

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 5:30pm

Trustees Present: Anna Halpin-Healy, Micah Manary (chair), Bridget Spann (vice-chair), Robin Lenz, Katy Evans (secretary), Timothy Cherubini (treasurer), Alexander Carlisle

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director), Kirsten Rose (library assistant director)

Others Present: Michael Sussman (representing the Friends)

The meeting was called to order by Micah at 5:30pm.

Reports

I. Approval of Minutes from November Meeting (Katy)

Timothy moved to approve and Micah seconded. All voted in favor, except Katy, who abstained.

II. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report not available at this time.

III. Director's Report (Pat)

This is Pat's last report as the outgoing library director. Her last day is January 5 and the administrative transition is in progress. Highlights from the report include:

- Awarded a COA Grant for Dementia-Friendly Buildings - selecting books on dementia for all ages
- Touch a Truck event
- Library will be closed 12/23 & 12/25, as well as 1/1 for New Year's
- Pavilion is ready to go through Sheds n Stuff. Micah offered to connect with Alex Carlisle and Pam Art to finalize deposit payments by the end of the week. Michael (Friends representative) says he has the invoices and will send the deposit checks to the contractors. Once deposits are received, Sheds n Stuff can then start with their permitting process and coordinate ground works.
- Kira applied for a scholarship from the state to attend PLA (Public Library Association) conference in Columbus, OH and received \$2,500. Rocio is also going.

We paused at this point in the meeting for introductions: Kirsten, Michael, and Trustees.

IV. Friends' Report (Elizabeth)

None at this time (Elizabeth not present). [Representatives from the Trustees attended the Friends' annual meeting, held earlier this same day, 12/13/23]

V. Buildings and Grounds Committee Report (Alex and Robin)

Alex presented the report. Highlights include:

- Alex has taken the Centerline Report and created lists of the recommended tasks, divided by trade (electrical, roof, drywall, general contracting, and Town of Williamstown DPW)
- Pavilion: Alex has received bids for the site prep required. The bid from Galusha Excavating came in \$200 under the quote from Mark Botessi. Rafters have been upgraded to 2x6 inches. The structure should be delivered by Sheds n Stuff the first week of January.
- Bob Menicocci, Town Manager, and Craig Clough, Director of DPW, attended last B&G committee meeting:
 - Bob is seeking to work more closely with the library; DPW willing to do small grounds projects - did walk-around at the library today (12/13) to inspect the exterior. Discussed replacing sidewalks damaged by frost and adding new drainage.
 - Next steps could be to document what was discussed at the walk-around, including drafting a list of responsibilities, and share with those involved.
 - Alex wants to make it easier for the town to maintain the building and grounds and proposed a possible "no mow" section in back of the library
- The McWeeny Family, abutters to the south of the library, are supportive of the pavilion, but asked about foliage that could be installed to provide a more robust visual screen. Alex Carlisle, Alex Charron, and Robin will work with them on what's needed. Discussion ensued about the library's responsibility to provide "screening." Bridget asked if this is written down anywhere? Pat noted that when the library first moved in to the building, there were high expectations for screening, but that this was an agreement with the previous abutters. Bridget asked that this history of the agreement to provide screening be sent to the B&G committee for reference and Pat said she could send it. Alex Carlisle indicated that the B&G committee should also review original screening attempts since these plants (the arborvitae along the parking lot) have grown and might not be providing an adequate visual screen anymore.
- Follow-up on the question regarding payment of the McWeeny's invoice from the electrical work needed over the summer: the Trustees paid the bill and Town is doing deed research.

Old Business

VI. Director Search Committee (Micah)

So far, the search committee has received 9 applications for Library Director. 2 were rejected and 1 applicant withdrew. Robin, Kirsten, and Micah are in the process of doing Zoom interviews with the remaining applicants (1 tonight, 2 on Friday, more next week).

The goal is to narrow down the pool to 2-3 candidates for in-person interviews. The committee has prepared questions to ask all candidates and will use a consistent structure for interviews to try to minimize bias.

The application remains open, even as the process moves forward. Given the timeline for interviews, it is unlikely that a new director will be in place prior to mid-February, at the earliest (the original goal had been to have a new director in place by Pat's departure in early January). The search committee is now proposing that Kirsten serve as interim library director, beginning January 6. This position will likely last a few months.

As interim director, Kirsten would handle the majority of the director's tasks and responsibilities. The search committee is also proposing a Trustee Transition Advisory Committee to support her with larger or more complicated tasks and issues, or responsibilities that we may not be anticipating. Details for this committee are to be worked out, but this might involve weekly meetings with Kirsten. As Timothy noted, this committee would be there primarily to support Kirsten, but it would also give the Trustees the opportunity to better understand the responsibilities of the director.

