

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 5:30pm

Trustees Present: Micah Manary (chair), Bridget Spann (vice-chair), Timothy Cherubini (treasurer), Katy Evans (secretary), Robin Lenz, Anna Halpin-Healy

Staff Present: Kirsten Rose (interim library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (representing the Friends)

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

REPORTS

I. Approval of Minutes from January Meeting (Katy)

It was determined that sharing minutes for comments through Google Drive does not work because it could be seen as deliberating outside of a public meeting.

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

II. Treasurer's Report (Timothy)

In February, we will pay for Director Search expenses (these should be the last) and the staff appreciation party.

Timothy has amended the Annual Cash Flow sheet of the Treasurer's Report to include a column for projected expenses and a column to show the amount approved by the Trustees. It was suggested that these are further distinguished by a different font or an identifying symbol.

The gift from the Friends is now in the 150th Anniversary account.

Our annual appeal numbers are now past \$30K and exceed last year's.

The Conway Glick account now has a balance of \$0.30. Timothy will look into whether there is a way to close this account.

Robin raised the point that some expenditures seem not to have been brought to the Trustees for approval. Specifically, when the Trustees agreed to pay the invoice for

electrical work over the summer for the McWeeny property (neighbors). It was agreed that expenses like this should be approved by the Trustees.

The stipend of \$75 for curating the library's monthly displays in the Children's Room is still needed.

Micah moved to accept the report, Bridget seconded. All voted in favor, except for Timothy, who abstained.

Fund Balances as of January 31, 2024:

Annual Fund	\$27,515.43
Botsford	\$76,031.54
Carpenter	\$10,538.82
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
150th Anniversary	\$5,179.75
TOTAL	\$462,804.24

III. Director's Report (Kirsten)

The library catalog will have a new look, called Aspen Discovery, which will be more user-friendly. In particular, it will make it easier for patrons to see what the format is when placing the hold and will pull in all content from Libby and Hoopla.

The library is using a new software for the e-newsletter, LibraryAware, which gives it a new look. Kirsten will work with Jack to coordinate the look of e-newsletter, catalog, and webpage.

The Legislative Breakfast in January was a success with 60 people attending. Pat M. laid the foundation well. Timothy was one of the featured speakers in his role on the Mass. Legislative Committee.

There was good attendance at library events in January:

Adult programming:

- Friday Film: *Sully* - 7
- What to Keep and What to Toss in 2024 with Jamie Novak (virtual) - 49

Total - 56 people at 2 events

Kids and Teens Programming:

- Storytimes - 27 children at 8 programs
- Kids movie: *Elemental* - 4 teens, 18 family groups

Total - 49 people at 9 events

IV. Friends' Report (Elizabeth)

Chapter Two Books has signed a lease through 2025. Williams College opened a tab for students to get a book at the store (\$6 max), which was helpful in bringing students in.

The Friends are working on a new initiative to create a workshop/studio space at the library. The space is intended for use for arts and crafts instruction and creation. The Friends are looking to gather donations of high-quality art supplies and plan to staff the room to provide supervision. The Friends will bring this idea to Kirsten and the new library director.

The Friends are also continuing to think about the proposal for extended library hours. There are funds to support this.

V. Buildings and Grounds Report (Alex *in absentia*/Robin)

Alex submitted the B&G Report in advance – there is a lot going on and the Trustees are grateful to the B&G committee for taking it on.

The process for requesting 3 bids for any project over \$10,000 is a bit cumbersome. Can we bundle tasks in such a way that they do not exceed \$10,000? The Massachusetts guidelines prevent this kind of re-categorizing or re-bundling. Alex Charron is going through the punch list to try to clarify each task in the Centerline report.

Micah asked if the B&G committee is getting enough support, noting that a lot of the work is falling on Alex Carlisle's shoulders. The Trustees are still looking for more committee members who have expertise in planning, design, and construction.

There is consideration of building a fence around the new pavilion in the courtyard of the library out of concern for security. There was discussion about how this strays from

the original vision of the Friends and others that the pavilion would encourage use of the library grounds, even when the library is closed. According to the Friends, the initial vision was for more transparency and an invitation to use the space by making the pavilion visible from the parking lot.

Other points raised include that parents of young children may be more comfortable with a fence and that it prevents people from “hanky panky” after the library is closed. The fence may give a false sense of security because it could be climbed or jumped after hours. Micah will talk with Alex and continue the conversation with the Friends, B&G committee, Trustees, and Staff.

Kirsten has talked with Alex Charron about compiling a list of the trees donated by others as part of the memorial tree program. The library is not currently accepting any more memorial plantings. With the list, the library and B&G committee can then make a plan for how to proceed, especially with the trees that are not doing well.

Robin proposed expanding mulch around existing trees and linking trees by mulch to decrease the amount of mowing the Town needs to do. In addition, it would be helpful to label the trees on a design plan that people can review.

VI. Director Search (Micah)

The visit by the final candidate is on Feb. 10th. Trustees are expected to attend, if you haven't let Micah know you're unavailable.

There will be a meeting to make a decision on the candidates on Tuesday, February 13th on the 3rd floor of Town Hall. Micah will check to see if the room is wheelchair-accessible.

The first question to consider at this meeting will be: Has the search been a success or do we need to get more applicants? Micah will gather some data from the search committee about overall number and breakdown of applicants. Then Micah will present feedback on candidates and ask questions to guide discussion.

VII. New Director Support (Anna & Bridget)

Anna and Bridget met a week ago with Kirsten and everything is going well.

They're planning a staff appreciation event on February 14.

VIII. FY 25 Budget Planning (Timothy)

Timothy will ask the Town to share the salaries of all town employees. Now that the library staff have received wage increases, we need to check in on how their pay relates

to others employed by the town.

We are still waiting on the date for the Fin Comm meeting where we will present the budget, but it will be in late February.

We will need to look at the library budget for the current year again in March. There are expenses that were not budgeted (salary increases) and we want to monitor where we are in relation to the projected budget. Overall we're where we should be right now.

NEW BUSINESS

IX. 150th Anniversary (Bridget)

The banner announcing the 150th Anniversary is up on the library and generating a lot of excitement. The next meeting of the planning committee is next week. The Open House event is March 9 and the Trustees are expected to attend and volunteer.

There is a film series at The Clark that will run March 7 through April.

We need to plan for a thank you for Judy Ensign. We can present it to her at the art reception in December.

X. Other Business

Bridget provided follow-up on the incident around the book investigation in Great Barrington. It has now become a select board issue and Bridget has talked with Stephanie Boyd (select board member), who has talked with Chief Ziemba. Trustees will follow up and pull others into the conversation (school committee, school librarian). Micah will talk with Kirsten to organize.

Bridget and Micah will seek reimbursement for paying for lunches with the director candidates. Micah moved and Timothy seconded a motion to reimburse them; all voted in favor.

Bridget moved to adjourn, Micah seconded; all voted in favor.

Micah adjourned the meeting at 6:48pm.

Next meeting will be March 13, 2024 at 5:30pm.