

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes DRAFT
February 8, 2023
5:30pm
David and Joyce Milne Public Library

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

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (Friends' liaison)

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

Approval of minutes from December 14: (Pat W.)

Mica moved to approve, Charles seconded. All voted in favor, except Pat W., who abstained.

Approval of minutes from January 11 (Pat W.)

Charles moved to approve, Robin seconded. Bridget, Charles, Robin, and Tim voted in favor; Micah, Tamanika, and Pat W. abstained.

Treasurer's Report: (Micah Manary)

Other than custodian expenses, we paid for the strategic plan printing and the annual mailing printing actually got withdrawn. We received many donations.

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| Trustees Annual Fund, balance January 31, 2023 | \$53,162.00 |
| January 12, 2023 Deposit | (Donations) +\$5,515.00 |
| January 12, 2023 Withdrawal | (Expenses) -\$2,861.88 |
| January 19, 2023 Withdrawal | (Wages) -\$1,665.95 |
| January 31, 2023 Deposit | (Interest) +\$32.50 |

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.

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| Balance January 31, 2023 | \$10,388.49 |
| January 31, 2023 Deposit | (Interest) +\$6.35 |

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.

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| Balance January 31, 2023 | \$74,948.42 |
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January 31, 2023 Deposit

(Interest) +\$45.82

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 January 31, 2023

\$24,629.35

Sarah McFarland Fund

Bequest from the McFarland Estate, with no restrictions.

Balance January 31, 2023

\$300,000.00

150th Anniversary Celebration Fund

Checking account for working purchases for the 2024 150th anniversary celebration.

Balance January 31, 2023

\$275.00

Tim moved to approve, Tamanika seconded, all voted in favor.

Director’s Report: (Pat McLeod)

The Children’s Librarian will be attending the American Library Association's Annual conference in June, 2023, in Chicago, thanks to the Friends, who are funding this trip.

The Human Resource Study team held interviews with selected Town employees. Donor plaques were ordered for the Teen Room and Reference & Technology Services areas. The library was awarded three Cultural Council Grants for fiscal 2024.

The League of Women Voters is interested in working with the library to present a program during Banned Books week, Oct. 1-7, 2023. They would like to do a series of readings excerpted from books that have been banned. We will keep you informed as the program takes shape.

Microsoft Office (Word, Excel Powerpoint) was added to the computers in the lab. The new Town IT Technician supplied three free licenses (They were paid for by the Town.) We are working with National Grid and a “heat pump initiative” program to replace the aging units in the circulation, children’s and nonfiction areas.

Pat McCloud attended the Legislative Breakfast for the 25th year; she serves as treasurer, with the responsibility of sending out solicitation letters and invitations. There were 65 people in attendance. She shared with the trustees copies of the Massachusetts card of Library Commissioners 2024 Legislative Agenda.

The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) through an EPA Healthy Communities Grant and the Community Climate Fund, has offered us, free of charge, an induction stovetop in a zippered case to start our new Library of Things. The collection development committee is meeting to talk about how we would like to introduce a library of things collection. We need to make a plan for

the selection, housing, and circulation of new materials such as snowshoes, a Roku box, sports equipment, or a sewing machine.

The library's budget presentation to the Finance Committee is scheduled for March 15th at 7:30.

Programming:

Our popular "Blind Date with a Book" reading program and contest began February 1. Gentle Yoga has returned for the next six weeks. This program—funded by the Friends—is widely successful. Many patrons stop into Pat McLeod's office on the way out to thank us for it. There has been no formal children's programming this month, but our sticker poster is getting a lot of attention. In the teen room, 40 templates were taken home for our "Create a Comic" activity; seven comics were added to our gallery. In adult programming, 19 people attended a virtual program by Mike Ivankovich about home downsizing—"Cashing In: Your Children Don't Want It? Here's What You Can Do!" and 16 attended his "De-Clutter & De-Personalize" program. One person attended a program for parents about reducing stress.

Friends' Report: (Elizabeth Whitney)

We are continuing with winter hours at Chapter Two Books. We have a Black History Month display in the front windows. We are also featuring books for Valentine's day, and for President's Day this month. We have received a very generous bequest—just over \$200,000. We decided to invest it in a treasury note for a year, which will give us some time to have substantial discussions about how those funds can be used. Our focus would be to further the goals of the library's five-year strategic plan.

