

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at 5:30pm

David and Joyce Milne Public Library, Williamstown, MA

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

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (representing the Friends)

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

Approval of June 14th Meeting Minutes (Micah)

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

Reports

Treasurer's Report (Timothy)

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

Most recent balances:

Trustees Annual Fund, Balance June 30, 2023	\$16,609.49
Carpenter Fund, Balance June 30, 2023	\$10,442.44
Botsford Fund, Balance June 30, 2023	\$75,336.18
Sara Tenney Osborne Fund, Balance June 30, 2023	\$24,629.35
Sarah McFarland Fund, Balance June 30, 2023	\$300,000.00
150 th Anniversary Celebration Fund, Balance June 30, 2023	\$5,575.00

Other than the custodian's salary, major expenses for the Annual Fund in June included the fees for the Centerline assessment (\$29,024.60) and Envisionware Coin/bill acceptor (\$3,210.40).

Timothy indicated that we should be able to estimate our projected expenses for the next fiscal year based on previous years. He will check in with Bridget and Pat to make sure he is not missing any expenses and will be able to share more about this in the next meeting.

Timothy also offered an update on the Annual Fund Drive to go out in Fall 2023. He has begun to orient the new trustees (Katy and Alex) to the process and update the prospect list. He invites continued feedback on the list (additions or deletions) and those

willing to personalize letters should let him know. The next steps will be to approve the appeal letter and coordinate with the Print Shop for mailing. Timothy shared a handout with the last 6 years of numbers for the Fund Drive and we discussed sharing the link for online donations in the library newsletter again.

Director's Report (Pat)

Pat emphasized that it's been a busy month with the start of Summer Reading (approximately 100 children and 24 teens have signed up) and the issuing of new library cards. She also noted that most staff are continuing to mask by choice. There was a great response from staff over the recent pay raise. Pat was able to share the news with them individually in person and they were very grateful.

The Friends gave an additional \$13,000 in funding for programming and professional development. Elizabeth emphasized that this was an intentional way of distributing money across the fiscal year to allow the Friends to work with the Director to add funds at a certain point in the year for specific programming needs.

Debbie, the Children's Librarian, went to ALA and will report back.

June's programming statistics are solid, with Pride and Juneteenth events and displays, as well as films on Friday afternoons.

Friends' Report (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth reports that Chapter Two Books is doing brisk business. They are open six days, with some days open until 5pm.

The Friends' meeting this month will be dedicated to longer-term reflection and strategic planning for the year. To be discussed will be how to use the O'Brien Fund, a substantial unrestricted bequest. Last month, Elizabeth introduced a proposal from the Friends that the library use these funds to extend library hours and they are continuing to seek Trustee support for this idea. Micah reported that he, Pat, Kirsten and Jenna met for an initial discussion. They discussed extended evening hours on a few more nights per week, opening at 9am on Saturdays, and/or adding Sunday afternoon hours.

Evening hours would be best for allowing additional programming and opening up the library as a community meeting space, although the current Wednesday evening tends not to have much circulation demand. Adding weekend hours may be more useful for circulation, but weekend hours seem to be the most complicated in terms of staffing. For reference, only one other Berkshire county library has Sunday hours.

Pat indicated that adding any hours would be difficult with current staff, although evenings would be easier to loop in. Currently, staff are happy with their hours and no one is willing to work on Sundays. It will be necessary to hire new staff to cover the additional hours, which may prove difficult in the current job climate, with multiple library

positions going unfilled across the state. An experienced member of the library staff would also need to be present to supervise.

Elizabeth emphasized that the Friends' goal is to use these funds to have a big impact and that they would like to increase use of the library as a meeting space, which additional hours would hopefully do.

Bridget raised the point that we would need to consider other additional costs and tasks related to opening the building on another day of the week, if we went with Sunday hours (for instance, plowing).

While the Trustees are generally supportive, it may take time to work out the details and, as Timothy pointed out, will need a lot more discussion and, as Charles remarked, perhaps gathering more data on what library users want. Based on the discussion and the questions still remaining, it was decided to put together a group of Trustees, Friends, and library staff to sit down to work on the feasibility of this idea.

Old Business

Building and Grounds: Heat Pumps (Alex)

Alex reported on the move to put heat pump minisplits in the Friends' wing of the library. The Friends will pay for installation and the library will cover the monthly electrical cost. The Friends would like to also shift the terms of their agreement on the space to a 5-year renewal from the current 3-year renewal as recognition of their investment in the space.

