

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes DRAFT
April 13, 2022
5:30pm
David and Joyce Milne Public Library

Trustees Present: Charles Bonenti (vice-chair), Timothy Cherubini, Karen Kowitz, Micah Manary (treasurer), Bridget Spann (chair), Pat Wilk (secretary)

Trustees Absent: Debra DiMassimo

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Lisa Hiley (representing the Friends)

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

Approval of Minutes from March meeting (Pat Wilk)

Micah moved to approve these minutes, Charles seconded, and all voted in favor except Pat, who abstained.

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

We had no extra expenses this month (other than our commitment to the custodian salary).

Trustees Annual Fund, balance March 31, 2022	\$50,161.85
March 23, 2022 Deposit	(Transfer) \$1,627.50
March 23, 2022 Withdrawal	(Expenses) \$1,310.70
March 31, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$25.36

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 March 31, 2022	\$10,332.64
March 31, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$5.25

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 March 31, 2022	\$74,545.45
March 31, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$37.86

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 March 31, 2022	\$24,629.35
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Bridget requested that the treasurer’s report also include the amounts of any bequests including the recent Sarah McFarland bequest.

Karen moved to approve the treasurer’s report, Tim seconded, and all were in favor, except Micah, who abstained.

Director’s Report: (Pat McLeod)

The boiler and heating difficulties are no longer an issue. The second pump has been installed, and the check valves we thought we needed are not necessary.

The current “masks recommended” recommendation in the library is going well. Staff members continue to wear masks, and most patrons wear masks. The mask mandate in the children’s room is working well.

There is a current problem with a trend of people who describe themselves as “first amendment auditors” visiting libraries, courthouse, and police stations and trying to film people using computers. Their intent is to instigate some sort of irritation and create videos that go viral on social media. Our library has experienced some this; staff policy is that we walk away—don’t engage, don’t enrage. We have the right to ask them to leave, and to call police if they refuse. Pat asked trustees to do some online research to find out more about this problem online, and she said the next policy we would be updating, the Patron Behavior Policy, needed to include behavior regarding cell phones, and to specify that filming of patrons, staff, and computer use in the library is not allowed.

There will be a new version of the public catalog and staff catalog rolled out on April 19th; Jenna English presented an overview and will be training staff. It is a very clean design, and there will be a noticeable difference when you search the catalog for an item.

A month after introducing Kanopy, a new streaming service, which is very strong on children's materials, 100 movies have been viewed by patrons. We have added ten new hotspots, as the result of a library donation, and they are currently all checked out. Pat reminded us that the Friends are paying for most of our streaming services. We have added a new search bar on our website—Genius, an excellent search engine.

The Best Practices Manual has been printed and distributed to staff.

Friends' Report: (Lisa Hiley)

The Friends voted to adopt a new meeting schedule; they are skipping April and August meeting dates instead of not meeting for two months in a row during the busy summer season. Lisa said that at their last meeting, the Friends decided to award \$250 to a graduating senior at Mount Greylock High School in honor of the work of Peter Mehlin. She shared the description of the award: "The Peter Mehlin Community Service Award is to be given to a senior who has shown an ongoing commitment to serving their community, be it school, town, or some broader purpose. Peter's interests are wide-ranging and the following phrases could serve as prompts: an abiding love of animals, a career in and decades of service to libraries, deep involvement in the theater and arts, concern for others (affordable housing), and a passion for lifelong learning. There is no stipulation that the student be heading to college or any restriction on how the award is to be spent." Now, The Friends are doing this as a one-time award, but their hope is to establish it as an annual award. She spoke about Peter's many contributions in the community, describing him as "a dear friend to many of us".

The Friends are making progress on redesigning their website, and coordinating the different logs they use so that they can work more coherently. They have donated "shopping spree coupons" for Chapter Two Books to local school libraries, which she said is "a fun way to get books into the hands of kids." The store is featuring National Poetry Month in its April window display. Business is good. They have had success putting some of the higher-end books on e-bay, and "figuring out a lot of different ways sell books. "

Building and Grounds Committee Report: (Charles Bonenti)

Charles e-mailed a report to us. The committee has not met for a year, but they plan to schedule a meeting soon. We are also buying a new audio-visual system for the community room, and the cost will be more than the balance in our renovation fund; Charles suggested that we consider taking some money out of the Trustees Fund or the McFarland fund to cover it. Now that the Town of Williamstown is at work on its Comprehensive Plan, this is a good time to get the Town

involved in improvements to the library's physical plant; there are pressing issues such as uninsulated cinder block and failing windows. Charles and Pat M. will meet with the consultant.