Building and Grounds Committee update: (Charles Bonenti) Ryan Gariboldi of Centerline Architects expects to deliver a draft of the Building Conditions Assessment next week. We are planning to meet with them February 16. After that meeting the committee will submit a report to the trustees.

Ryan offered this projected table of contents: Executive Summary, Building Program Summary, Architecture Summary, Building Deficiency Priority List, Room by Room Identified Deficiencies Matrix, Code Review: Drawings and Overall Summary, Structural Report, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Report, Civil Report, Cost Estimating.

Old business:

- a. **Centerline Building Assessment update** (Charles) The trustees discussed the financial risk of funding this proposal without knowing what the town would be willing to contribute, and whether the Friends will decide to make a contribution. If we wait, we will delay the start of the assessment. Bridget moved that the trustees approve paying for the building assessment with the expectation that the town will contribute to its cost, and the hope that the Friends will contribute as well. Micah seconded. All voted in favor.

- b. Annual appeal update** (Timothy) We are probably at the tail end of receipts of the Annual Fund. Next month Tim plans to do an analysis of how his year stacked up against other recent years. There could be some interesting and informative things to note and work into our thinking around the strategic plan action focused on donors.

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| Total received as of February 6, 2023 | \$28,428.00 |
| Total donors (individuals/families) | 213 |
| First time donors | 26 |
| \$50 or less | 44 |
| Newberry (\$50 - \$99) | 65 |
| Caldecott (\$100 - \$249) | 76 |
| National Book Award: (\$250 - \$499) | 13 |
| Pulitzer (\$500 - \$999) | 10 |
| Nobel (\$1,000+) | 5 |

- c. Town Charter Committee update.** (Charles) The Charter Review Committee met Feb. 2 and continued work on a community questionnaire it plans to circulate with the March real estate tax bills. The aim is to bring some proposed charter or bylaw changes to the May town meeting. The Committee was unaware that Milne Library operations are guided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners’ “Trustee Handbook” and by the policies we have been updating these last years. A digital copy of the handbook and a link to the policies on our website were delivered to the chairman Andy Hogeland, for distribution to the committee members. Other committee members are Mary Kennedy, Anne Skinner, Nate Buddington, Jeff Strait, Jeff Johnson, Joe Bergeron and Town Manager Robert Menicocci.
- d. Patron Behavior** (Micah) We saw the text of this policy, with changes to our draft made by Town Counsel. Trustees, Pat McLeod and library staff members all feel these are changes we can accept. We discussed the changes at last month’s meeting. Mica moved to approve the Patron Behavior policy. Robin seconded. All voted in favor.
- e. Finance Advisory Committee update** (Timothy) The Trustees Finance Advisory Committee met on February 6th. Two major topics were considered.

The first was continued development of a document summarizing funding sources for the library. This effort helps address part of the Committee's charge, to help trustees understand the organization's financial affairs and ensuring that all board members are well informed. Tim will be making several edits to the document based on the discussion and

then will share draft with trustees who have not yet seen it.

The second topic was discussion of financial resources needed to realize near-term strategic plan actions not already accounted for in the town budget or approved for funding by the Friends.

Those actions include: Developing better visual pathways and signage to direct patrons to collection subject areas and outdoor signage. (Spring 2023); Continuing to offer video tutorials and in person workshops on the use of digital tools and resources (in process); creating a pilot program of a "lending library of things" (i.e.: tools, looms, sewing machines, musical instruments) with a resource directory of things available for loan from community members; making the library accessible to the reading and hearing impaired (in process); developing a plan for the care and cultivation of major donors, including the Friends (2023) ; strategizing a capital campaign kickoff with the 150th library anniversary celebration in 2024 (2023).

The Committee felt funding from the Trustees' budget and/or gift funds could be identified for all, though additional information is needed before a specific recommendation can be made. The committee discussed each of these five items, brainstorming ideas and recording progress towards this goal so far. He shared notes summarizing this discussion with the trustees. The next meeting is March 6, 2023 at 4:00 pm ET.

