

Town of Belmont
Human Services Subcommittee of Warrant Committee
Minutes of Meeting with Library
March 14, 2022 – 2:30 p.m.

DATE: May 16, 2022

TIME: 5:14 PM

Human Services Sub-Committee of the Warrant Committee

Minutes for the meeting of March 14, 2022 held via zoom at 2:30 p.m

Present: Robert McLaughlin, Chair, Jenny Fallon, and Lynn Read

Also present: Kathy Keohane, Vice-Chair, Library Trustees and Peter Struzziero, Library Director

The meeting was called to order by Mr. McLaughlin at 2:42 p.m. (late because of technical difficulties).

Ms. Keohane began with a summary of the work of the Library Trustees to set context for the discussion of the Library's budget request for FY23. The Trustees have focused on three main areas:

1. Programs and services – Is the Library meeting the needs of the community? How is use of the Library changing with changing needs? New investment in technology will be necessary.
2. Management, governance and oversight – High staff turnover in the last few years including many retirements; have taken the opportunity to review job descriptions to ensure the staff structure is correct, the right tasks are being accomplished the most efficiently, and the staff is right sized. It is clear that they will have to request an Assistant Director position soon. The Library is the only Town department without such a position and most other municipal libraries have this position.
3. The new building project – Refreshing cost projections for the new construction, as well as projections for costs to repair the current building to prepare up-to-date information for the fall vote.

The Library's budget request is an increase of 4.2% over the FY22 budget. This represents a recapturing of funds from the overall budget reduction of a few years ago when the first COVID budget was faced and the reduction of the "capital outlay" line item that all departments were requested to make.

Part of the increase is a request for a new FTE position of an additional Children's Librarian. This is partially funded by the elimination of a .4 FTE position. This new position is necessary following expansion of hours for the Children's Room to cover four

nights and Sundays with no increase in staff and the increase in Belmont's under 18 population leading to increased demand for programs and services. Other increases include a \$14,000 increase in Tech Services Capital and \$25,000 to cover part of the building cleaning contract which has been funded from the Facilities budget in the past.

The line items for technology funding have never been robust (only about a 4% increase over 10 years). Increased technology up-dates and ongoing subscriptions are necessary, especially following responses to COVID and more remote services and programs.

The need to meet the minimum municipal appropriation for the MBLC and membership in the Minuteman Network was noted again.

Ms. Read spoke for all the sub-committee saying how impressed she is with what the Library is able to accomplish with very restricted resources.

The proposed fall Debt Exclusion vote for the new Library building was discussed. If the new building project is not approved the cost of repairing the current building will also require a Debt Exclusion.

The WC report should include a section on future challenges, including mention of the building project and the need for an Assistant Director position.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Fallon