

PEMBROKE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes for November 17, 2021

ATTENDING: Kathy Benvie (Interim Library Director), Mary Beth Courtright, Larissa Curley, Melissa McCleary (Youth Services Librarian), Sean Fitzpatrick, Jill Taylor, and Carol Watches. There is currently one vacancy on the Board. Carol Watches, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:12 P.M.

The minutes for the October 20th meeting were read. The Youth Services section of the minutes, regarding the passive craft, will be amended to remove the word “scavenger hunt”. Mary Beth moved to accept the minutes as amended, Larissa seconded, and it was so voted.

OLD BUSINESS: Happily, there’s been a continued increase in patron visits and activity.

The Trustees have received two applications to fill the vacant seat on the Board of Trustees. Both applicants appear qualified and interested, which is wonderful. Discussion was had on whether or not to invite both applicants to the same Trustee meeting. Carol will reach out to both applicants and invite them to join us at the meeting of their choosing: December or January.

Upcoming large expenditures include the sidewalk repair, public bathroom faucet repair, and roof/gutter repair. The sidewalk contractor cancelled the scheduled appointment made by the Town Manager. Bill will either reschedule or reach out to a new contractor. The public restrooms have faucet issues; several of the faucets run continuously. There was shingle and gutter damage to the library building during a recent storm; this has been repaired.

Kathy received an estimate for repair of the flat (rubber) roof, which will be revised slightly and then (hopefully) completed. The HVAC system includes a separate unit which splits off to the History Room. This split off portion has become inoperable and the parts to repair it are obsolete. Kathy is waiting for a quote to repair that section of the system. Additional repairs to the main HVAC system, including roof units, will need to be addressed in the near future. A roof sensor has been temporarily repaired and Kathy is adjusting various thermostats to try to keep the building at a comfortable temperature.

Two parking lot light fixtures, which are under warranty, need repair. The manufacturer was ultimately able to locate parts which they initially claimed were unavailable, so hopefully the fixture work will be completed soon. The Town Manager is taking responsibility for the five-year fire suppression test which is required to be done at the library.

The staffing challenges/pay study increase topic was tabled to the December meeting.

Capital requests with a more than 2.5% increase over the FY22 budget include wages and salaries, library books, purchase of services, and office equipment.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: The Director's Report for October was read. The library was without phone service for a few days after a storm that knocked out power to most of the town. The library was a warming and charging station for several days after the storm hit, also offering extended opening hours. The sorting facility in Plymouth was out of commission for a few days as well, so inter-library loans were briefly affected. Sean moved to accept the Director's Report as written, Larissa seconded, and it was so voted.

YOUTH SERVICES REPORT: The Youth Services Report for October was read. There's a fun DinoNoodle Build scheduled for December. Melissa is planning to revamp the "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" program, which continues year-round, to try to foster increased long-term engagement. She has great ideas on how to achieve this, including adding more frequent reward milestones. Larissa moved to accept the Youth Services Report, Jill seconded, and it was so voted.

REFERENCE LIBRARIAN'S REPORT: The Reference Librarian's Report for October was read. Stephanie held a total of 11 events in October, with 82 attendees. There were 30 total reference requests, including 12 related to technology. Jill moved to accept the Reference Librarian's Report, Larissa seconded, and it was so voted.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The Financial Report for October was reviewed. The Gift Balance has increased due to donations received in Ann Dunnington's memory. The new large print book display dedicated to her will be coming soon. Jill moved to accept the Financial Report as printed, Mary Beth seconded, and it was so voted.

MAINTENANCE: The staff room will need its sink and countertop replaced as soon as possible. There have been stop-gap repairs done to prevent further leaks, but they will be only very temporarily effective. The restrooms also require other, smaller repairs, aside from the more extensive faucet concerns noted above in Old Business.

FRIENDS NEWS: Tracy Marino is now the President of the Friends. She and Carol discussed Tracy's attending a future Trustee meeting so the Friends, Trustees, and Director can touch base with each other. The Trustees welcome the idea of future Friends' attendance!

The Book Sale and Basket Raffle were extremely successful. It was refreshing to have the Basket Raffle return after its Pandemic hiatus! Well done, Friends.

FOUNDATION NEWS: The Foundation met last month and has filed the required paperwork to regain tax-exempt status.

NEW BUSINESS: There were two typos on the September reports: the Online Resources usage number and Youth Attendees numbers were mistyped and have been corrected.

The FY22 Action Plan has been updated. Library staff voted for Stephanie to be the library's liaison to the DEI Committee. Jill will keep track of target dates for the Action Plan and follow up with the Director to request timely updates for each item.

Jill moved to approve the updated FY22 Action Plan, Sean seconded, and it was so voted.

The Bulletin Board & Materials Distribution Policy has also been updated. New language includes a section prohibiting the distribution of notices, flyers, and/or unauthorized items placed into library materials. Jill moved to approve the updated Policy, Mary Beth seconded, and it was so voted.

The Standards of Conduct Policy has also been updated. New language includes the following: "insertion of any unauthorized items into Library materials is prohibited." Sean moved to approve the updated Policy, Larissa seconded, and it was so voted.

The staff will plan a small bowling event for the holiday staff party this year (though it will probably be held in January). Several anonymous donors will fund this year's staff party.

New item, not on the agenda: Jill initiated discussion on the need for a formal document for the Trustees to reference during future annual Director performance evaluations. She distributed copies of a draft performance review explanation and rating sheet to the Trustees. The Trustees will review the draft on their own time and discuss revisions/formalizing the document at the next meeting.

DIRECTOR SEARCH: Two candidates reached the final stage of consideration for appointment to the position of Library Director: Karen O'Brien and Marcie Walsh-O'Connor. The Trustees believe both candidates are demonstrably qualified to perform the Director's duties. The Trustees, Interim Director, and Youth Services Librarian evaluated the candidates' responses to the identical interview questions which were posed to them, and the Trustees each completed a rating sheet for each candidate. The majority of the rating sheets awarded Marcie Walsh-O'Connor a higher rating.

Carol stated the meeting should move into Executive Session in order to consider applicants for employment or appointment by preliminary screening committee, because Open Meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. Open Session will reconvene following Executive Session. Sean made a motion to move into Executive Session at 8:50 P.M., Larissa seconded. Roll call vote: Larissa – yes, Mary Beth – yes, Carol – yes, Jill – yes, Sean – yes. Bob DeMarzo, Library Foundation President, arrived at 9:05 P.M. and the meeting moved to Executive Session.

The Board of Trustees, along with Interim Library Director, Kathy Benvie, Youth Services Librarian, Melissa McCleary, and Library Foundation President, Bob DeMarzo, deliberated over the question of whether or not the Trustees should seek additional applicants to fill the Library Director position.

Larissa made a motion at 10:25 P.M. to reconvene Open Meeting and Mary Beth seconded. Roll call vote: Larissa – yes, Mary Beth – yes, Carol – yes, Sean – yes, Jill – yes. So voted.

Mary Beth made a motion to move a vote in favor of appointing a candidate for Library Director, Sean seconded, and it was so voted. Sean made a motion to appoint Marcie Walsh-O'Connor to the position of Pembroke Public Library Director and Larissa seconded. Roll call vote: Larissa – yes, Mary Beth – yes, Carol – yes, Sean – yes, Jill – yes. So voted.

Mary Beth will contact the Town Manager tomorrow to request assistance with the specifics of Ms. Walsh-O'Brien's contract terms. Carol will then extend to her an offer letter.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Sean moved to adjourn the meeting, Larissa seconded, and it was so voted. The meeting adjourned at 10:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Taylor
Secretary