

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:30pm

Trustees Present: Alexander Carlisle, Timothy Cherubini (treasurer), Anna Halpin-Healy, Robin Lenz, Micah Manary (chair), Bridget Spann (vice-chair), and Katy Evans (secretary) (*Katy arrived at 5:40*)

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (representing the Friends)

The meeting was called to order by Micah at 5:34pm.

Reports

Treasurer's Report (Timothy)

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

Fund Balances as of October 31, 2023:

Annual Fund \$14,361.34
Botsford \$75,715.11
Carpenter \$10,494.96
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 \$ 445,628.58

Director's Report (Pat)

Pat presented the Director's Report. Highlights include the Touch a Truck event (~75 children attended), the Halloween party (105 children and parents attended), and the "Ask a Muslim Anything" talk with Robert Azzi (18 attendees). Pat is also working with Alison at the Berkshire Housing Authority to plan a library open house at the 330 Cole Avenue residences.

Approval of October Meeting Minutes (Katy)

[Approval of minutes was initially delayed pending Katy's arrival with the latest edits.]

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

Friends' Report (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth reminded us that the Friends' annual meeting is on December 13 at 4:30. All trustees should plan on attending.

Building and Grounds Report (Alex)

Alex presented the B&G committee report. Of note is that Martino Glass inspected the windows in the Friends' sorting area and said they may not be able to be repaired. The committee is seeking a second opinion.

Because contractors in the area are so busy, the goal is to package all of the smaller jobs indicated in the Centerline Report with other jobs, like repairing the windows, in hopes that a contractor will be more inclined to take on a package of jobs. Alex is also making a list of the jobs and organizing them by topic/trade to appeal to local companies.

Old Business

Director Search Committee (Micah)

Timothy posted the position widely and Kirsten added it to library listservs. We are already getting applicants. Please note that there's a separate email address for applications.

The committee will have a meeting at the end of November to discuss the candidates and their process for review. Micah indicated that Zoom interviews would be a possibility and that if one candidate needed to do Zoom, we would hold all interviews on Zoom. Micah also agreed that we are open to international candidates.

Director Transition (Bridget)

Bridget has emailed the town to ask for resources and input on transitioning a long-standing director out of their role. It does not seem like they have formal materials for this process.

New Business

Volunteer Appreciation (Micah)

There will be a library volunteer part in early December. The trustees voted on approving \$600 to go towards this party: Timothy moved, Alex seconded, all voted in favor.

The trustees also voted on granting permission to serve alcohol at the event: Micah moved, Timothy seconded, all voted in favor.

DIRE Report (Katy)

Bridget suggested adding Katy's name as the compiler of the report.

Elizabeth mentioned that she is looking for a replacement from the Friends to take her spot on the DEI Committee. Micah is also looking for a replacement for his role on the committee.

Although the committee doesn't meet monthly, DEI principles and values have spread into all of our different areas of work.

Bridget moved to approve the DIRE report to be sent to the town, Micah seconded, and all voted in favor, except Katy, who abstained.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Micah and Timothy)

Timothy distributed a timeline for the budget process. He suggested that one or more members of the trustees attend the budgeting meeting between Pat and Anna Osborn to provide continuity once Pat retires.

Micah said that staff wages continue to be a priority for the trustees; the town has indicated a 3% cost of living increase for the next FY. Salaries in the FY25 budget need to reflect increases in pay for staff in spring 2023, in addition to this cost of living increase.

Micah also noted that the trustees can offer informed perspectives on the financial picture of the library and advocate for budget increases with the Town Manager in ways the director cannot. It's also important for new trustees to learn the budgeting process as making changes in the budget is often a multi-year process.

During the budget proposal process, it will be important to clarify the relationship between the town and the trustees in terms of funding the library. The director and trustees will present a budget that reflects the actual cost of running the library and then there needs to be continued conversation with the town to come to a clear agreement.

Bridget would like a list of all town employee salaries, along with the final version of Classification and Compensation Study from the HR group consulting with the town; Micah will request these from Anna Osborn. We should also compare our ratio of salaries to other expenses with other libraries in Berkshire County to see how we compare.

Bridget also noted that showing up at the joint meeting between FinCom and the Select Board in March to do a public comment on library salaries was important and effective.

[Alex left at 6:30pm]

ARPA Funds - would be interesting to know where we are with these funds as they need to be spent by the end of 2024. Micah will look into it.

Tim asked about a “wish list” (“punch list”) so that we can come to the town with a full list of what we plan to do, especially around fulfilling the strategic plan.

Bridget also mentioned that we need to be mindful that a new library building is on the horizon. There is a state grant we will need to apply for in the coming years and we will need to be ready and keep the conversation going with community partners for expenses that exceed the grant.

Other Business

Timothy mentioned the Berkshire Libraries Legislative Breakfast in January. They’re holding the breakfast at Milne this year and Pat is meeting with the caterer tomorrow. Pat sent out the usual appeal letter for the event for donations to help offset some of the costs of hosting.

Timothy moved to donate \$100 for the Berkshire Libraries breakfast. Bridget seconded and all voted in favor.

Micah is planning to attend the event as Trustees Chair and give the welcoming speech.

Pat indicated that she will write a good-bye statement for the library e-newsletter.

Timothy moved to adjourn and Micah seconded. All voted in favor. Micah adjourned at 6:49pm.

Next meeting: December 13, 2023 at 5:30pm (after the Friends’ meeting at 4:30)