

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 5:30pm
Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
(approved 9/13/23)

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

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

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

Approval of July 12th Meeting Minutes (Katy)

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

Reports

Treasurer's Report (Timothy)

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

Timothy noted that the Uncategorized Expenses of \$1909.16 in July were likely the last time the custodian's salary would be taken from the Trustees' budget. He noted that we also paid the invoice for the 150th Anniversary rack cards. This amount has been shared with Judy as well.

Timothy introduced a new page in the Treasurer's Report - page 2 - that includes columns for what was spent that month in each category (July Actual), what has been spent so far that year in each category (YTD Actual), and what we anticipate spending in each category based on expenses we've already approved or have spent in previous years (Annual Projected).

Balances as of July 31, 2023:

Annual Fund	\$14,795.90
Carpenter	\$10,455.65
Conway Glick	\$ 0.30
Craig	\$12,972.33
Botsford	\$75,431.50
Tenney Osborne	\$24,629.35
McFarland	\$300,000.00
150th Anniversary	\$5,093.75
Trustee, Friends allocation for	

renovation fund	\$2,361.44
Total	\$445,740.22

Timothy pointed out that the Conway Glick, Craig, and renovation funds do not need monthly formal balance updates from the town. Since the Trustees need to approve expenses from these funds and the Director will see the invoices, we can track these balances ourselves and just get updates from the town on a quarterly basis.

Pat said that the funds in the Craig account can be used for STEAM programming and maker space expenses. It would be beneficial to use these funds as additional donations may be forthcoming from this family. Pat also suggested that there may be additional funds going into the Conway Glick fund to help offset the cost of new windows.

Director's Report (Pat)

Pat shared important staff updates, including that Jack is out on Family Leave and Kira will be doing the library newsletter until he returns. In addition, both Kira and Rocio have updated titles - Kira is now Head of Adult Services and Rocio is Teen Librarian. Multiple staff will be out next week and Debbie will be in charge. There was no staff meeting in July due to staff being out.

DVDs that have gone missing or been stolen are being reordered. It's standard for a small percentage of library materials to be stolen and the DVDs being replaced are recordings that can't be located online.

Pat also relayed that with Purple Dragon closing, the library is encouraging them to use the library for some of their gaming.

Pink slips have been put on cars' side windows in the parking lot on 3 separate occasions, stating that COVID is a test scam with a QR code. Pat reported this to Mike Ziemba, Chief of Police.

Pat notes that the door counter statistics for June and July show a decrease of approximately 1,000 patrons from 2018 (pre-pandemic) usage levels.

Pat will be reviewing the financial report next. Currently the library is \$6,000 over budget, but there are sources to fund these expenses.

Friends

Elizabeth did not attend the meeting, but shared in advance that there is nothing to report. The Friends met in July for their annual retreat and will not have a meeting in August. They will meet next on September 20.

Buildings and Grounds (Alex)

The Buildings and Grounds committee has not yet heard back from Lindsay Neathawk about the designs for the library signs. Alex has said he will reach out again and will also start looking for another designer in the area.

We discussed the ample number of daylilies currently in the library garden beds. The committee recommends removing these to open up space for other plants and can offer these to library patrons for free. Pat suggested getting in touch with Maria, while Bridget suggested contacting Williams student groups for help in removing the daylilies, although this help may not be needed – Robin pointed out that there are approximately 70 daylilies to be removed and this would not take long. Once the daylilies are removed, though, we may need to bring in Mountain Home for help in moving the landscaping plan forward.

Alex and the committee identified both short-term and long-term goals. In the short-term, the goal is to beautify the garden beds for the 150th Anniversary next year. In the long term, the goal is to move forward with more of the actions identified in the strategic plan. Micah supported these goals and the idea of keeping goals simple at this point.

Pat shared more about the gazebo for the back area where the tent is now. It will come from Sheds 'n Stuff, be 12x20, be wheelchair accessible, and will be installed in one piece. Because the installation will be in one piece, it can be moved later, but will also mean the garbage hut will need to be removed to make room. The quote for the gazebo is \$12,500, but the installation will cost more, especially with ensuring that it's fully accessible.

In terms of the heat pumps (mini-splits) to be installed in the Friends annex, Alex recommends choosing the Laureyn's United proposal for the Mitsubishi units because they will perform better at low temperatures. The question was raised whether we need the Friends to sign off on the proposal to get the work started because they will pay for it, or whether the Trustees could initiate the work, then receive payment from the Friends.

Micah recommended we get Friends' initial approval over email, but that the Trustees could sign the contract. Bridget added that the Trustees should sign the contract to get the work started as soon as possible, then speak with the Friends about transferring funds for the installation as a donation. Timothy added that we could review the agreement with the Friends at that time to extend the renewal period to five years (from 3).

