

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown  
Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 5:30pm

**Trustees Present:** Micah Manary (Chair), Anna Halpin-Healy (Treasurer), Katy Evans (Secretary), Alex Carlisle, Robin Lenz, Jared Della Rocca

**Trustees Absent:** Bridget Spann (Vice Chair)

**Staff Present:** Angela Zimmermann (library director)

**Others Present:** Elizabeth Whitney (representative from the Friends)

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

## Reports

### I. Approval of Minutes from April Meeting (Katy)

Micah moved to accept the April meeting minutes, Robin seconded. All voted in favor, except for Katy, who abstained.

### II. Treasurer's Report (Anna)

Anna is now set up on the Trustees' bank account.

Anna will speak with Micah about the thank you letter we send for monetary gifts that come in throughout the year.

Angie's reimbursement for moving expenses has been settled and paid from the Trustees' Annual Fund account.

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

### III. Director's Report (Angie)

Angie supplied a detailed report on the administrative, programmatic, and budgetary developments over the past month. In addition, each full-time staff member provided a summary of the happenings in their area. The Trustees expressed appreciation for the new format and content of the Director's Report.

Highlights include:

- Angie has been meeting with several groups and individuals in the community.
- College students from Bennington, Williams, and MCLA have reached out about internships.
- Staff have been working on cleaning up areas around the library. The newly-cleaned Classics Room will become the new Library of Things.
- Staff are also looking to weed the collection in all areas to make room for new books and to create more forward-facing displays.
- Staff will be present at the Farmers' Market and WYC Spring Fest this month.
- Angie has been working on the library's budget proposal for the Friends to be voted on in June.

We discussed the library's year-to-date budget and noted high spending in the Subscriptions line. There will be an increase in this line for the next fiscal year. In addition, the Friends are set to reimburse the library for the Consumer Reports subscription, per the budget submitted to the Friends in the fall. Angie will connect with Friends to move this forward.

Micah shared an overview of the library budget timeline: Micah and Tim spoke with Town officials about the budget in February and developed it with their input. Micah, Alex, and Bridget presented it to Fin Com at the end of February and did not receive any pushback. It will be officially approved at Town Meeting on May 23.

Angie highlighted some subscriptions that we may be able to cut from the budget. For instance, Hoopla and Kanopy are available through the Boston Public Library e-card. Concerns were raised that the extra step of getting the e-card through the BPL would lead some patrons not to use the services. Angie will look into how much we would save by not continuing these subscriptions through Milne.

Angie and Micah discussed the library budget for this fiscal year. We're anticipating going over by \$71,000, which was expected because of the staff salary increases of approximately \$70,000. \$50,000 of the salary increases will be covered by the Town and the remaining overage will be covered by the Trustees' Annual Fund.

#### **IV. Friends Report (Elizabeth)**

Chapter Two Books is getting ready to extend its hours for the summer. They are preparing new theme displays, including for AAPI month, spring gardening, and graduation. There are some new volunteers, including a Williams College student.

The Friends note that they've been able to contribute to special requests for funding for programming and professional development from Angie. The current process of requesting/approving these funds is going well.

The Friends are very excited to be working with Angie on new initiatives, especially those mentioned in the strategic plan (e.g. Maker Space, Library of Things).

## V. B&G Report (Alex)

Alex started off a discussion of the relationship between the B&G committee and library staff. The goal of the committee is to help take care of the building and grounds, especially around deferred maintenance. The committee can step back and allow library staff to take the lead, but they want to clarify roles.

Alex acknowledges that, as a Trustee, he should not have direct interaction with library staff, like Alex Charron, who is supervised by the Library Director. At the same time, he wants to efficiently provide needed information about the Centerline Report and the projects on the list to Alex who manages the library facilities.

Micah raised some operational questions to consider:

- Who makes decisions and who selects materials for B&G projects?
- Who collects bids on large library projects?
- Who decides how the grounds are used?

The Centerline Report is a guide and may not fully capture all needs of the building and grounds. Some of those projects have been tabled, while others have arisen.

Alex Charron, as supervisor of grounds, has responsibility to make informed decisions about maintenance and cleaning and repair issues. Ultimately, Angie is overseeing Alex and Trustees are not.

For large projects (e.g. a \$12,000 door replacement vs. \$500 repair), this would be something to be discussed with the B&G committee. The purpose of consulting with the committee is to get multiple perspectives and have a full conversation. But how does the committee become fully informed about the options?

Staff (Alex Charron) should take decisions to Angie and she can present to B&G, or ask Alex Charron to present to the committee. Angie should understand the scope and determine how and when to present to B&G committee. Committee should be cc'ing Angie on all communication about the library.

How are other town buildings cared for? Could we involve other town employees in assessing needs and planning projects?