We have quotes from two companies (Ashley Swift - \$17,950 and Laureyns United - \$19,923) for the installation, but they don't include cost for electrical hookup. We need have Rickert Electric assess whether the building can carry the increased load and to set up the electrical, but they're not available for two months. Pat will follow up with them to get a quote.

Buildings and Grounds: Sign/Gardens (Robin/Pat)

Neathawk is preparing a design for new outdoor signage. Pat will follow up to get their design by August.

Robin shared that the Garden Club doesn't have the time to take on maintaining the library gardens, but is still thinking of ways to support the space. With the 150th Anniversary coming up, the front entrance gardens are especially important to update. Without the Garden Club, we could have Mountain Home do the installation, though we are still waiting on a design. Perhaps Julie Sniezek from Williams College could help with the design phase? We will revisit in the next meeting.

Budget Update (Micah/Pat)

We are celebrating the staff wage increase and Bridget shared a positive article in iBerkshires on the increase.

Banned Books Update (Robin)

Robin reports that planning for the Banned Books event (October 1, 3-5pm) is going well. So far three readers have signed up, and we are waiting on seven more.

New Business

MBLC Deep Dives (Micah)

Micah highlighted this series provided by MBLC and encouraged attending.

DEI Committee Update (Katy)

The committee met last week. Katy shared the new initiatives, including moving forward with working with the Stockbridge-Munsee band on a land acknowledgment and contributing DEI perspectives to the 150th Anniversary and the library director search.

Charles shared that he recently attended an event with John Lewis from the Berkshire Community Empowerment Foundation, which supports emerging Black community leaders and does “idea jams.” Also, St. John’s Church held a recent talk with the Berkshire Black Economic Council. Bridget suggested that we might partner with other area organizations and churches to host a Northern Berkshire idea jam. Charles shared contact info for both organizations and Katy will bring it to the DEI Committee.

Staff Appreciation

We are due soon to offer another staff appreciation event. Bridget offered to take the lead on proposing something and requesting funding.

Trustee Calendar (Micah)

Micah shared a monthly calendar with key dates for the Trustees and said he will share updated versions a couple of times a year.

On the calendar is the Legislative Breakfast, which Pat says is happening January 26, 2024. Pat is taking the lead on planning this, even though she will be out of the office already for her retirement. Pat indicated her last day in the office will be January 5, after which time she'll take leave out of the office until her last day of employment. Bridget offered to help get this event planned by December to free Pat up to meet this timeline.

Strategic Plan Prioritization (Micah)

Micah shared the list of goals from the strategic plan, divided up by who (which committee or staff) would be responsible for ensuring their completion. We revised some assignments and Micah will send out an updated document.

It was also noted that the Trustees have to report to the MBLC every October 1 on our progress on strategic plan goals and that this should go on the Trustee Calendar.

Personnel Committee (Micah)

This will be a new committee to do the preliminary work for hiring a new director. Three trustees are needed and will form the Trustee component of the search committee. Micah will lead the committee and Timothy and Katy offered to be on it.

Filling Trustee Vacancy (Micah)

With Charles moving out of town, we will have a Trustee vacancy. Micah will advertise the vacancy by sending an email to other Williamstown boards and posting it to the town website for one month. Williamstown residents can complete a citizen action form to indicate their interest. The position is temporary for 9 months. It would be helpful to have trustees reach out to people and encourage them to join – please coordinate these efforts through Micah.

Other Business

Gazebo

Pat shared plans for adding a gazebo outside the library for programming and an outdoor meeting space. The best option is from Sheds 'n Stuff – it's rectangular, accessible, and could be moved. The estimated cost is \$12,000. There is support from library staff for this. We will talk more about this in August.

Centerline assessment

Micah reported the disappointing news that the town did not agree to contribute any funds towards the Centerline study. Multiple meeting participants emphasized that we had a “good faith agreement” with the town and that we were told at two meetings that the town would contribute. At the same time, it was noted that we never had a firm agreement from them and we should plan our approach to future studies with this in mind.

Thank you to outgoing trustee

Bridget led us in recognizing Charles for his service to the Trustees and the many initiatives he oversaw. We all wish Charles well in his move to Lenox.

Adjourn

Charles moved to adjourn, Micah seconded, all voted in favor. Micah adjourned the meeting at 7:32pm.