Concerns were raised about the time commitment needed from the trustees on the Trustee Transition Advisory Committee, as well as about how Kirsten will balance responsibilities of her assistant director position with the new interim director position. Bridget emphasized the usefulness of subs and temporary employees for tasks that other staff can do (for example, sitting in at the circulation desk).

Pat expressed concern that the Trustees are only now proposing that Kirsten serve as interim director. She worries that there will not be enough time to finish passing off her duties and orienting Kirsten to the role before her last day on January 5. Timothy assured her that she does not need to make transition decisions on her own and that the Trustees will work to support Kirsten as she steps into the interim role.

Trustees divided the proposal by the search committee into two votes:

1. establish Kirsten as interim director

2. establish an interim director support committee (Trustee Transition Advisory Committee)

Discussion ensued about whether the Trustees should go into executive session to vote on personnel issues. Micah indicated that this is not necessary.

Micah moved to hire Kirsten as interim director for a January 6 start (vote 1). Bridget seconded.

Discussion: It was noted that the interim position is short-term and that the Town usually approves a 10-15% pay increase for interim staff. Trustees should commit to an appropriate pay increase for Kirsten. It was also noted that the personnel line of the budget will need reconciling at end of year due to previous staff wage increases, and now the interim director position.

Pat proposed that the Trustees pay Kirsten retroactively as interim director going back to October 1 because she has been taking on more and more of Pat's responsibilities. It was noted that the Town would likely not approve an interim director while the current director is still there.

Bridget noted that she met with Pat last week about the director transition. The goal is to transition as much as possible to other staff before Pat's last day to provide a clean break. Pat acknowledged that the transition process has felt awkward in that she has had to write her own retirement announcement(s).

[Anna Halpin-Healy departed at 6:30]

A vote was held on the motion and all voted in favor (vote 1).

Tim moved to establish an interim director support committee (Trustee Transition Advisory Committee) (vote 2). Micah seconded. All voted in favor.

It was determined that Bridget will chair this temporary committee. Timothy and Katy volunteered to join. It was also suggested that Anna could serve. Bridget will follow up with Anna and will determine the make-up of the committee.

Kirsten will determine what personnel changes are needed in the library to allow her to take on the interim role. There are some funds in the library budget for subs, but it's a fixed amount and there's not much remaining. Also, Kirsten noted that the main sub is going away from January-February and other subs are in school. Subs need to be on the Town payroll.

VII. Director Transition (Bridget)

Compiling a list of topics of information to pass on to interim director, including Personnel, Technology, Buildings & Grounds.

Pat's Retirement Party will be held Wednesday January 3, 4-5:30 (Trustees, Patrons, Friends, Staff, Volunteers will be invited). Party planners will need up to \$1,000 for catering and other supplies. Bridget moved, Micah seconded the request. Timothy suggested increasing to \$2,000. All voted in favor of the increased amount.

Micah makes a motion to approve the serving of alcohol at the party. Alex seconded. All voted in favor.

Bridget said she will be in touch for help with supplies, including donations of alcohol since Trustees' funds cannot be used for this purpose.

New Business

VIII. Staff Bonuses (Micah)

Micah moved to give a \$150 bonus to library staff. Robin seconded. All voted in favor.

IX. Alcohol Request (Micah)

See VII. above.

X. Anniversary Open House (Micah)

There will be a request for financial support of anniversary programming coming from Judy and the planning committee.

XI. New Sign (Alex)

Alex presented possible sign designs from David Edge, the graphic designer for the Clark. The next step is to select a sign shape and font style. B&G Committee prefers serif fonts and more traditional sign designs (e.g. the Walpole library sign in the examples given). The designs from David tend towards a more contemporary style. Alex will continue to work with him on new designs.

Remaining questions include what text to have on the sign (for example, whether to include "est. 1874" and the state). Kirsten emphasized that there's limited time to read the sign going around the rotary and it would be better to keep text minimal and emphasize "Public Library."

XII. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Process (Micah & Timothy)

The trustees' budget committee will need to support Kirsten in proposing the FY25 library budget to the town. Micah and Timothy will be on the budget committee; Bridget offered to be involved, if more support is needed.

XIII. Trustee email/Zoom (Micah & Timothy)

No need to discuss - we can use library's account for Zoom interviews.

XIV. Other business

Pat's last Trustees meeting - thank you to her for her massive efforts on behalf of the library. Congratulations to Kirsten on her interim appointment.

Bridget moved to adjourn, Alex seconded. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned by Micah @ 7:06pm.

Next meeting: January 10, 2023 at 5:30pm