

Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees, Public Library of Brookline

A virtual meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library was convened on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 6:18 p.m. Those Trustees present were:

Burstein; Cawthorne; Chanyasukit; Healy; Hung; Lohe; Livingston; Margolis; Martin-Page; Vanderkay.

Shakespeare and Zelkha were absent.

Also present were: S. Slymon, Library Director; and E. Mitchell, Assistant Director for Technology

All votes were conducted by roll call vote.

I. Comments from the Public

A. No comments from the public. No public present.

II. Secretary's Report

A. Thank you and holiday cards received from Anne Reed, Tom Golden, Kenny Yim, and Get out of the Kitchen. Golden and Yim are library employees.

M: Lohe moved to accept the minutes. Margolis seconded. Minutes were approved.

III. Library Director's Report

A. Had two weeks of contactless curbside pick-up and a few snow days.

B. Covid rapid tests are going to be distributed at the Coolidge Corner branch.

C. Some personnel changes:

a. Discussion of a custodian who has been out of work for 8 months. Will know tomorrow if he is cleared to come back soon. Three custodians are currently doing the work of four. Discussion of a way to thank them. Will vote on it when the fourth custodian returns to work.

b. Have had difficulties hiring a temporary custodian. Temp agencies are not a viable option.

D. Covid absences are down among staff.

E. New Assistant Director for Administration starting next week: Danielle Savin.

F. Middle managers will be getting 3 weeks of vacation instead of 2 weeks once the new AFSCME contract is settled. Still less than most union members get, but the

change will make us more competitive.

- G. Trial date for the Karimi lawsuit will be in April. The lawsuit is a discrimination lawsuit against the Town & Library by a former employee who has filed multiple lawsuits and grievances. Once this is resolved, the understanding is that there are no further avenues for grievance or litigation.
- H. Accident on library property on Sunday, February 6th. A DPW plow driver hit a Bobcat driven by another DPW employee. Concern was expressed for the Bobcat driver who was injured. A library bench and light post were also damaged.
- I. Thank you to Emily Mitchell for acting as interim director. Thank you to other department heads and staff as well for making Director Slymon's absence and return run smoothly.

IV. Treasurer's Report

- A. Lohe gave the half year budget report. Some funds are untouched and some funds, like the chair's discretionary fund, are going over what was budgeted. Both were reduced a few years ago when endowment funds were down. Trustees to consider reallocating funds for the next fiscal year.
- B. Lohe reported from the Investment Committee meeting. The market is down by 4% so endowment is down from 5.3 to 5 million. Return will be low this year. The final endowment numbers are calculated based on March's investment report.
- C. The Staff Appreciation Committee has \$3,550 to spend on staff appreciation for the rest of the fiscal year, through June.

V. Trustee Committee Reports

- A. Programming Committee Report: Holding off on Brookline Reads until there are fewer Covid concerns.
- B. Staff Appreciation Committee is in the process of getting gift cards for the staff.

VI. Old and New Business

- A. Burstein proposed adding a book gift to the motion passed at December's meeting for honoring retiring trustees for ten or more years of service. The gifted book would include a book plate matching the ones put in library books to honor them. Lohe requested a financial limit put on the gift. Livingston reported that material gifts versus more ceremonial recognition were discussed by the Honors Committee, and they decided against a physical gift.
- B. Budget Amendments:
 - a. Last meeting Trustees discussed filing a budget amendment at Town

Meeting this year to increase the library budget. Trustees want to ensure any proposed amendment is very solid so as not to damage the library standing at town meeting. Some departments are still not up to pre-covid budgets, so we might not have as compelling a case.

- b. Director Slymon says the budget is going to press tomorrow and cannot be changed. Library is getting a 2.9% increase. Operating expenses cut during Covid are fully restored. More money allocated for part time personnel. Library should receive certification.
- c. There was discussion about the library's uncompetitive department head and middle management salaries. There needs to be external pressure and a whole town restructuring. Employee morale is low town-wide due, in part, to salary concerns. Library morale is relatively high, as staff has felt pretty supported through covid. Trustees can keep the salary conversation going.
- d. Trustees will look to FY24 to put together an initial budget that allows for more staff and higher salaries.

C. Other Business

- a. Burstein expects to hold March and April as remote meetings.
- b. Elections are coming up.
- c. Margolis reported that the US Supreme Court heard arguments on the lawsuit against the City of Boston over the city's refusal to fly a religious flag from the flagpole in front of town hall. The Public Expressions Committee will discuss the library's flag policy and report at the next meeting.
- d. New Town Health Commissioner.
- e. The Police Chief search is going well. They hope to have someone by the end of June.
- f. Anti-racism training consultant (Dr. Carter) will be coming the week of February 28th. Trainings will not happen yet.
- g. ARPA Update: The library has requested ARPA money for hard goods, staff compensation, and printer leases.

VII. Adjourn

Margolis moved to adjourn. Cawthorne seconded. Passed unanimously.

Adjourned 7:43 p.m.

A true record.

ATTEST



Koinonia I. Martin-Page

Secretary

2022