

Library Board Meeting Minutes

Wed, 12 Mar 2025

The meeting was called to order by Micah at 5:32pm.

Attendance

Trustees Present: Micah Manary (Chair), Jared Della Rocca (Vice Chair), Ben Lee-Cohen, Robin Lenz, Bridget Spann, Anna Halpin-Healy

Trustee Absent: Katy Evans (Secretary)

Staff Present: Angela Zimmermann (Library Director), Rocio Carrera (Teen Librarian)

Others Present: Stephen Winkler (Friends' Representative)

Reports

1. Library Staff Member Introduction: Rocio Carrera

The board welcomed Rocio Carrera, the Teen Librarian. Rocio shared her background, noting her transition from Maine, her roots in Los Angeles, and her diverse work experience spanning libraries and the culinary arts.

Rocio outlined her responsibilities, including purchasing for the teen room, developing and running engaging programs for teens and tweens, and managing the popular after-school snack program. She described the art corner, where the project changes monthly, and a dry-erase board that features a thought-provoking question. In addition to these core duties, Rocio organizes a summer create camp for kids, conducts weekly story times, and acts as the Spanish liaison, co-starting a popular Spanish conversation club. Future plans include Spanish-language viewings of Disney classics and a collaborative Spanish story time led by a high school volunteer. Rocio also contributes to the library's online presence with blog posts for the teen section of the new website.

Rocio emphasized that the library should be viewed as one cohesive entity, rather than segmented children's, teen, and adult sections. She shared her passion for developing programming that benefits the entire community. Finally, she noted the continued need for clear communication concerning all of the library's diverse services.

2. Minutes

The board discussed the revised format of the meeting minutes. The consensus was that the new, more condensed format is easier to understand and read. It was agreed that it is more helpful when used in combination with the automatically generated transcript and recording of the meeting. Micah highlighted that the recording and transcript are accessible through the Google Drive. To ensure transparency, it was clarified that the transcript is generated automatically and is not curated or edited. Anna suggested adding a disclaimer to the transcript, indicating that it may not accurately reflect what was said during the meeting.

Micah moved to approve the February minutes as submitted, and Jared seconded. Ben, Robin, Bridget, and Jared voted in favor, while Anna abstained.

3. Treasurer's Report (Anna)

Anna began by acknowledging Angie's one-year anniversary with the library and celebrating her positive impact. She then presented the treasurer's report, which included figures for the annual appeal. Anna explained that the January donation deposits were not reflected until the February bank statement but have since been reconciled and are reflected in March. She is keeping the printing and mailing costs for the annual appeals open due to the potential need to purchase additional stamps and envelopes for acknowledgment letters. Anna, Ben, and Jared will coordinate to resolve issues related to addressing thank you notes. She also noted that the staff appreciation amount, previously approved in January, will be included in an amended version of the treasurer's report.

Ben moved to accept the treasurer's report, and Micah seconded. Ben, Robin, Bridget, Jared, and Micah voted in favor, while Anna abstained.

4. Director's Report (Angie)

Angie reported that the boilers have been signed off on and are scheduled for installation in the fall. The new website and logo have been well-received by the community. Thanks to the Friends of the Library, the library will be acquiring a book bike, which will be used for home delivery and participation in outreach events. Furthermore, the library has been awarded an ALA grant, with further details to be revealed next week following the ALA's marketing announcement. Angie spoke before FinCom, which was extremely well-received. Funding for a new MakerSpace employee is likely. Angie emphasized that she is encouraging staff to take on leadership roles within committees while maintaining her presence in all committee activities. Finally, circulation figures were down due to the cold weather. Micah requested that the 2024 circulation figures be retained on the chart for comparison purposes.

5. Friend's Report (Stephen)

Stephen shared that the Friends are funding the Book Bike. Additionally, they recently held a BOGO children's book sale at the store, which was well-attended. The Friends are considering a members-only shopping session in the distribution center (DC) to facilitate weeding. The chair noted that the Friend's Report was outstanding.

6. Building and Grounds (Robin)

Robin announced that Ben will be taking over as chair of the committee, with Robin focusing on grounds-related issues. The committee has experienced some loss of membership. The town has begun assuming greater responsibility for the management of building facilities after two years of discussions.