Micah talked with Craig Clough in the DPW and they do not have time/interest to be involved in project decisions. Library can make decisions and communicate anything that impacts mowing and drainage to them with ample advance notice.

Alex suggested that the committee discuss and vote on all large projects, which Angie can then communicate to Alex Charron with specific instructions. Angie is also inviting Alex to the B&G committee meetings right now as she is still in transition.

Micah prefers that all decisions get looked at by the B&G committee, whether or not they're voted on. Also requesting that the Director create a document outlining maintenance processes and policies (e.g. when something needs repair, here is what we do, or this is how we clean the bathrooms, or this is how we cut trees on the lot). Then the Director and the B&G committee can pull in others to help with this as needed (e.g. tree warden, health inspector, Alex Charron). Angie is already taking notes at B&G committee meetings and following up with Alex about tasks.

The Trustees are also aware that dictating specific protocols to staff about cleaning and maintenance could increase tensions and that's a big lift for the new Director.

It was noted that, in terms of division of labor, policies are the Trustees job and protocols are library staff responsibility. Alex Charron should (and wants to) take the lead on many maintenance issues at the library.

Action Steps: Angie will start on a protocol list - laying out who makes what decision and the flowchart for how decisions get made and at what scope the B&G committee is involved. It was suggested that Williams College or another organization likely has a document similar to this. Micah will check.

Update on the design for the library entrance sign: passed on to Angie. Have one quote already, getting ready to meet with another company for another quote.

No update on pavilion.

Update on property line fencing: Micah heard from Craig that the fence should be 6 inches off the ground to allow room for the trimmers.

We have 3 bids on the fencing: New England Fence \$19,750, All American Fence Co. \$22,500, and Berkshire Fence Co. \$22,475. Micah moved to hire New England Fence, Anna seconds. All voted in favor.

Heat pumps: still waiting for the Town to sign contracts. Applying for additional Green Communities funding for additional heat pumps next year. Next year's funding will include heat pumps for Friends sorting areas.

Windows in Friends sorting area: Paul Burnham (contractor helping with other library projects) will look at these for repair or replacement.

Tree removal: we have 3 bids (Tree Guy \$5500, Countryside \$4751.06, Greater Heights \$13,325).

Micah moves to authorize the hiring of Countryside for tree removal, Jared seconds. All voted in favor.

Where is the money coming from? Micah will look at the current budget and discuss with Angie.

Ben Diffley is joining the B&G committee - will help with plans and research for no mow lawn area. He was approved in the previous meeting.

Update on leaking forced hot water system: leaking boiler. Alex Charron was able to fix it so we don't need to replace it.

Robin reports that we're completing the planting plan for the 150th anniversary year and there will be a community planting on Saturday. Laura Benz is hosting "work and learn" sessions for gardening at the library.

## **Old Business**

### **VI. Schedule to go to Friends meetings**

## **New Business**

### **VII. Staff room upgrades**

The kitchen has been cleaned and Angie is looking for funds to freshen up the room (e.g. new chairs).

Micah moves to approve up to \$1,500 for staff room, soliciting support from Friends. Katy seconds. All voted in favor.

### **VIII. Library of Things initial funding**

Getting moving on the collection and need seed money. This could be something the Friends can help with. Ongoing list of what patrons have suggested and staff have a lot of good ideas.

Is there any liability with what we lend out? Angie is talking with town counsel.

**IX. Trustee Self-Evaluation**

We reviewed the list of board self-evaluation topics. Overall, the Trustees do well. It was agreed that the Trustees could encourage members and staff to attend local, state, and national meetings related to library issues and that trustees could be better at advocacy.

We know we're deficient with state-level advocacy. We could aim to submit something in writing and/or invite Tim to speak with us annually about state-wide issues. Anna will look into what more advocacy on the state level will look like.

Also, Tim forwarded an email recently about state legislation affecting library building projects. Jared will draft a letter to the state reps in support of legislation that he can bring to the Trustees to have us jointly sign.

It was also suggested that we could read more library-related periodicals and could document Trustee procedures in a trustee notebook or manual. Jared reads American Libraries Magazine and recommends it - it's online and readable. Micah will also look into other things Trustees should be reading.

**X. Other Business**

Do we want to bring snacks to the meeting?

We need a Bulletin Board Policy. Micah co-wrote a draft with Angie. We currently have an overflow of flyers and need to be able to prioritize.

We also need to create a programming policy committee - director, trustee chair, and whichever staff would like to join.

Election next week!

Trustee Offices: If you are interested in a position, please let Micah know and bring it up at the next meeting.

Anna moved to adjourn, Robin seconded. All voted in favor. Micah adjourned at 7:16pm.