

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

December 17, 2020

DATE: January 25, 2021

TIME: 9:49 AM

Chair Kathy Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 Trustees Elaine Alligood, 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 Ann Marie Zocchi.

**Review of Minutes:**

The Minutes of the Trustees' November 19 meeting were approved on a motion by Chair Keohane, seconded by Trustee Mann and voted unanimously. No changes to the minutes as submitted.

**Library Operations:**

The service model changed in light of the recent spike in COVID cases in Massachusetts. The Library Director and staff had planned for a possible need to rollback library services in case of an increase in the virus and implemented their plan when the Town of Belmont closed all public buildings to the public on December 11. The library service roll back ended computer usage and browsing of displays, staggered work shifts, further spaced work locations and staggered staff on-site work. Patrons can request materials and they are provided through window service to the right of the front door and outside the Children's Room.

The Library Director is in communication with libraries in adjacent communities and reported that other libraries have adjusted their service model in various ways in response to the increase incidence of the virus.

**FY22 Budget Update:**

If the Town override vote in April fails, the library will be asked for a reduced budget. Per the request of the Town Administrator the Library Director has drafted budgets for FY 2022 with 10% and 20% reductions in preparation for an open public forum on January 7, 2021.

The Library Director is preparing a capital budget request for FY 2022 which will carry forward the two capital requests in FY 21 which were not funded, i.e., a new fire alarm system and \$55K for preventative maintenance for the large air conditioning units.

**Trustee Review of Policies:**

The Trustees will begin a year-long process to review existing library policies starting at the January Trustees' Meeting. This process will start with the oldest policies and continue through subsequent months. The Trustees will also consider topics where there is no policy and whether a policy is needed, for example, work from home. At present the Town of Belmont does not have a work from home policy.

**Staffing review:**

Two staff members are on parental leave. The Library Director has hired a new reference librarian to replace an attrition. A staff member has moved from Circulation to fill a position in the Technical Services Department.

### **Friends/Foundation Update:**

The Belmont Library Foundation is developing its communications strategy and message. The Foundation is operating in a quiet phase as the timetable for the new library is uncertain.

The Friends of the Belmont Public Library launched their membership drive this fall. They continue to prepare the history of the Friends in recognition of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. They are reaching out to former leaders of the organization for their input.

### **School Committee update:**

At a recent meeting, the School Committee reported enrollment has decreased from 4,633 in 2019 to 4,430 largely due to COVID. The drop in enrollment is mainly in the lower grades. All grades are conducting hybrid classes.

In the new year the Library Director will contact the middle school librarian to see if the 5<sup>th</sup> grade library card program can be offered this school year. If not, the plan is to offer it to both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders during the 2021-22 school year.

### **Key topics:**

A draft has been prepared of the Long-Range Plan for 2021-2026. The Trustees will receive the plan in January for their review.

The recently completed air flow analysis of the library building showed that the library needs air purifiers with an estimated cost of \$25K. The next steps are under review.

During this current library closure, the Library Director plans several modifications. The library will replace water bubblers with faucets designed to fill water bottles. The torn and patched main hallway carpet will be replaced. A small storeroom located off the break room will be repurposed into a private room for nursing mothers. The problem of banging pipes will require repairs to the heating system.

### **Director's Report:**

The Boston Globe highlighted two recent events at the library; the James Patterson interview and the Jeff Benedict talk. The James Patterson interview had >960 attendees on Zoom.

Mass Audubon gave the library a grant to install bird feeders and conducted 2 family programs outdoors at the library; 24 and 30 families attended.

The One Book One Belmont Community Read (OBOB) will be held in March and April. OBOB has 2 foci; racial healing and wellness to heal from the virus. The confirmed speaker is E. Dolores Johnson, author of "Say I'm Dead."

The Library Director mentioned he has received a number of notes of appreciation and thanks from community residents for the library's service during this time.

**Discussion of 2021 Goals for Board and Director:**

The Long-Range Plan is expected to be finished in January 2021. Given this, the Trustees' Chair stated the January meeting will be a time for the Trustees to start a discussion of their goals and objectives, including what is the role of the trustees and how can the trustees best support the Director and the staff. Other issues making this a timely discussion include the demands of operating during a pandemic, possibility of having to preserve library operations in the face of a potential budget crunch and ways to serve the community while in the current building.

In conclusion, the Trustees chair commented that 2020 has been an incredibly challenging year for the library which had to reinvent itself several times. She commended the resilience and commitment of the library staff and offered her thanks for all their efforts.

**Next Meeting – January 21, 2021, 7:00 pm Via Zoom**

**Adjourn:**

Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary D. Stearns, Secretary

**Exhibits:**

- Agenda –December 17, 2020
- Minutes- November 19, 2020
- Buildings and Grounds Spreadsheet
- Director's Report, November 19, 2020
- November 2020 statistics
- Trustee Calendar