

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes DRAFT**  
**May 3, 2023**  
**5:30pm**  
**David and Joyce Milne Public Library**

**Trustees Present:** Bridget Spann (chair), Charles Bonenti, Pat Wilk (secretary), Timothy Cherubini (vice-chair), Robin Lenz, Micah Manary (treasurer),Tamanika Steward (via Zoom)

**Also Present:** Elizabeth Whitney (Friends' liaison)

**Staff Present:** Pat McLeod (library director)

The meeting was called to order by Bridget at 5:30 P.M.

**1. Approval of minutes from April 12:** (Pat W.)

Charles moved to approve. Micah seconded. All voted in favor, except Pat W., who arrived after the vote was taken.

**2. Treasurer's Report April:** (Micah Manary)

Robin moved to approve. Timothy seconded. All voted in favor, except Micah who abstained and Pat W., who arrived after the vote was taken.

**3. Treasurer's Report May:** (Micah Manary)

Other than custodian expenses, we paid for the updating/repair of various CO and fire alarms.

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Trustees Annual Fund, balance April 28, 2023	\$52,364.70
April 14, 2023 Deposit	(Donations) +\$1,520.00
April 14, 2023 Withdrawal	(Expenses) -\$4,123.45
April 28, 2023 Deposit	(Interest) +\$59.67

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**Carpenter Fund**

*Established in memory of Elsie Carpenter to generate income to purchase books and other learning materials for children and young adults, the annual purchase of which will occur as near to May 15 as practicable.*

Balance April 28, 2023	\$10,415.64
April 28, 2023 Deposit	(Interest) +\$11.61

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**Botsford Fund**

*Created from the sale of the Botsford House to be used for projects at the town library. After using some principal for a repair, some of which was repaid by the town and some of which was cancelled as forgiven, it was formally split from the House of Local History.*

Balance April 28, 2023	\$75,144.26
April 28, 2023 Deposit	(Interest) +\$83.75

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Sara Tenney Osborne Fund

*Endowment for Milne Public Library, to be used “for any purpose”, decided annually by the board. We receive the interest from this endowment once yearly.*

Balance April 28, 2023 \$24,629.35

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Sarah McFarland Fund

*Bequest from the McFarland Estate, with no restrictions.*

Balance April 28, 2023 \$300,000.00

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150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Fund

*Checking account for working purchases for the 2024 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.*

Balance April 28, 2023 \$275.00

Timothy moved to approve. Robin seconded. All voted in favor, except Micah who abstained and Pat W., who arrived after the vote was taken.

Designation of Sarah McFarland Fund

Bridget requested that the trustees vote to approve the designation of the Sarah McFarland Fund that was presented at the April meeting by Timothy: Bequest received from the McFarland Estate in 2022. The Trustees have identified uses for this unrestricted fund as: (1) support for implementation of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, and (2) seed funding for the development of additional ideas or initiatives, preferably leveraging funding from other sources (for example, matching grant funds). Funds are held by the town. Charles moved to approve this designation. Timothy seconded. All voted in favor.

#### **4. Director’s Report:** (Pat McLeod)

The Town Select Board included an additional check last Thursday for staff to “say thanks to all for rising to challenges ensuring town services continued throughout the pandemic.” Staff employed before June 15, 2021 and who remained employed as of last week received \$1,000 for full-time staff and \$500 for part-time staff before taxes. This included non-benefitted part-time employees and was paid through ARPA funds.

Charles will be attending the next staff meeting on May 12th to discuss and receive feedback on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Kira has become Chair for the Mass Library Assoc. Programming Committee. She will run monthly meetings to discuss program ideas around the State.

The tree in the courtyard was cut down last week and also the large bush by the entrance. The Town did this work and will assist Alex in stump removal. Alex will take the wood away.

Live Customer Service training will take place on Monday May 15th and the library will be closed. Krista McLeod, of the Mass Library Association, will run the training session. The Friends will pay her fee, mileage, and lodging.

Pat M. attended a Zoom meeting for a proposed public art project at the Five Corners roundabout at the intersection of routes 7 and 43. The goal is a public art installation that will both acknowledge and honor the generations of Indigenous people – including the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation -- who defined this area as part of their homelands long before the 1765 date of incorporation of Williamstown as a village by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Over a dozen organizations are involved in this project.

Pat M. attended a webinar on Friday on “How to Craft and Utilize an Elevator Speech to Prove Your Library's Value.” She promised to send the trustees her speech.

We celebrated National Library week with a banner and by giving out cookies with the library logo and National Library Week 2023 printed on the frosting.

Sweetwood representatives met with Pat M. to discuss adult programming and possible forms of collaboration. Trustees discussed this idea; Bridget made the point that it would be better to transport Sweetwood residents to the library to attend our programs that the Friends are funding, than to bring our programming to them. However, their facilities include a nice auditorium, which we might need for future events. We will continue the conversation.

Attendance at children’s activities:

Tigger Movie 7  
Poetry Collage 6  
Storytimes 8

Attendance at teen activities:

Movie: “High School Musical” 5  
Collage Poem entries: 9

Attendance at adult activities:

“Bright star” a film about poet John Keats: 2  
Open Mic Poetry Night: 33 This event was attended by patrons of all ages.