The board discussed whether the committee should assume an oversight role in relation to the town's work. Micah and Bridget pointed out that the Building and Grounds committee was established following the Circulation renovation, which did not have a dedicated committee. Maintenance of the grounds is handled by the town, with input from the Garden Club. Robin has been working to reduce mowing frequency in order to lower the library's carbon footprint; however, this effort has faced some challenges. A new committee is being formed to solicit RFPs for the courtyard area where the gazebo is located. The Sustainability Committee is considering current and future building and space considerations and is collaborating with the COOL committee.

Regarding potential future renovations, it was acknowledged that these would be coordinated between the library director and the Building and Grounds committee. The line between the committee and the town's responsibilities was discussed. Anna agreed with Bridget's perspective that creative control should remain within the library. Angie suggested that the library director could convene the Building and Grounds committee on an as-needed basis. Micah drew a comparison between the roles of the school and the town. Ben will follow up with the school to better understand that division of labor.

The Building and Grounds committee may adjust its schedule and communication with the board. The committee plans to determine how best to work with the town on theoretical future projects.

7. DEI Committee (Angie presenting on Katy's behalf)

Angie presented on behalf of Katy, highlighting several proposed changes to the committee. The committee is proposing a transition from a board-led to a staff-led structure. The committee believes it can make this change independently, as the rationale is that the committee was initially formed when the library was not actively engaged in DEI initiatives, which is no longer the case. It was noted that this transition would necessitate the board rescinding the original policy. Anna emphasized the value of having both a policy outlining minimum requirements and a statement that expresses aspirational goals.

The committee also proposed changing the name from DEI to JIDEA (justice, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility) and changing the committee's output from a policy to a statement. The Oak Park Public Library was cited as an exemplary resource in this area. Furthermore, the committee plans to enhance the library's land acknowledgement. Micah will consult with Angie and Brianna before the next board meeting to discuss these proposals further.

Old Business

1. Invoice for Fence / Botsford Fund Restrictions

The board discussed the invoice for the fence, noting that the Botsford Fund's interest, but not the principal, can be used for this purpose. The current interest amounts to approximately \$7,000. It was agreed that the remaining cost would be covered by the annual fund. The Friends generally prefer not to fund operational expenses, making them unlikely to contribute to this project.

Micah moved to allocate the interest from the Botsford fund to the fence, with the balance to be covered by the annual fund. Anna seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Appropriate Library Use Policy (Revised)

The board reviewed the revised "Appropriate Library Use Policy." A suggestion was made to reorder the words "clean" and "comfortable" in the opening paragraph to read, "maintaining a comfortable clean," improving the flow. There was a discussion about renaming the policy to something less judgmental or shaming. Alternative titles considered included: "Respectful and Shared Library Spaces Policy," "Library Use Policy," "Responsible Library Use Policy," and "Policy on Respectful and Shared Library Spaces."

Micah moved to accept the revised policy with the change to "comfortable clean" and to change the title to Library Use Policy. Robin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Building Advisory Committee

Bridget initiated a discussion about the Building Advisory Committee following discussions at FinCom and the MBLC breakfast. Micah suggested holding multiple "Open Forum on Future of Williamstown Library" meetings to gather community input and generate interest in the project. These meetings would involve outlining the existing building and its challenges.

4. Staff Appreciation Event 3/14

The board confirmed that a staff appreciation event, including chair massages and lunch from Spring St. Market, would be held on Friday.

New Business

1. Annual Director Evaluation

In preparation for the annual director evaluation, Angie requested that all staff members be consulted. Micah announced the formation of an ad hoc committee consisting of himself, Jared, and Anna to conduct the evaluation. The board took the opportunity to acknowledge Angie's one-year anniversary. Bridget expressed her appreciation for Angie's work, noting the incredible progress and positive changes that have occurred at the library during her tenure. Bridget also expressed her hope that Angie would be able to find a sustainable pace for her work.

2. Grounds Policy

The board noted that while there is an existing parking policy, there is no corresponding grounds policy. They also acknowledged that the modified Library Use policy contains some overlapping provisions. A proposal was made to consolidate the new grounds policy, the existing parking policy, and the Library Use policy into a single, comprehensive document. The board also recalled their recent approval of the Meeting Rooms policy, which includes some provisions that may overlap with these other policies.

Adjournment

Ben motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Micah seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Written by Ben Lee-Cohen.