

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

A virtual meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library was convened on Monday, November 20, 2023, at 6:16 PM.

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

Also present: Library Director, A. Hirst; Assistant Director to Administration, D. Savin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director, C. Hesslein

Trustees voted to convene the meeting.

All votes were conducted by roll call vote.

I. Comments from the Chair

- A. Burstein thanks Board for their flexibility in accommodating today's meeting date, which moved from its originally scheduled date due to Town Meeting
- B. Burstein informs Board that the December Trustees meeting will happen as usual on the 2nd Tuesday of December (December 12, 2023)
- C. Burstein advises that today's meeting will last for 1.5 hours or less and that any topics not able to fit into this timeline will be discussed in December's meeting

II. Comments from the Public (5 minute limit)

- A. One member of the public joined the call; she identified herself as Macy Davis, a Children's Librarian at The Public Library of Brookline who lives in Brookline; explains that she recently took on the role of union steward, representing the full-time unionized staff at The Public Library of Brookline; offered to answer any questions about union the Board may have

III. Secretary's Report

- A. Minutes

1. Martin-Page reported that there were no requests received for revisions or changes to the drafted October 10, 2023 meeting minutes and requested motion for minutes to be approved. Lohe moves to approve the minutes; Livingston seconds. Minutes are approved

B. Correspondence

1. No correspondence received.

C. Other items

1. No other items to discuss.

IV. Treasurer's Report

A. Other

1. Lohe explains that the written report is posted for all to read; no questions for Treasurer

V. Library Director's Report

A. Statistical

1. Included in the report is attendance data and circulation data for each location for 2019, 2022, and 2023 (2020 and 2021 are excluded due to being atypical pandemic years) to demonstrate pre-pandemic vs. current levels
2. Hirst explains that the Library is working through ARPA Round 1 and Round 2 grant funding, that the Library moved forward with an automated materials handling system to sort materials (it will likely be completed in May 2024 – POs have been created and the Town signed off on contactor quotes, electrician quote, and demo quotes for install), and that a pollinator garden at Coolidge Corner (in front) is underway, with design being handled now and planting to be completed in the spring

3. Hirst reminds Board that all locations will close early (at 3pm) on Wednesday, November 22 and will be closed on Thursday, November 23 for the Thanksgiving holiday

B. Financial

1. FY24 budget on track; Town asked for level-funded budget; Library submitted an expansion request to meet the market
 - a) Margolis comments that he believes the Library seeking additions to budget does not reflect poorly on staff / their budgeting abilities
2. Vogt asks how the decreased attendance and circulation numbers track with budget and / or staffing needs; Hirst clarifies that the attendance / circulation data only shares one piece of the story, that the other things we do outside of checking in and out books, such as programming, community engagement, digital resources, etc. aren't reflected in those stats
3. Burstein mentions he would be curious to see how today's digital material and print material numbers compare with the pandemic years; Hirst explains that in general, library electronic resources trended upward during the pandemic and have since leveled off; also explains that the Library made budgetary decisions that limited usage of our electronic resources rather than reduced demand
4. Martin-Page asks about April and May data showing attendance at zero; Hirst clarifies that there was a technical issue with the gate counting system; Burstein suggests adding in asterisk to explain that anomaly

5. Hirst explains recent changes in staff and that the Library has not received any Freedom of Information Act requests or court orders

VI. Trustee Committee Reports

A. Investment Committee and Finance Committee

1. The endowment is down again, with October having been a bad month for the stock market; however, the stock market is now performing better and the next statement should show some portfolio value recovery
2. The Investment Committee asked Bob Mast, Chair of the Board, if funds should be better protected by re-allocation (moving some funds out of equities and putting them into money markets, etc.); Bob informed Board that State Street had already done this, putting around \$200k into a money market account earning 5%
3. The Investment Committee will be meeting in February 2024 with State Street representatives; Burstein offers to join meeting in his role as Chair of Library Trustees

B. Policy Committee

1. The Policy Committee met to review a proposed Parental Responsibility Policy, which intends to replace the current Unattended Child Policy
2. Lohe asks what precipitated a review of current policy; Hirst explains how she reviewed all policies when she came on board and prioritized ones that were not in line with her professional experience; also explains that staff expressed having trouble implementing this particular policy
3. Hirst worked with Youth Services staff members to draft new policy where responsibilities are outlined for parents / guardians, rather than

children; researched local and national libraries to determine standard approaches and had proposed policy vetted by Town Counsel

4. Vogt explains how the Policy Committee's discussion focused on two main topics: 1.) how the library would deal with a child not following the policy / if a child is unattended when the library closes and 2.) if eliminating the age requirement is necessary
5. To address 1.), Hirst clarifies that the language in the proposed policy about contacting Brookline Police Department (BPD) is not meant as punitive; it is to keep a child safe / in protective care should the child's parent / guardian not be present after Library closes
6. Hirst also clarifies that the Policy Committee voted 3-0-1 (one abstention) to approve the proposed policy and move to have the full Board vote on it
7. Various Board members offer viewpoints about the necessity of involving BPD and ask if BPD is prepared for this kind of collaboration; multiple Board members mention that the policy should reconsider removing the minimum age limit
8. Margolis offers that the proposed policy should be reconsidered in full in light of the Board's comments, that the Policy Committee should prepare an updated proposal for the Board to review in December; Margolis makes a move to defer policy consideration to December meeting; Fredkin seconds
9. Hirst clarifies that the Policy Committee already approved this policy and asks what actions the Board is specifically asking the Policy Committee to do should this be deferred to December's meeting; Burstein instructs all

Board members to email Vogt and Hirst with their exact thoughts on what needs to be done / added to policy to assuage their concerns; Burstein clarifies that by emailing Vogt and Hirst directly, Board members are not in violation of open meeting law; Burstein also offers that policies are not set in stone and that the Policy Committee can decide to revisit any policy at any time

10. Board votes 10-2 to defer discussion to December's meeting

C. Development Committee

1. To be discussed at December's meeting

VII. Old Business

A. No old business discussed

VIII. New Business

A. Parental Responsibility Policy

1. See above

B. Review vault materials for deaccession

1. Not discussed; to be added to December's meeting agenda

IX. Remarks for the Good of the Order

A. Burstein is convening DEI Committee next week; the Staff Appreciation Committee will soon be meeting to plan the January holiday party

B. The Trustee Development Committee met in November; their meeting will be discussed in December's meeting, which will be held in-person / hybrid; Burstein asks Trustees to inform him and Amanda via email if they cannot attend December meeting

X. Adjourn

- A. Burstein asks for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Livingston moves to adjourn;
Margolis seconds
- B. Trustees vote to adjourn the meeting

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Minutes drafted by Courtney Hesslein

A true record.

ATTEST



Koinonia I. Martin-Page

Secretary

2023-2024