

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2022
5:30pm
David and Joyce Milne Public Library

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

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (Friends' liaison)

The meeting was called to order by Bridget at 5:31pm.

Approval of minutes from August 10: (Pat W.)

Micah moved to approve, Timothy seconded. All voted in favor, except Pat W., who abstained.

Approval of minutes from September 14 (Tamanika)

Micah moved to approve, with minor corrections as discussed at the meeting, Charles seconded. All voted in favor, except for Pat W., (not present for that meeting) and Tamanika, who abstained.

October 2022 Meeting Treasurer's Report: (Micah Manary)

Other than custodian expenses, we paid for the annual mailing and the printing of the strategic plan.

Trustees Annual Fund, balance September 30, 2022	\$40,307.84
September 13, 2022 Withdrawal	(Expenses) \$3,053.95
September 30, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$22.11

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.

Balance September 30, 2022	\$10,364.54
September 30, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$5.52

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.

Balance September 30, 2022	\$74,775.60
September 30, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$39.81

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 September 30, 2022	\$24,629.35
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Sarah McFarland Fund

Bequest from the McFarland Estate, with no restrictions.

Balance September 30, 2022	\$264,000.00
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Timothy moved to approve the treasurer’s report, Pat w. seconded. All voted in favor, except for Micah, who abstained.

Director’s Report: (Pat McLeod)

Pat told us about the Fall Crawl, a county-wide initiative planned by 12 Berkshire County libraries. Patrons receive “library passports” and are encouraged to get them stamped by different libraries in the county. Our library is giving away gel pens with little pumpkins attached to the eraser end.

We discussed a “library of things,” one of the ideas mentioned in the Strategic Plan. Members of the South Williamstown Community Association approached Pat M. about setting up a “tool lending library” with the support of Williamstown Rural Lands. They would like patrons to be able to sign out tools for short-term use through the Milne Library. Pat M. raised two concerns: the amount of storage space that large tools would take up (as opposed to smaller items such as specialty cake pans that people might borrow before a child’s birthday party) and the liability factor that might arise when someone uses a dangerous tool they are unfamiliar with. Tamanika asked if it would be possible for us to create digital resources, such as how-to videos that patrons would need to view before signing out the tools. Pat W. asked if Williamstown Rural Lands could store the tools and patrons could just view the lending library items in a catalog at the

Milne. Tamanika suggested a digital catalog. In our discussion trustees liked the idea but acknowledged the difficulties. Discussion and planning will continue.

CWMARS members voted at their September meeting to allow academic cards to circulate materials at public libraries. They also voted to go fine-free and all new libraries that join the consortium must not charge overdue fines. Existing members are grandfathered in, but encouraged to join the 126 member libraries who have removed ILS policies that accrue overdue fines.

Pat described a new method of cataloging, that will add over 25 new shelving locations to our collection records. Since we began automating we had two shelving locations, General for Adult and Juvenile for children's materials. So that we can find items and identify collections better, we are adding modifiers such as large print, DVD, mystery, graphic novels, paperbacks, etc. This will only affect the numbers assigned to each item, not shelving or physical arrangement of items in the library.

The grant from the MA Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for hot spots ended Sept. 30th. Pat M. will be asking the Friends to fund eight devices.

Friends' Report: (Elizabeth Whitney)

Used book management is going well. We have more and more volunteers with specialized knowledge who are supporting donations very effectively. Chapter Two Books is continuing to have really strong sales. We've had some nice book displays, including one on banned books, and another on Hispanic heritage. It's nice to have a large enough collection to be able to create these kinds of displays. The Friends are close to finalizing a new brochure which is quite beautiful. Their goal is to have it ready in order to go out with our annual appeal. The group has also been thinking about advocacy needs—ways of stepping up and being a voice to support the needs of the library, in partnership with the trustees. The Friends' Board was happy to have Micah attend their last meeting as the trustees' liaison. (Pat W. was out of town.) They enjoyed hearing about his work. Should we have a rotating trustee representative rather than just one person? Elizabeth thought that would be beneficial. Pat W. and Micah agreed. Pat W. agreed to create a list of upcoming Friends' Board meetings, with Micah's help, and to ask trustees to sign up for one meeting per year. She will attend all unclaimed meetings.

Building and Grounds Committee update: (Charles Bonenti)

The Centerline architect who drew up the building needs assessment proposal was married this month and off on a honeymoon; we will meet with him later in October. The Zoom meeting will include other town officials to discuss whether to accept the proposal and how to pay for it. The B&G Committee will report back to the trustees for a decision in November.

We are concluding work on the Adult Services area with current and pending invoices totaling \$11,147.08.

Strategic Plan Committee update: (Charles Bonenti)

The plan was submitted by the October 1, 2022 deadline and accepted by the MA Board of Library Commissioners. Copies are being sent in digital form to town committees, local institutions like Williams College, The Clark, and school libraries; they will also be sent to potential foundation funders. Printed copies with a cover letter from Bridget will be going to major individual donors. The response has been appreciative.

The Strategic Plan Committee is no longer meeting. The appreciation party will be held October 26 at 5:30pm in the Community Room. Catered food will be provided by Wild Oats. Charles urged all trustees to attend.

Pat M. has also been sharing the document with staff and with community members. One takeaway she has is that it's an existing document, a plan for the future, and it's going forward. She feels that the responsibility for this plan basically falls on her, and she needs some guidance. In our previous strategic plan, each goal had a person responsible and a timeline for reaching the goal. This document doesn't have that structure. What are our priorities? Does staff and community come first? Buildings and grounds? She requested that we form an implementation committee.

