

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 5:30pm

Trustees present: Micah Manary (chair), Bridget Spann, Anna Halpin-Healy (treasurer), Katy Evans (secretary), Jared Della Rocca (vice chair), Ben Lee-Cohen, Robin Lenz

Staff present: Angela Zimmermann (library director)

Others present: Elizabeth Whitney (representative from the Friends)

Micah called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

Reports

I. Staff Member - Welcome Jack!

Angie has begun inviting library staff to attend our meetings on an individual basis so Trustees can get to know staff roles better. The first visitor was Jack Sarr, Digital Resources Librarian.

Jack began at Milne in 2021 and will be leaving next month to move back to Wales. Jack discussed his primary job responsibilities (digital resources, cataloging, and marketing) and how they've grown over the years. Jack has grown library collections (e.g. adult graphic novels, sci fi) and the Libby digital collections. He also redesigned the website and the newsletter. He has been deeply involved in the Thingdom (his name idea!) and has been cataloging all items. He sits in the reference area and assists patrons with digital / tech questions, along with more general reference questions.

When he leaves, his responsibilities will be spread among different staff while they're seeking his replacement. His position is part-time and he sees a real need for a full-time individual to expand on each of his responsibilities (cataloging, marketing, digital resources).

Jack also shared his concerns about workplace culture at the library and the former director's continued involvement in staff affairs. He indicated that the former director was continuing to come to and call the library with negative feedback, which then exacerbated staff tensions and impacted staff morale. He identified patterns of negative

and bullying treatment in the former director's behavior while director of the library, especially of some staff and some patrons with mental health issues. He was frustrated that not more was done and that the former director received an Employee of the Year Award after retiring this year.

Due to the stress experienced as an employee under the former director, Jack chose to share these concerns in hopes that the Trustees could help address her current overreaches into staff affairs, which are impacting current workplace culture.

The Trustees expressed their gratitude for Jack's honesty and willingness to share these concerns and confirmed the amount of time, energy, and effort that went into trying to hold the former accountable for patterns of negative behavior. Trustees had consulted frequently with Rob Favini, MBLC trustee liaison, on how to respond in a productive and legal way.

The Trustees stated their intention to address the current issues of the former director crossing professional boundaries. Discussion ensued about whether to refer this to a small group for discussion or continue to discuss with the whole board. We agreed that our primary goal and responsibility is to create a safe and welcoming work environment for the current director and support her work building a positive staff culture.

A small group of Trustees (Micah, Jared, and one other) will engage with Angie in conversation about how to move these issues to a satisfactory resolution.

II. Minutes from August meeting (Bridget)

Bridget presented the minutes from the August meeting. Micah moved to approve, Jared seconded. All voted in favor, except Bridget and Katy, who both abstained.

III. Treasurer's Report (Anna)

Anna presented the Treasurer's Report for August. She noted that the Friends committed \$20,000 to help pay for the pavilion and that the Trustees received \$10,000 of this in January. The Trustees Annual Fund also received a donation of \$2,500 from Eric White, which is not reflected in the August balance.

Ending Balances as of August 31, 2024:

Annual Fund	\$19,305.90
Carpenter Fund	\$10,645.57

Botsford Fund	\$76,801.54
150th Anniversary Fund	\$1,064.33
Conway Glick	\$0.30
Craig	\$12,972.33
McFarland	\$303,575.28
Tenney Osborne	\$24,629.35
Trustee, Friends allocation for renovation fund	\$ 2,361.44

Jared moved to approve the report, Micah seconded. All voted in favor, except Anna, who abstained.

IV. Director's Report (Angie)

The library has been very busy in the last several weeks!

Since last week, the library has been offering extended hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays and no longer locking the doors 10 minutes before closing.

The events calendar and room reservation system are now online, which meets one of the goals of the strategic plan.

Angie met with the Town Manager and Accountant about the library's capital improvement funds. The library is now approved to spend these funds for any building improvement projects.

Angie shared an update on her approach to replacing Jack when he leaves. She will be posting a job ad for a full-time marketing and communications staff person to expand that area of his job responsibilities.

The library will be closed on Friday, October 4th for a staff in-service day. Among some of the sessions on that day will be a LGBTQIA+ cultural awareness training and crisis intervention/de-escalation training.

A new Community Services Intern will be starting soon.

V. Friends' Report (Elizabeth)

The Friends didn't meet in August. Chapter Two Books continues to do well. The Friends continue to be committed to funding programs and initiatives at the library and have been transferring funds to the library budget as planned.

VI. Building and Grounds Committee (Robin)

It's time to engage with the Friends to negotiate a new lease agreement. This is a good chance for the new director to update the lease, affirm the library's relationship with the Friends, and clarify how library spaces are being used (particularly the stage storage area). Angie indicated that the library has already shifted a lot of library materials to the stage for storage and is sharing that space well with the Friends.

