

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

A hybrid meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library was convened on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 6:17 PM.

Present: Burstein; Chanyasukit; Fredkin; Goleman; Hung; Lohe; Livingston; Margolis; Martin-Page; Vogt; Vanderkay; Zelkha

Also present: Library Director, A. Hirst; Assistant Director to Administration, D. Savin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director, C. Hesslein; Reference Librarian - Special Collections, J. Steytler; Putterham Branch Supervisor, G. O'Day

Trustees voted to convene the meeting.

All votes were conducted by roll call vote.

- I. Comments from the Chair
  - A. Burstein congratulates Hirst on her first anniversary as Library Director
  - B. Burstein introduces the newly appointed Putterham Branch Supervisor, Ginger O'Day
- II. Comments from the Public (5 minute limit)
  - A. Natasha Naim, a resident of Brookline and life-long patron of the Library, expresses how important the Pride flag and Black Lives Matter flag that hung at Brookline Village were to her and to the community
  - B. Burstein informs Naim to reach out to the Trustees directly should they have any additional questions, concerns, or thoughts
- I. Speaker: Jess Steytler - Reference Librarian - Special Collections
  - A. Steytler, the official archivist at PLB, presents on the regular archival activities, current major projects, and future plans for archival work
  - B. Steytler explains how the Trustees can be involved in archival work, namely to review recommendations for items to remove from the Library's archives that don't fit into the PLB's scope or mission
  - C. Steytler's presentation is available in the Document Center
- II. Secretary's Report
  - A. Minutes
    1. Zelkha motions for the July 11, 2023 minutes to be approved; Vogt and Margolis second the motion; minutes are unanimously approved
  - B. Correspondence
    1. No correspondence to review
  - C. Other items
    1. No other items to review
- III. Treasurer's Report

A. Other

1. The FY23 final figures were recently reviewed by Lohe, Hung, and Goleman; came in at \$31k under budget
2. August endowment statement is not yet available, but the endowment continues to grow
3. No questions from Trustees about the Treasurer's Report

IV. Library Director's Report

A. Statistical

1. Savin provides an explanation that the total numbers for August circulation statistics are correct, but the breakdown of statistics by branches is off due to a coding error; the coding error has since been corrected
2. Savin explains the turnover metric as an equation that takes into account the size of the collection and how often items are getting used; explains that the higher the turnover number is, the more items are moving; this metric indicates the collection's relevancy to patrons; explains that PLB's goal is to always have a turnover rate be above 2; explains that the rate listed in the report is a snapshot – it is accurate as of the time / day the report is run
  - a) Margolis offers that turnover metrics can be overrated; posits that there is value in having items that don't circulate often
3. Vogt suggests that these stats be shared in spreadsheet form so that graphs can be easily created
4. Burstein asks if we have a record of the last major weeding completed; Savin explains that it happened when PLB was closed due to COVID and mentions that weeding is completed regularly as needed and that PLB is due for a major weeding soon
5. Hirst acknowledges that circulation performance was better in August than July, which is a great testament to Brookline Village and Putterham branches being open on Saturdays this summer, since circulation historically goes down in August months
6. Hirst explains that the entire Minuteman Network experienced a surge in circulation last August (August 2022), so all network members have lower circulation rates compared to that for August 2023.

B. Financial

1. Hirst mentions that her Director's report will contain a 'News and Noteworthy' moving forward
2. Hirst describes the successful staff day in July that the Trustees generously funded; Hirst explains that a crucial part of that staff day was having staff view, comment, and vote on the PLB's FY24 Action Items
  - a) Four FY24 Action Items were determined as a result of this process and will be reviewed by the Trustees later in the meeting
3. Hirst is working with the Town's Fleet Manager, Purchaser, and Planning Department to get the bookmobile project moving forward
  - a) After meeting with vendors, Hirst learned that the original vehicle selected for the bookmobile is not be suitable for use as a

