor opportunities, which will mean an increase of \$1,000.

Branding Committee

The Branding Committee will consist of M. Burstein, V. Goldman and K. Livingston. The Director will let M. Burstein know the staff members that will be joining the committee. M. Burstein will let the Director know of the committee meeting dates.

VI. **Old/New Business**

Potential By-Law Change: M. Burstein suggested changing the bylaws to define a quorum as 7 Trustees to ensure Trustee attendance below 7 members would not impair the Board from conducting Trustee business. No action was taken.

M Budget Transfer: By roll call vote a motion was made to transfer \$25,000 from the network infrastructure line and \$7,227.33 from the peripheral replacement line and move it to the 53105 data processing line. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Legislative Day: The Library Legislative Day will be held on April 2, 2020 at the State House. P. Mehta will send a google poll to each Trustee to see who will attend.

VII. Adjourn

M There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimous:

Voted: To adjourn at 7:56 p.m.

A true record.

ATTEST



Koinonia I. Martin-Page

Secretary

2020