- f. **Budget update** (Pat/ Bridget). The finance committee will consider the library's budget at its March 15th meeting, at 7:30. Bridget encouraged trustees to attend this meeting, and advocate for the library. Before that meeting Pat M. will have a final budget. Together with the board's new Finance advisory committee, she is creating a list of income sources, which will be shared with us. Library is currently at a 7 percent increase.

New Business:

- a. **150th Anniversary Celebration** (Judy Ensign) Judy shared with the trustees her vision for the celebration of the Milne Public Library's 150th anniversary in 2024. She explained the work that her committee has done so far, and handed out two documents: a list of proposed events, with the estimated costs and the tasks volunteers would need to do, and a list of possible topics for a lecture series on the role of public libraries. She has asked Mountain One Bank to sponsor the event, and she is hoping that the bank will fund the entire cost of the program, which she estimates at \$6000.

Among the activities planned: Every child in the elementary school will participate in poster contest—resulting in 600 posters. We will ask each artist in the country to do one work in honor of the library. (They hope to have two shows—one in November and one in December). The Williamstown Historical Museum will have a small exhibition of artifacts and old books. There will be a banner displaying the 150th logo hung over the front door of the Milne Library. Tunnel City will create a new blend of coffee called Williamstown's Library Blend, and donate part of the proceeds to the library. David Edge, graphic designer for The Clark, has agreed to design a logo for the celebration. At this point, Judi told us, their biggest need is volunteers. She is trying to get a volunteer to be in charge of each of the

projects. Might some of the Friends volunteers be willing to help? Some of the tasks could be done at home.

Tamanika wondered about representing the contributions of people of color and native communities; their contributions wouldn't be reflected in traditional historic accounts and artifacts. She wanted us to be mindful of these things. Pat McLeod mentioned a grandfather clock in the library, originally located in the Botsford House, which was constructed by Daniel Porter, a respected clockmaker who was of mixed race—one parent black and one white. We agreed that it was important to feature the clock, and to look for other connections to communities of color as we plan.

- b. DEI Report** (Bridget). Bridget shared our current DEI report with all trustees via email. We discussed the possibility of hosting an Idea Jam. Charles went to an Expo sponsored by a number of development agencies in the Berkshires, supporting women and minority business owners. There he met John Lewis, who heads an organization called BlackShires, which is exploring ways to empower members of the black community to achieve leadership roles in business and the nonprofit sector. He sponsors Idea Jam events. We thought about how we could work with him, and decided that partnering with the DIRE committee would make a lot of sense. We agreed to investigate this idea. Charles moved to approve the DEI report, Pat W. second. All were in favor.
- c. LSTA grant** (Pat) We are drafting a grant application for an LSTA grant called “Dig In” which offers up to \$20,000 for educational gardening projects reflecting the library’s long-range goals and the needs of the local community. This grant application is due Feb. 23rd. The due date for this grant is Feb 23rd. Charles, Pat and Bridget met with Maria Suskind, president of the Williamstown Garden Club, for feedback about the gardens we might propose. A member of the club, Diane Van Kempen, a Master Gardener, agreed to help with garden ideas and thoughts about programming. Pat Wilk volunteered to help with writing.
- d. Social Media Policy draft** (Micah). Tamanika, Mica, Pat, and Kirsten met to begin working on this policy. Tamanika organized the policy into different sections: people using social media at the library, and library social media accounts. We need to consider how patrons interact with library social media—things that would be acceptable and would not be acceptable. Patrons using social media at the library need to respect library policies. Social media procedures for staff would go in our Best Practices manual. Will meet again next week to draft this. All of the things we restricted are things that are illegal. Why do we need a social media policy? What are the consequences someone violates our policy? Are there different consequences for a pattern of offenses vs a one-time offense? Not many libraries have a social media policy. We will have Town legal counsel give this a second look before we vote on it.
- e. Trustee terms.** (Bridget) Nomination papers are available now; they are due on March 21st. People generally become trustees because someone who is serving on the Board of Trustees or is active in the library community has reached out to them. We need different voices—especially

we seek people under 40, and people of color. Bridget said she would be happy to meet with people who might be interested, and explain the work to them.

8. Adjourn: Pat W. moved to adjourn. Charles seconded. All were in favor. Bridget adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Next meeting: March 8, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.