**5. Friends’ Report:** (Elizabeth Whitney) The Friends Board has not yet met. The League of Women Voters has submitted their request for funding the Banned Books Reading Event. The Friends have agreed to contribute equally: the Friends funding \$1500, the Trustees \$1500, and the League \$1500. The Friends are gathering a group of board members to discuss plans for the O’Brien funds. Chapter Two Books will continue Sunday hours for the foreseeable future, and will add some Monday hours as well. Chapter Two Books will be closed only on Tuesdays.

**6. Old business:**

- a. **Centerline Building Assessment update:** (Charles). Charles has shared the Centerline report with us. The Buildings and Grounds committee talked about how to proceed from here and how to prioritize the work.
- b. **Finance Advisory Committee update:** (Timothy) This group met on Monday, two days before our meeting. Pat M. reported on the status of the current operational budget. It is not likely that there will be a lot of leftover funds to pay for the Centerline report. We realized that we are dependent on the DPW to do so many of our projects; however, we don't meet with them. We discussed the hope of meeting with the DPW on a quarterly basis, after they hire the new DPW head. Also the Financial Advisory Committee is looking ahead to the 2024 budget; what will we be expecting to ask for in the next budget cycle? Three ideas came up: moving recurring electronic subscription costs to the town budget, continuing to request funds for computer hardware, and implementing a trial of additional library hours. We need to advocate for what we need to be added to the town budget.

The topic considered was whether or not to continue this committee. We had five goals and we have contributed to all of them. We had envisioned this group to be opened up to residents with financial experience, and used as a community engagement tool, to help us think through to gift funds, and investment strategies. But because the town holds those funds, there really isn't an opportunity for us to do that. In the future, we could talk to donors about different ways that we could make their funds available to the library. Now we seem to not need community members. Because most of the trustees attend these meetings, there is some redundancy.

Trustees discussed options: abolishing the committee and meeting on an as-needed basis. We agreed that it is not necessary to meet regularly, but Timothy should feel free to call the group to meet whenever there was work to be done—for example, during the budget approval cycle, or the fund drive.

- c. **Budget Update:** (Pat McLeod and Bridget Spann). Finance committee and Select Board has approved \$300,000 for capital building repairs. Town meeting is on Tuesday, May 16. Vote for the budget.
- d. **Strategic Plan Update and Timeline.** (Pat and Charles). Booklets were distributed to staff and they were given two weeks to respond. Most of the staff had very little input, and did not want to be involved in any committee work. Most staff members said they did not understand what these action steps were, and some say they do not want to participate. Charles said he didn't see this project as voluntary, and agreed to meet with them at the next staff meeting.
- e. **Library Director Evaluation Goals:** (Pat M., Timothy, Bridget) Timothy and Bridget have been meeting with the library director regarding performance evaluation goals. Trustees received a status update on goal attainment so far. Bridget pointed out that the evaluation period was October to October. She hopes these status reports will be helpful as we move forward.
- f. **Privacy Policy:** (Micah, Pat M.)

Pat W. moved to accept the privacy policy; Charles seconded. All voted in favor.

**g. Fundraising Policy:** (Micah, Pat M.)

Micah moved to accept the fundraising policy; Robin seconded. All voted in favor.

**7. New business:**

**a. DEI report to the town:** (Bridget)

Pat W. moved to approve the DEI report. Timothy seconded, all voted in favor.

**b. Trustee board evaluation:** (Bridget)

Bridget invited everyone to share a positive comment, or comment on room for improvement. We discussed both positive and negative conditions. Micah, Robin, Timothy and Bridget were all elected for a three-year term in 2022. It's unfortunate that all four will be up for reelection at the same time. One positive: we are doing more advocacy with the town. Still there is room for improvement; we should also go before the Select Board regularly with positive updates, which would serve as an announcement of what we are doing to the town. Pat M. remarked that staff members do not really know the trustees, do not feel comfortable with them, and say that trustees do not engage with them. Timothy said Pat had told us not to interact with staff members, and therefore she was in a position to fix this problem. Tamanika asked how the library could do more to reflect the community, and the community's needs. Pat W. said the library has been, and is still resistant to change: ideas like the "library things" and a cafe, which people said they wanted when we did the strategic plan research, have been brushed aside. We're not taking steps to accomplish these things. Timothy praised trustee participation: we almost always have everyone attending our meetings. Bridget encouraged us to think more about positives and room for improvement.

**c. New trustee orientation checklist:** (Bridget) This checklist is still being revised. If anyone has any input, please send to Bridget. The orientation meeting for new trustees will happen between the May meeting and the June meeting.

**d. Collaboration with Williamstown Garden Club:** (Bridget/Robin/PatW/PatM.)

Micah moved to approve \$5000 for revitalization of the gardens, Pat W. seconded it. All voted in favor.

**e. Thank you to outgoing trustees.** Bridget thanked Pat W. and Tamanika for their specific contributions to the board.

**8. Adjourn:** Pat W. moved to adjourn. Micah seconded. All were in favor. Bridget adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Next meeting: June 14, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.