The new lease agreement can be presented to the board next month. Micah and Robin will talk with Angie about next steps. In the past, there has been a separate meeting involving Trustees, the library director, and representatives for the Friends.

Robin highlighted that there were six Monarch caterpillars on the plants in front of the library.

There will be a meeting in the winter to discuss spring garden design plans.

The fence and screening project is complete.

Angie shared that the MakerSpace committee is meeting at the end of the month and to email her if you are interested (Ben expressed interest).

Old & New Business

VII. Circulation Policy

The draft of the updated Circulation Policy was reviewed. Changes were proposed to switch the order of 2 paragraphs on page 1 and add "Per C/W MARS policy" to the start of the 2nd of these paragraphs, like this:

Email reminders are sent out 2 days prior to due dates. Late items two weeks beyond their due date will generate an emailed notice and/or phone call to the patron. Items not returned one month beyond their due date will be billed to the patron for the full replacement fee.

Per C/W MARS policy, library patrons with more than \$10.00 in fines or fees from any library will be blocked from borrowing materials from any of the C/W MARS libraries until they get their balance under \$10.00.

A change was also proposed on page 2 under the Thingdom policy to add “per C/W MARS policy,” like this:

1. To borrow from the Milne Public Library’s Thingdom collection, a patron must have a C/W MARS library card in good standing, per C/W MARS' policy for a valid library card.

It was clarified that digital items checked out via Libby, etc. do not count towards the 50 item total allowed to be checked out with one librarian card.

It was also noted that Town Counsel provided the consent form for the Thingdom.

Jared moved to accept the policy with the amendments noted by Micah; Ben seconded. All voted in favor.

VIII. Service Animal Policy

A draft of the Service Animal Policy was reviewed. Small adjustments were suggested, and it was decided that more clarity was needed on how/where to mention miniature horses. Micah will bring a revised version to the meeting next month.

IX. Staff Lunch

Robin moves to approve up to \$500 from Trustee funds to purchase lunch for the staff. Micah seconded. All voted in favor.

X. Annual Appeal Draft Letter

A draft of the annual appeal letter was reviewed. The Trustees agreed it looks good and some edits were suggested for clarity and consistency. It was also suggested that a QR code is added for online donations.

Anna has the mailing lists from last year; these need to be updated with anyone who has moved or is deceased. Anna will share the lists with Bridget, Ben, and Ginny to get

their help with updates. Bridget also suggested getting a list of town residents from the town to see whether new residents should be added.

Discussion ensued about the level of detail needed when recording donations. Ben and Jared will assist Anna in streamlining the process for recording donations and sending acknowledgment letters.

Micah moved to approve up to \$3,000 for printing, envelopes, and stamps for mailing the appeal letter, and moved to go forward with sending the letter, with the suggested edits. Jared seconded. All voted in favor.

Bridget also suggested checking in with Tim, former Treasurer, for assistance, if needed.

XI. Director Evaluation

Now that the Director has been at Milne for 6 months, the Trustees will complete an evaluation. Working from the job description, a rubric was created to evaluate the Director on core responsibilities and goals.

The strategic plan also has action items and guidance on what a Director might focus their energies and goals around. In addition, Angie, as a professional in the field, is encouraged to set her own annual goals and Trustees can assess if they match the strategic plan.

It was noted that the Trustees want to match the feedback we're giving with what is most helpful for the Director's working style. It was suggested that a small group meeting with the Director, Anna, and Jared may be helpful. The group would review the strategic plan, see where Angie's goals lie, what projects are currently in the works, and what other items (even beyond the strategic plan) could be goals for the next year.

Angie noted that she already created a spreadsheet of projects drawn from the strategic plan and was looking for guidance from the Trustees on how to prioritize these projects and make the role of the Director sustainable over time.

The small group noted above will review this spreadsheet and discuss ongoing projects, then come back to the large group in order to set priorities with the goal of long-term sustainability.

Anna will create a Google Form of the rubric that was created around the Director's responsibilities and goals and the Trustees will complete it. Anna will create a recap in time for the Trustees to review for the next meeting.

For future Trustees meetings, the Secretary will create a meeting packet via Google Folder that contains all relevant meeting materials. This packet will need to be made available as a public document in advance of the meeting.

The deadline for meeting materials will be the Wednesday before the week of the meeting (e.g. October 2). Send to Katy who will collate and send out to the Trustees and Town.

XII. Other Business

Angie will be presenting at the next Select Board meeting.

It was noted that the Town Employee of the Year is decided by the League of Women Voters and the Trustees were not aware that the former director was receiving the award until that day.

Jared moved to adjourn, Ben seconded. All voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36pm.