- bookmobile – the axles aren't strong enough to accommodate; as such, a new vehicle will need to be used
- b) The most likely contender for this new vehicle is a Mercedes Benz electric Sprinter, which is coming out this fall; Hirst is waiting on pricing and availability
  - c) Hirst explains that if the electric Sprinter isn't available or released in time, the PLB may have to cede ARPA funds back to Town, as the money has to be committed by end of FY24 or a few months into FY25
- 4. Zelkha asks why we can't procure a hybrid vehicle, especially if it will only be driven around Town and therefore won't use much gas
    - a) Hirst explains that the grant is written as procuring a fully electric vehicle and that she continues to research additional options / alternatives
  - 5. Margolis suggests to investigate having a custom vehicle built
  - 6. Fredkin suggests we look into a vendor called BrightDrop, who has an electric cargo van by GM
  - 7. Burstein offers that the unforeseen extended timeline for procuring this bookmobile is not ideal; Hirst agrees that it is disappointing
  - 8. Hirst explains that Eversource is providing grants for EV chargers and that we are aligning the procurement of charged with the bookmobile purchase
  - 9. Hirst explains that Brookline Village will be getting an EV charger; the Trustees will need to meet with the Buildings and Grounds committee to approve the placement of the chargers; installation timeline will be around April 2024
  - 10. Hirst provides staffing updates – Librarian I, Librarian III - Reference Supervisor, and Librarian II - Cataloger jobs are currently posted

#### V. Trustee Committee Reports

- A. The Policy Committee met on Friday, September 8, 2023 to discuss two draft policies – Volunteer Policy and Library Grounds and Public Expression; the Policy Committee voted to recommend both policies to the full Board for review and approval
- B. One substantive change was made to the Volunteer Policy; 'business casual' was replaced with 'neat casual' to be more inclusive
- C. The Policy Committee did not make changes to the Library Grounds and Public Expression draft and recommends the policy as written, with a caveat that the Board may wish to revisit this policy in the future for potential edits / additions
- D. Margolis offers that 'campaign activity' listed as an allowable activity in the Library Grounds and Public Expression lacks definition and questions if we should encourage partisan activities on library grounds
- E. Burstein references that a lot of this language references ALA policies about free speech that govern what libraries can or cannot dictate
- F. Goleman asks if this policy reflects standing operating procedures for libraries more generally, or is it specific to PLB

1. Hirst clarifies that some libraries have similar policies and that this draft was vetted by Town Counsel prior to bringing it to the Board
- G. Burstein offers that if any Trustee wants to see changes made to these policies to send a track-change document back to the Policy Committee
- H. Margolis asks if we have a definition for what kind of work volunteers may do; Hirst offers examples like Girls Who Code program, English Language tutoring; also explains how volunteers will be helpful in launching our home delivery of materials initiative in advance of procuring the bookmobile
- I. Hirst explains importance of volunteers for the Library – volunteers tend to act as ambassadors for the Library and help expand our services beyond staff capacity
- J. Margolis motions to vote on each policy; Fredkin seconds; Volunteer Policy is unanimously approved; Library Grounds and Public Expression is approved with ‘Yes’ votes from all Board members present save for Vogt, who abstained
- K. Both policies will be added to the PLB website

VI. Old Business

- A. No older business to review

VII. New Business

- A. Volunteer Policy and Library Grounds and Public Expression Policy approved by Board
- B. FY24 Action Items
  1. Hirst explains how staff at July’s staff day reviewed, made suggestions, and voted on proposed Action Items for FY24; the four Action Items for FY24 are: Amplify Results & Recommendations of Diversity Audit; Programming for Neurodiverse Patrons; Expanding Access to the Public Library in Public Housing Communities; Delivery of Library Materials to Homebound Patrons
  2. Burstein asks if Amanda has been in touch with BHA and senior housing communities; Hirst explains that Guy Harris, Coolidge Corner Branch Supervisor, is working with Ruthann and others from BHA
- C. Hirst explains that Action Items are meant to be discrete, goal-oriented, and time-bound, with measurable metrics, and that these four are meant to be completed this FY, but that they can be carried on through subsequent years
- D. Zelkha offers that PLB should partner with Brookline High School, who has a program where students can get credit for volunteering
- E. Vogt offers that all Action Items are externally-focused and that she is surprised staff-related diversity efforts aren’t listed; Hirst clarifies that these Action Items are meant to align with PLB’s programs, services, outreach goals and that internal work to implement the Carter Development Group’s Racial Equity Study is ongoing.
- F. Burstein mentions that he needs to a meeting of the DEI Committee
- G. Margolis makes a motion to accept the Action Items as proposed; Livingston and Goleman second; Action Items are unanimously approved

VIII. Remarks for the Good of the Order

A. Chair provides Trustees an update on his health; Fredkin offers thanks to library staff and Trustees for sharing condolences

IX. Adjourn

A. Motion from Margolis to adjourn meeting; Fredkin seconds; motion to adjourn meeting is unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Minutes drafted by Courtney Hesslein

A true record.

ATTEST



Koinonia I. Martin-Page

Secretary

2023-2024