

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at 5:30pm

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

Trustees Absent: Alexander Carlisle

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (representing the Friends)

The meeting was called to order by Micah at 5:32pm.

Reports

Approval of September Meeting Minutes (Katy)

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

Treasurer's Report (Timothy)

Timothy presented the Treasurer's report. Micah moved to approve and Robin seconded. All voted in favor, except Timothy, who abstained.

Balances as of September 30, 2023:

Annual Fund: \$14,681.26
Botsford: \$75,616.34
Carpenter: \$10,481.27
Conway Glick: \$0.30
Craig: \$12,972.33
McFarland: \$300,000.00
Tenney Osborne: \$24,629.35
Trustee, Friends allocation for renovation fund: \$2,361.44
150th Anniversary: \$ 5,093.75
Total: \$445,836.04

Pat shared that a final distribution from the McFarland estate was made on 10/6/23 to

the McFarland fund in the amount of \$3,575.28.

Timothy reported that 555 letters were sent out for the annual appeal and that 60 donations have come in to date. More information on these donations will be included in next month's Treasurer's Report.

Bridget asked why on the annual cash flow report the projection for "Staffing: Staff appreciation" was lower than the amount approved by the Trustees at the September meeting. Timothy answered that projections are anticipated expenses made at the start of the fiscal year, in many cases based on prior-year actual expenditures. When actual expenses are paid, the increased amount approved by Trustees will be reflected on the report's "actual" lines and will then be the reference point for FY25 projections.

Director's Report (Pat)

Pat presented the Director's Report. Highlights from the report include the Banned Books Celebration that took place on October 3rd and had over 100 attendees. It can be viewed on Willinet.

The parking lot has new LED lights that have dusk-to-dawn photocell sensors. Staff are aware that having these lights on all night may be problematic for neighbors of the library, but that a timer on the lights did not work.

Pat provided an update on the Sheds 'n Stuff gazebo to be put in in the courtyard. Installation could happen this fall before the ground freezes, but preparation of the site would need to start immediately. The gazebo will be supported financially by the Friends, but they will not be able to vote on final approval until their November meeting. In addition, the town building inspector still needs to sign off on the design due to the roof being designed for residential properties, not institutional use.

There was concern about moving ahead with installation before the Friends could vote, as well as concern about unforeseen costs for installation. It was suggested that a spring installation, after the ground thaws, might be better and that there could potentially be a tie-in with the 150th anniversary celebration. Elizabeth indicated that the Friends would be supportive of the idea.

On November 7, there will be a "Touch a Truck" event at the library with the DPW and 6 large pieces of machinery.

The Green Incentives program with Mass Save was canceled, but will be rescheduled.

Friends' Report (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth shared that the Friends sent out their first newsletter and had a 68% open rate (industry standard is 21%). They will be sending their membership mailing out after Thanksgiving.

Everyone should plan to attend the annual Friends' meeting on December 13, which takes place at 4:30pm, right before the Trustees' meeting.

Building and Grounds Report (Micah)

Micah presented Alex's Buildings and Ground committee report. The committee decided to go with an independent designer to have a new library sign ready by early 2024 for the 150th anniversary celebration.

Robin shared that she will be working a lot on the library's front garden beds in the coming days.

The committee is now working on replacing five air conditioning units with heat pumps, which will provide both heat and air conditioning. The heat pump proposed for the Friends' sorting area of the library is on hold, pending repair of the casement windows in that area and the potential of a subsidy or rebate to help pay for this work.

Pat noted that individuals organizing a Town Tree Walk would like to include a few of the trees in the Reading Garden. This would involve labeling the trees and agreeing for them to be included on the Town Tree Walk map. Bridget indicated that the B&G committee should review this proposal and make a decision as part of their overall planning process for outdoor spaces.

The B&G committee is looking for a new member to replace Keenan Chenail. The new member will ideally have building science and construction experience and Trustees should think about who might be good in this role.

Old Business

Staff Appreciation (Bridget)

This Friday, 10/13, there will be chair massages from Emily Banner, gift cards, lunches, and a card from the Trustees for library staff.

Director Search Committee (Micah)

The Personnel Committee of Micah, Timothy, and Robin share that they're developing the search committee for the new library director. So far it includes:

1. Trustees: Micah, Timothy, Robin
2. Library staff: Micah did outreach and Kirsten expressed interest
3. Friends: The Friends decided that Elizabeth Whitney should be on it
4. Community Members: Multiple community members had expressed interest and Micah indicated that Tamanika Steward and Jared Della Rocca would be the best fit.

The search committee will also actively seek input from people not on the committee.

Micah and Timothy presented drafts of the position description and job ad. These were developed from the existing version of the position description and informed through conversation with trustees, the library director, staff, town officials, Friends of the Library and members of the community. They are seeking additional feedback from trustees before presenting the documents to the search committee.

Conversation ensued about how specific to get in the position description about the qualifications required in the role. Some suggested that including preferred qualifications, but leaving them open (for instance, indicating that an MLS is preferred, but not required) would attract a larger number of candidates and candidates from a variety of backgrounds. Suggestions were also made about paring down and revising some of the language in the position description.

This job ad includes the qualifications and is designed to capture candidates' attention. The job ad also includes a description of the surrounding community and culture of Williamstown. The group offered feedback on revising this information to highlight the Clark and Mass MoCA by name, as well as to highlight the diversity of the people within the community (LGBTQIA+, international families).

Micah and Timothy will incorporate revisions suggested by the group and send out updated versions to approve over email. Bridget indicated that the search committee should also be invited to offer feedback.

New Business

Friends Budget Proposal (Pat)

In the past, the library has submitted funding proposals for the year to the Friends in the fall, but this does not align with the library's fiscal year. The goal with this fall's proposal is to request funding for November 2023 to June 2024, then the library will submit a FY25 proposal to the Friends in June for July 2024 to June 2025 to get the two budget processes to align.

To note: the proposed FY25 budget for the Friends will need to be brought to the

Trustees for the March meeting in order to allow time for feedback and then to send it to the Friends to approve by June. Bridget notes that the Trustees go to Fin Comm in March.

Last year the Friends gave \$44,842 to the library for programming and professional development. The current funding proposal for November to June is for \$35,563, with additional expenses of \$15,700 to be incorporated into the FY25 request.

It was noted that the amounts earmarked for professional development and for the installation of the gazebo would be paid out as needed by the Friends and as invoices come in.

It was also noted that it's important that costs for library services, including essential digital technology (computers and primary digital subscriptions) are covered by the town as part of the funding of basic library services. The goal of the Friends' funding is enhanced programming (beyond basic services).

150th Anniversary Celebration Grant (Micah)

Micah shared information on the March 9, 2024 Open House event. At the request of Judy Ensign, we have applied for a Flynt Grant from the Williamstown Community Chest to fund the \$5,000 needed for the event. One of the goals in the strategic plan is to explore more grant opportunities so this is a good experience.

Other Business

Bridget asked if there is a town checklist for department heads who are transitioning out of their roles? She noted that there may be steps and planning that the Trustees need to be doing and documenting as we prepare for Pat's retirement.

Timothy made a motion to adjourn, Robin seconded. All voted in favor. Micah adjourned at 7:16pm.

Next meeting: November 8, 2023 at 5:30pm