Charles suggested that some people from the strategic planning committee might be drafted to stay on and provide guidance. Timothy pointed out that we were talking about a different skill set; an implementation committee is very different from an ideation committee. He asked Pat M. exactly what sort of help she needed. Pat M. and Charles agreed to discuss this in more detail and come back to the trustees at the November meeting to revisit this request.

Old Business:

a. Annual Appeal update: (Timothy)

Timothy thanked everyone for their assistance. Letters went out according to plan: First batch of letters around Sept. 16th, and personalized letters by the 27th. We are still discussing special communication with some major doors. Tim proposed a more personal connection for our responses: if you personalized an appeal letter, and that person donated, you should be the one to reach out and thank them. He offered to put together a spread sheet showing names of donors, and send it to us. Pat M. made this point that this would make it a public record. What about the issue of privacy? We agreed we would rather work with individual emails from Tim to notify us about which donors to thank.

Tamanika asked if we had categories of donors, and how we cultivated donors within those categories. We discussed past practices, and ideas for acknowledging donors in a more personal way. Pat M. offered to meet personally with donors and share what the library is doing, if we thought that would be helpful. We discussed whether we should solicit donations from local businesses.

b. Staff appreciation gesture: (Bridget and Tamanika)

Tamanika described the plan to offer the 15-person staff a relaxation experience. This would include a 15-minute hand or neck massage, lunch from Spring Street Market and a sweet treat., plus a \$30 gift certificate at Cumberland Farms. The date is Friday Nov. 18th, following a 9-10 a.m. staff meeting. Cost is \$1500. We praised the creativity and usefulness of this idea.

c. Appreciation event for Peter Mehlin's service to the library:

This event will take place on Friday, Nov. 4th at 11:30 a.m., and will follow Peter's book club meeting at 10 a.m. Library staff, trustees, Friends, and key people from Chapter Two Books are invited to attend. The following people will make remarks: Pat McLeod, Pam Art, Ginny Sheldon, Bridget, and a book club member or two. The program will include the presentation of the collection of books we purchased in his honor for the Milne Library. We will publicize this event in the library e-blast and in iBerkshires. Refreshments will include apple cider and cookies. There will be children's programming on the theme of animals around that same week to honor Peter.

Bridget moved that we increase the budget for this event from \$250. to \$500. Pat W. seconded, all voted in favor.

New Business:

a. Renovation fund: (Charles and Pat M.). Pat M. announced that a donor has made a \$25,000 donation to the library via the Friends to be used to finish the renovation and to support the strategic plan. This would allow us to purchase window treatments, chairs, and a shelf to hold printers. We agreed that in accordance with our policy for large donations, a Donor letter of intent is needed.

b. Director evaluation: (Bridget, Timothy, Robin)

Bridget and Robin thanked Tim for collating all of the ideas in print. Tim spoke about this year's director evaluation being different; he said that in recognition of the strategic plan being newly updated, the committee wanted to focus on the director and the unique things the director does. He described the document as being ambitious. Some of the things track nicely with the strategic plan. It hopes to build the confidence and cultural orientation of the staff. There is an increasing interest in advocacy, and in building robust community relationships. There's a lot of interest in robust community relationships. he hopes that this document will help us to work together, to "leverage our collective strength." Pat M. described the evolution session as a very good conversation, a good sharing experience. She said this document was more visionary, more strategic, and made her feel that she has support and respect.

c. Trustee finance committee: (Bridget)

Bridget reminded us that we have been talking about needing more guidance for trustee finances, and wanting to think more strategically about how we manage our finances. We are looking for community members with skills that could help to guide us. She suggested that we form a trustee finance committee. It would be a committee subject to open meeting laws, composed of some trustees and some community members. We discussed this idea.

Bridget made a motion that we form a committee made up of the following trustees: Charles, Micah, and Timothy, with Charles acting as chair. Robin seconded. All voted yes. If any of us have ideas about community members who might be willing to serve on this committee, we should forward them to Charles.

d. Funding Proposal to the Friends: (Pat McLeod)

Friends' fiscal year is different than the calendar year. They start in November. This request will go to the Friends next week and give them a month for consideration. Pat M. reviewed specific items in her request for funding this year, which is \$10,000 more than last year's request. A lot of this amount is for computers and technology. Some is for more adult programming. Some of the finding will support additions to the collection—specifically, new media and new genres.

Tim said he would be interested in increasing the3 requested amount for professional development. We had a discussion about the usefulness of different forms of professional development, and whether library conferences meet individual staff needs. Pat M. said current staff members don't want to travel. She has instead focused on webinars. Elizabeth asked whether the Friends could participate in the planning process for staff development, so that it's a strategic and effective method. Tamanika suggested the value of ongoing coursework towards a certification or degree. We all felt that individual staff member should be able to propose something they would like to pursue for professional development and take that idea to the Friends for financial support.

e. Other business to come before the board Charles proposed that the board approve alcohol being served at the Strategic Planning Committee appreciation event. Micah seconded. All voted in favor.

Bridget reminded us that she is looking for items to include in the DEI report to the town, which we will review at our meeting next month. We should also expect a request from the reference librarian that we help fund a party to thank the library volunteers.

Adjourn:

Micah moved to adjourn, Timothy seconded. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Next meeting is Wednesday, November 9 at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Pat Wilk.