

FLETT ROOM, BELMONT MEMORIAL LIBRARY
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MAY 16, 2006

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hal Shubin at 7:30 pm. Present were trustees Elaine Alligood, Mary Keenan, Jil Westcott, Director Maureen Connors, and LWV observer Audrey Lenk.

Benton Branch: A group of 18 Benton branch neighbors and supporters followed up their presentations at the Selectman's meeting on the previous night, May 15, by attending this meeting. Since the previous evening's remarks were focused on their reasons why Benton should not close, Chairman Shubin requested that the speakers keep their remarks to suggestions or ideas potentially enabling Benton to remain open for a period of some number of weekly hours in FY07. Chairman Shubin made the point that the Board would not make any decisions tonight because two members were absent; and the Board needed to discuss all the issues and look carefully at the budget before deciding any changes to the FY07 budget allocations.

The Benton Supporters presented a range of suggestions and emotional pleas to not close the Benton. Chairman Shubin clarified that the Benton is NOT slated to close permanently; only for FY07 as a result of the 90K budget cut required by the failure of the recent override vote and Town mandated budget cuts. Director Connors and Trustee Westcott reiterated that in FY08 and beyond the Benton is slated to play an integral role in services to Belmont during the construction of a new main library.

Three suggestions emerged from the discussion, below are the points made:

Volunteers help run Benton: Director Connors responded to this by explaining that insurance liability issues, staff unions' (there are three) requirements, and patron privacy issues prevent neighbors from working as volunteers to run the Benton in the absence of paid professional or paraprofessional staff.

Change Benton to a Reading Room rather than a full Branch: This is a potential option as it would not require a professional librarian to be on site, but rather a paraprofessional would be on site to check out and check in materials and handle the reading room's administrative tasks.

Propose an amendment at Town Meeting: This is an option for the Benton neighbors to pursue, on their own, at Town Meeting.

Chairman Shubin, and the trustees present also encouraged the Benton neighbors to contact and join the Friends of the Belmont Public Library. The trustees encouraged them to maximize their current enthusiasm by joining the Friends to work through the established Belmont Public Library organization to make best use of their Benton interest.

New Business: New Copy Machine Proposals were presented by Fred Dooe, Head Technical Services. The two vendors on state contract offered similar hardware and

technologies that allowed users to send files directly to the networked copiers one of which will be a color copier. Paper purchase and storage was also discussed and it was decided that Fred Dooe investigate whether the paper vendor could store the paper and deliver supplies in smaller lots as needed requiring less to be held in the library's limited storage space. Trustee Keenan moved to accept the vendor NBM's proposal which was the lower priced. Trustee Westcott seconded the motion and the Trustees voted unanimously to accept the proposal.

Chairman Shubin then brought up the suggestion to set up a subcommittee to look into the Revolving Fund and how best to manage it. Trustee Westcott volunteered to chair the Revolving Fund Subcommittee with Trustee McCormick serving on it and to work with the Town Accountant, Barbara Hagg to investigate what the Library's options are and how to best utilize and manage the fund(s).

Director Connors next described the Belmont Library Foundation's (BLF) request for Board input in the planning for the long range future budget needs. It is anticipated that the library would have some sort of endowment that could provide some degree of operating expenses. Specifically, the BLF wants the Board to identify some best estimates for annual budgets after the new library opens. Director Connors characterized current budget needs at 195K and the potential future year's budget might be more like 209K given the expenses of a larger space and the potential addition of approximately five new staff added within the next twenty years. The Trustees agreed to create a subcommittee to make a plan to meet with the BLF and discuss the specific issues and parameters for this budget estimate process. Trustees Keenan and Alligood volunteered to do this and report back to the larger group. They will speak to Martha Gallagher, President of the BLF and begin the process.

[At this point, since the Benton neighbors' discussion went over time—until 8:45 pm; the Trustees decided to work through to 10:00 pm and leave the unfinished agenda items until the next meeting on June 20, 2006.]

Committee Reports:

At 9:12 pm Director Connors presented the library's Internet Use Policy for discussion and approval. The policy was well received with only a few minor edits suggested and discussed. Trustee Keenan moved to approve the policy, Trustee Alligood seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

Old Business:

The Budget 07 update was presented by Director Connors. Trustee Keenan was concerned about potential spending on the circulation area re-configuration to be underway soon, given the construction cost plus potential ADA compliance related costs. Director Connors mentioned that Pat Bruschi wants the library to work with the Town's permanent building committee to create a plan for FY08 as the FY07 building plans have been placed into the FY08 queue. It was decided to assign

trustees at the next Trustee's Meeting on June 20, 2006 to work on the circulation area building plan this summer.

State Grant Funds: Use of the state grants funds for weekend operating costs was discussed. Director Connors updated the trustees on three recent personnel actions that will positively affect the budget. One retirement, one departure, and one maternity leave will generate some additional funds. The trustees agreed to open the library for eight four-hour summer Saturdays and 17 four-hour school year Sundays. It was noted that this is only a partial restoration of fall/winter Sunday hours and not the usual 30 four-hour Sundays.

Use of State grant funds for the Benton branch was discussed next. The Trustees discussed the possibilities for using these funds for Benton and decided to wait until immediately prior to the Town Meeting on May 22 to discuss this when the two absent trustees would be available.

Chairman Shubin moved that the Board approve both the Minutes of April 11, 2006 regular meeting, and the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees held prior to the April 11, 2006. The motion was seconded and both minutes were approved.

NEXT MEETING --- TUESDAY --- May 30, 2006 at 7:30pm in the Flett Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine C. Alligood, Secretary