Micah said he is talking with Pam in less than a week and will let her know the Trustees will sign the contract and oversee the work and confirm that they are prepared to donate what will likely be \$25,000 (\$19,000 plus electrical installation). We can revisit the specifics of the license agreement at our next meeting.

Alex suggested that we write up a memo of understanding to share with the Friends and explain why we are recommending the Mitsubishi unit. He will start a draft and share with Micah, who can finalize and present to Pam for her signature.

Bridget supported the memo of understanding idea, noting that this is a large amount of money and we need to be clear. Bridget will send the license agreement to Micah for our consideration at the next meeting.

We revisited the Centerline Report, noting that there are issues in the report that need to be addressed before winter, including some electrical work, ceilings, plumbing, and the grading to the back doors. Micah noted that we need to follow the town's process for sending out these projects for bids from contractors.

Pat noted that there are also other projects waiting to happen including sidewalk and window repair. Pat will talk with the Town because the DPW should take the lead on interviewing contractors for this work. Pat will also begin arrangements for a roof inspection and the work that's needed on the roof over the bathrooms.

Alex updated us on the cycle for funding library building projects through the MBLC. The last round of funding closed in April. The next round of building funding will open in 4-5 years, with a construction timeline of approximately 5 years beyond that, meaning that the current library building will need to be maintained for at least 10 more years.

Micah and Bridget think this is not an unreasonable timeline for a new building because we will need to start conversations with the town and lay the groundwork with other community partners. Timothy pointed out that the MBLC process and timeline could also change, depending on state funding and politics, and suggested a 6-month check-in with MBLC.

Old Business

Filling Trustee Vacancy (Bridget)

Bridget shared the process for community members to express interest in the vacancy left by Charles's departure – they will need to fill out a citizen action form. Send Bridget any ideas of people you would like to apply, perhaps someone on the younger side.

Robin suggested talking with Justin and Rebecca of Wild Soul River for recommendations and spoke to Tamanika, who will talk with PCAN.

Personnel Committee (Micah)

Micah is working on a timeline for the search for a new library director with Timothy. Timothy met with the Town and is making sure we know what we can offer in terms of salary. So far, the town has been positive about the search.

Pat's last day working with January 5, but we likely won't be able to hire someone until March and will therefore need an interim director.

Micah, Timothy, and Katy will meet again to divvy up tasks and share more in September.

Annual Appeal Letter (Timothy)

Timothy share that the draft of the appeal letter is in good shape and that the Print Shop is ready to print and mail it when needed.

The process for online giving is still a question as the Town's website is hard to navigate for online donations. One other possibility is to direct folks to a link on the library website to an online giving page.

Bridget and Pat shared feedback on the letter and Timothy encouraged others to email suggestions for edits to him.

DEI Committee Report (Katy)

Katy presented the quarterly DEI report to be sent to the town's DIRE committee. Micah moved to approve, Bridget seconded. All voted in favor.

Vacation

Pat, Kirsten, and Kira will be out of town for part of next week. Bridget and Micah will also be out of town during this period.

Future of ESOL Classes (Micah) - see attachment

Micah presented a written request from Annie Pecor, Director of Northern Berkshire Adult Education, to continue to offer an in-person ESOL class at Milne.

Bridget expressed support for this class, noting it is a great value for our community and very important for our community members. It could also be useful to add mention of the ESOL class to the annual appeal letter.

Timothy suggested that the Trustees receive more regular updates on the impact of the program. Pat noted that she meets with the instructor once a week.

A vote was held on whether to put up to \$3,500 to fund the continuation of this class, with the understanding that Micah will speak with the instructor to get a clearer breakdown of how this money is spent.

Bridget moved to approve, Alex seconded. All voted in favor.

Request to Serve Alcohol (Micah)

Micah presented a written request from Charles Bonenti to serve wine at his art opening at the library on September 2. Micah moved to approve, Timothy approved. All voted in favor.

Other Business (Micah)

Micah shared that the Town forwarded an invoice for \$1420 from McLain Electric resulting from an accidental power shut-off to the McWeeny residence, adjacent to the library building. The McWeenys received the bill from McLain and forwarded it to the Town because the issue stems from how the electrical service was configured on town property when the original property was divided into smaller lots. The town refused to pay the invoice and forwarded it to the Trustees. The Trustees took no action: it is not a Trustees issue since the town owns the building and it is a legacy issue. The electrical issue has not yet been fixed.

Micah wished to note a recent pattern of the town shifting financial responsibilities to the Trustees, even after agreeing to their share of the expenditures (e.g. the Centerline study) and that this invoice is part of this pattern.

Timothy moved to adjourn, Alex seconded. All voted in favor. Micah adjourned the meeting at 7:14pm.