

## **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, Feb. 11, 2025

**Present:** Chanyasulkit, Fredkin, Goleman, Hung, Livingston, Lohe, Margolis, Martin-Page, Vanderkay, Vogt, Zelkha

**Absent:** Burstein

**Also Present:** Interim Library Director, D. Savin; Interim Assistant Director for Administration, R. Brennan

**Motion to convene** by Lohe; Vanderkay seconds. All present vote yes, 6: 24 p.m.

All votes were conducted by roll call.

- I. **Comments from Chair:** Executive order for hybrid meetings expires March 31, 2025. If it is not renewed, BOLT will need an in-person quorum for meetings, starting in April.
- II. **Comments from the Public**
  - David Pomeranz, present at meeting, made 4 points:
    - Signage directing visitors to Trustee Room is poor
    - Programs such as “Speaking from the Heart” that occur on Saturdays exclude Sabbath observing Jewish patrons. Requests consideration of this by those responsible for programs
    - One of the automatic doors at BV frequently stops working, making entry and exit difficult for disabled patrons. Requests permanent repair
    - Requests that both CC and BV open on Sundays in summer (D. Savin states the Library is hoping to make this happen if staffing permits.)
- III. **Approval of Minutes**, Motion to approve, Lohe; second, Livingston: 10 approve, 1 abstention
- IV. **Treasurer’s Report:** As expected, half-year expenses are low. By May, expenses will catch up with allotment. The bill from the Town for books and materials has been received and will be paid soon.
- V. **Library Director’s Report**
  - Over 50 Youth programs with 2000+ attendees in January.
  - Lunar New Year events well-attended at all 3 branches.
  - Putterham director, Ginger O’Day, interviewed by BIG and Brookline CAN re senior services.
  - New reference desk installed at CC with sitting and standing options.
  - Two staff committees that had been on hiatus have now been re-started: Staff Tech and Policy.
  - Re 2026 budget, no date yet for meeting with Advisory Committee.

- Two internal promotions: BV Librarian III Supervisor of Youth Services, Elissa Martel; BV Reference Librarian I, Kenny Yim

#### **Discussion of report**

- Lohe requests Interim Director use full names of staff in Director's Report as a professional courtesy. Savin responds that for privacy reasons staff can opt in or out; she will use last names in the future for those who opt in.
- Margolis expresses concern about safety of loading dock during Pierce construction and emphasizes the Town's responsibility to ensure this.
- Vogt asks about staff morale. Savin replies that while she cannot speak for the staff, she is taking small steps such as re-starting two committees that are beginning to improve communication among staff and with administration.
- Martin-Page asks if the budget is staying balanced and whether there have been conversations with the staff about the budget. Savin replies that we are on target with the budget, something she has shared with department heads. Savin has not had a full staff meeting yet. There has been so much to do. Full staff day planned in March. Savin agrees that more communication with the staff about the budget is needed.
- New Executive Assistant to Library Director hired Feb. 9.

### **VI. Trustee Committee Reports**

- Finance Committee:
  - Chair Lohe reports a brainstorming session about how Trustee funds are spent. The fact that spending is self-determined and discretionary means that it should be subject to review and reconsideration intermittently. Current approach is aspirational, intended to motivate growth and innovation. Since we typically come in under budget, Lohe asks if this approach makes sense. Should we run leaner?
  - Possible uses of the trust funds: underwriting mid-career development; internships for college students to encourage library careers among diverse groups. Lohe asks how we can find out what staff would appreciate in terms of Trustee financial support.

#### **Discussion of report**

- Savin notes that the staff can't do more than its numbers allow even if funds are available.
- In relation to remarks about deteriorated areas in all three branches, Hung directs the Library Functions Committee to meet and to consider, in collaboration with the Finance Committee, possible improvements to areas of importance to staff. Hung asks Library Functions to report at the March meeting.

- Staff Appreciation Committee
  - Chair Chanyasulkit reports that plans have been made for a staff bowling trip and lunch on Tuesday afternoon, March 25, at American Flatbread and Brighton Bowl. Trustees are invited.
- DEI Committee
  - Chair Fredkin reports that the DEI committee met. Fredkin also spoke with Kevin Mackenzie, Chair of Brookline Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Community Relations (CDEICR). The Commission supports Trustees attending its meetings; Commission has funds not used yet.
- Trustee Development Committee
  - Lohe and Goleman explain that they need Board's assistance to complete two sections of the New Trustees Handbook: Trustees' biographies and list of duties and responsibilities of a Brookline Library Trustee.
  - Model bios and questionnaires were distributed. All materials due by **FEB. 18**. Email to [CarolTroyenLohe@gmail.com](mailto:CarolTroyenLohe@gmail.com) or [JGoleman57@gmail.com](mailto:JGoleman57@gmail.com)
- Ad Hoc Committee for Hiring a Consultant
  - Chair Savin reports that she interviewed two candidates and met with the Ad Hoc committee to describe the proposals of each and to discuss her rankings.
  - Committee members (J. Goleman, Trustee; J. Steytler, Librarian) unanimously supported the rankings in a roll call vote.
  - Savin reports that first-ranked candidate has been contacted and expressed interest by submitting a formal proposal shortly before BOLT meeting.
  - Savin and Goleman express optimism that the credentials and suggested approach of the candidate are a good fit with Library needs. Committee wishes to move forward with the process.
  - Discussion that follows focuses on whether the charge to the committee does or does not require BOLT to give its permission for the hiring to move forward. While stating that the original charge did not necessitate a vote, Hung accepts the wish for one.
  - Motion by Lohe, second by Vanderkay: *Allow the Ad Hoc Committee for Hiring a Consultant to complete the hiring process with a price ceiling of \$45,000. If cost rises above this amount, BOLT must call a special meeting or wait until the next monthly meeting to move forward.*
  - Motion passes: 8 Yea, 2 No.

**VII. Old Business:** Livingston asks if anyone can replace her as a volunteer at the March 15 training for Team Brookline.

**Comments from Public** (*out of order for technical reasons*)

- Lisa Shatz requests that the Library prepare a display of photos and letters in honor of Aaron Fuerstein, Malden Mills owner and philanthropist, for Jewish American Heritage Month in May.

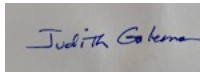
**VIII. New Business** None

**IX. For the Good of the Order**

- On behalf of a patron, Martin-Page requests that the Library order *The Bay State Banner*, a significant Boston newspaper for the Black community. Interim Assistant Director R. Brennan explains that while there have been technical difficulties in completing the order, the Library has now subscribed to it directly for the BV branch.
- Hung announces with enthusiasm that M. Burstein has pulled papers to run again as Trustee.

**X. Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn by Livingston, second by Lohe. Vote is unanimous. Meeting adjourns at 9:00p.m.

Attested

A small rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith Goleman".

Judith Goleman, Secretary