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DATE: August 16, 2021
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BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
May 18, 2021

Chair Alligood called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology as a result of the Covid-19 related order preventing gatherings. Also present were Vice Chair Keohane, Trustees Mark Carthy, Gail Mann, Corinne McCue Olmsted, Mary Stearns and Director Peter Struzziero. Members of the Library staff attending the meeting were Gráinne Griffin and Christopher Tremblay.

Review of March 25, 2021 Minutes

The Minutes of the Trustees' March 25 meeting were approved on a motion by Trustee Keohane, seconded by Trustee Mann and voted unanimously. No changes to the minutes as submitted.

Review of April 14, 2021 Minutes

Trustee Olmsted requested several changes to the minutes as submitted. The revised minutes were approved on a motion by Trustee Keohane, seconded by Trustee Olmsted and voted unanimously.

Review of April 28, 2021 Minutes

The April 28, 2021 minutes were not reviewed at this meeting and will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting.

Library Operations

Outdoor expansion

As of May 18, the Library Director expanded library services to include outdoor operations. The library is providing outdoor circulation of materials using carts on wheels and will add outdoor seating. Trustee Olmsted asked about the availability of video cameras to monitor the outdoors given the recent vandalism at nearby under wood pool.

The Library Director is targeting June 1, 2021 as the date to open the library building to the public. He is in contact with the Minuteman Library Directors and the state network of library directors to identify best practices for reopening.

Trustee Keohane asked about the library cleaning protocols. The Library Director said the protocols have not changed.

Trustee Olmsted stated that the library might consider following the Belmont school policy for our childrens room which is to require masks and keep 3 feet apart.

FY22 Budget Update and Capital Budget Committee

The Town's Capital Budget Committee deferred the library's capital budget request and asked for more information. The Library Director is preparing the requested additional information.

Building Project Update

Chair Alligood and Vice Chair Keohane met with the Town Administrator and the Select Board Library Liaison to discuss the status of the building project. The Select Board Liaison voiced support for the library building project and mentioned the possibility of a debt exclusion vote in 2023 or spring 2024. The Trustees will provide a report on the library building project at the June 9 Town Meeting.

Friends / Foundation / School Committee Updates

The Trustee Chair will attend the Friends of the Library Annual Meeting on June 3. The positions of President and Vice President of the Friends will rotate at that time. The Friends May Book sale was a financial and social success. Many enjoyed the Star Wars characters appearing at the Book Sale.

The Foundation meeting was cancelled.

The School Committee reported that all children are back in school except for those opting to remain remote. The children must be 3 feet apart indoors. The high school librarian position will be cut in FY 22 and the Library Director is working with the School Department to provide an app to allow students to access the library's electronic resources. The architects Perkins and Will met with the School Committee and the Select Board jointly to present the results of their ice rink study. The proposed design has a 18M cost with 20% error band.

Key Topics

Presentation by Library Director- Discussion and Vote on Library Fines

The Library Director delivered a presentation describing the proposed Fine Free Program which would end the practice of late fines. He provided a quantitative analysis of Belmont Public Library data showing that the library incurs a cost from the fine collection process which exceeds revenue from fines. He reported that all of the surrounding communities, including the city of Boston, either have, or are in the process of, adopting a Fine Free Program.

Trustee Carthy asked that the proposed Fine Free program, which would require amending the current circulation policy, include how to handle a serial abuser, how reminders will be sent, a description of the late policy and its implementation and how lost items will be billed to the borrower. Trustee Mann said the policy should define the process for suspending a patron following abuse of the account. Trustee Olmsted asked how to handle the new materials shorter loan period which currently do not allow renewal. The Library Director was asked to provide information on expenses to be incurred by tracking and replacing lost items.

Trustees Stearns asked that the Trustees vote on the concept of Fine Free. Trustee Mann offered a motion that the Belmont Public Library eliminate overdue fines effective 7/1/21, seconded by Trustee Stearns, and the motion was voted unanimously. Trustee Mann asked that the Director update and revise the circulation policy and present this revised policy for the Trustees' review at the June meeting.

The Library Director reported on the success of the Library's Food for Fines program and said that this program will continue after a Fine Free program is implemented.

Policy Review - Museum Pass Review and Vote

The Library Director reported that the Friends of the Belmont Public Library have asked that access to the museum passes be opened to residents of other communities due to insufficient pass use. The Library Director provided statistics on use from 2016-2019. Use has been steady despite increased promotion of the availability of passes.

The Trustees reviewed the sentence in the library's policies limiting museum pass use to town residents. Trustee Keohane asked for more data on pass use prior to making any decision to change the current policy including what passes are available, how are each used and what days are they used. Trustee Olmsted asked for information about museum pass access in other towns. The Library Director will provide this data.

The Trustees' goal is to encourage more use of the passes by Belmont Library cardholders. The Trustees asked the Library Director to increase the marketing of the pass program. Trustee Keohane will speak to the Friends about the Trustees' current position on this topic. The decision on extending access to museum passes to non-Belmont residents was deferred.

Director's Report

The Library Director is working with the Town to acquire granite curbing for the parking lot to replace damaged portions of the asphalt curbing.

The Director reported that the recently completed Community Read program, which offered two months of programming, was very successful with more than 700 participants.

Chair Alligood said that the Library Director's annual review will be held on June 10. She asked the Trustees to provide her input for the review.

Adjourn:

Chair Alligood moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Carthy seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary D. Stearns, Secretary

Next Meeting – June 17th 2021 at 7:00pm

Exhibits:

- Board of Library Trustees Agenda, May 2021
- Library Minutes, 3/25/2021, v3
- Library Minutes 4/14/2021
- Library Minutes 4/28, 2021
- Buildings and Grounds
- Director's Report, May 2021
- FAQ on Belmont Public Library Fines
- ALA Resolution on Fines
- April Usage Statistics
- Supporting Document for Library Director's Presentation