Strategic Plan Committee Report: (Charles Bonenti)

We brainstormed catchy one-line phrases that would pull in our partners and stakeholders, and let people know what our goals and objectives are. Several members of the committee threw out ideas: Libraries Build Equality, Your Voice Counts, What's in YOUR library? What does it mean for people? Access to knowledge that matters. Ideas for citizens. Your library matters. So much more than books. We will continue to share ideas via e-mail.

Pat W. moved that we approve for distribution the text of the survey as submitted, with the understanding that the header and a catchphrase will be determined by the committee. Charles seconded. All were in favor.

We discussed the use of focus groups after the survey results are in; Bridget was worried about how we would get the views of people who didn't fill out a survey. When you begin a focus group with the results of a survey, she warned, you are shutting some people down. We decided to revisit the idea of focus groups at our next meeting.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Update (Micah Manary)

Micah said this committee has met once; it was largely a brainstorming session, considering how we could use this committee to help shape our policy and our visions for the library? A number of specific things came up. There was a wide range of very diverse ideas.

He asked us for our thoughts about what this subcommittee could do for the trustees, whether we could use "a DEI lens" to make the library as accessible as possible to a broad group of people. What do you want us to do? How can this committee be helpful and serve the mission of the library?

Bridget said we have created a library DEI policy and we want it to be a living document, one that inspires us. What are our training needs? What areas should we focus on? What are areas you think we need to focus on? She said the Chamber of Commerce is having a DEI training session on Tuesday, May 17th, 9-11, and it's open to the community. It would be nice to have one or two trustees there.

Charles pointed out that the committees in town are comprised of the same kinds of people. He wants to broaden that group. How can we bring different people into the library?

Pat M. talked about the library's non-English collections, and the idea of a community book read. She said she would talk about DEI ideas at the next staff meeting.

Old Business:

a. Milne Library's 150th anniversary (Pat McLeod)

A small group met on March 8 with Pat McLeod, Kirsten Rose, Peter Mehlin, Judy Ensign, Bridget Spann, and Pam Kelley (patron and volunteer). It was a starter meeting. Group members tossed out a bunch of ideas. The next meeting is June 7 at 1 p.m. We are at the information-gathering stage. It was a good first meeting. Pat encouraged us to e-mail any ideas we might have to Judy, and to cc Bridget or her.

New Business:

a. updated director job description (Tim)

Tim, Pat M., and Bridget worked on this. They shared an updated description. Tim said the group's goal is to capture the current state of the job, clarifying where needed. They ended up reorganizing the old job description and documenting what is going on for the current director. If we were hiring someone to fill that position, we would need to revisit this again. Trustees voted to approve this updated director job description.

b. Employment Agreement for library director (Bridget) The existing document is from 2011. We briefly consulted town hall. They are in the process of hiring HR support for the town. Right now most department heads do not have a contract. They have a letter of hire. It's reassuring that this document exists, but there is no need to update it now. We will need a written employment contract when we are looking for a new library director.

c. Meeting Room policy (Micah)

Micah forwarded to us a copy of existing procedures, and sent some links about things related to meeting room policy. ALA in 2018 added a phrase about stating that you can't exclude people from using a library meeting room specifically because they are discussing views about hate. This was added because there were a number of lawsuits in major areas of the country about this. Those were won or settled. Six months later they removed it because they got so much backlash about it. Libraries should promote free speech; does letting hate groups use a library promote free speech or shut down others? We discussed some wording and made some changes. We decided the best way to go at this problem was through our patron behavior policy.

We agreed with Micah's plan to edit our meeting room policy to remove restrictions on any types of groups, and to simultaneously update our behavior policy to cover the restriction of offensive or hate speech.

Adjourn:

Tim moved to adjourn; Karen seconded. All were in favor. Bridget adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11, at 5:30 p.m.

