



PEMBROKE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes for December 15, 2021

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting was conducted via remote means.

No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted. We will post on the Pembroke website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings, as soon as possible after the meeting.

All votes taken during this meeting were roll call votes.

ATTENDING (VIRTUALLY): Kathy Benvie (Interim Library Director), Stephanie Ciciotti (Trustee applicant), Mary Beth Courtright, Larissa Curley, Melissa McCleary (Youth Services Librarian), Sean Fitzpatrick, Jill Taylor, and Pam White (Trustee applicant). There is currently one vacancy on the Board.

Larissa Curley, Vice-Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

The minutes of the November 17th meeting were read. Sean made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Mary Beth seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted.

The minutes of the November 30th meeting were read. Sean made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Mary Beth seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted.

OLD BUSINESS: *Director Evaluation Guideline* – the draft document submitted by Jill at the last meeting was reviewed and discussed. There will be some rearranging of the sections of the document, but no major changes to the content other than altering the lines in the “Managing the Staff” section, which will be merged with “Development of Staff”. The line “Individual staff evaluations are conducted on at least an annual basis” was added to that section and all other lines aside from “Fair and equitable policies are proposed for Board adoption and then fairly administered”. Mary Beth made a motion to adopt the Guideline, as amended, and Sean seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So adopted.

Reopening updates – The gradual reopening to a pre-Pandemic state has been slightly hampered by another surge in COVID-19 cases, but there have not yet been any new, significant negative changes in circulation or in building opening hours/capacity.

Open seats/recruitment – An invitation to attend tonight’s virtual meeting was extended to the applicants interested in being appointed to the Board. Stephanie Ciciotti and Pam White attended tonight’s meeting. The Trustees and Trustee applicants introduced themselves and the Trustees provided answers to the applicants’ general questions about the Trustee experience.

Capital needs update – Kathy met with Bill Chenard, Town Manager, last week. Bill is having a new company come in for the sidewalk repair and will then hand the project over to Kathy. Kathy is meeting with Bill again next week regarding Capital needs. The heating system concerns led to Bill considering adding these to the Capital request at Town Meeting.

Staffing challenges pay study – Bill notified Kathy that the payroll study has been completed and has expanded beyond the library to other town departments. Bill is putting all of the information in order and will share it soon; we look forward to the release of the information!

FY23 budget – Kathy is meeting with Bill next week to complete budget worksheets with him.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT: The Director’s Report for November was read. The Action Plan for FY22 was filed with the MBLC. Kathy suggested adding month-to-month rather than year-to-year statistics on the monthly Director’s Report, going forward. Trustees are in favor of this idea. There was some state-wide data that is not yet available (the Gale database); this was not added to the report for November. A coin operator has been added to the copier and is running smoothly, and the NY Times is now available!

Inter-library loans were affected for a few weeks, due to a lack of drivers available to transport materials. Several runs were cancelled, but the issue appears to be sorted out.

Jill moved to accept the Director’s Report as written, Mary Beth seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted.

YOUTH SERVICES REPORT: The Youth Services Report for November was read. Melissa and other staff attended the Council on Aging (COA) Open House to promote library services. Sean asked about the “shelf-talker” display; Melissa demonstrated them for us; they are tags that extend out next to the bindings of books, printed with sayings such as “Staff Favorites” and “If You Like Squid Games”. The first in-person craft for teens (not a passive craft) is scheduled for tomorrow, December 16th.

Jill moved to accept the Youth Services Report, as written, Sean seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted.

REFERENCE LIBRARIAN’S REPORT: The Reference Librarian’s Report for November was read. There were a total of 36 reference requests in November, including 11 technology requests. Stephanie hosted 19 events - attended by 134 people - and completed passport agent recertification training, this month.

Jill asked whether we've had any of the staff trained to take over for the several staff members we lost in recent months, who had moved on to other libraries. Kathy confirmed we have one newly-trained staff member who has been trained and will have an Aide returning soon who will also receive training. Passport applications are at pretty high-volume right now.

Sean moved to accept the Reference Librarian's Report, as written, Mary Beth seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The Financial Report for November was reviewed. A lot of the funds for building maintenance are being/have been utilized. Kathy has stayed in close contact with Bill Chenard, Town Manager, to keep him apprised of maintenance costs and needs.

Jill moved to accept the Financial Report as printed, Mary Beth seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted.

MAINTENANCE: Kathy met with the HVAC contractor today, to discuss the work that will need to be done to the History Room/Director's office. They were out last week to repair the roof units and returned this week to adjust temperature settings in various areas of the building.

The flat roof repair was completed. The parking lot light fixtures are still an issue. Kathy obtained two quotes for flooring, to replace an area where the staff enter and exit.

Mary Beth asked about whether or not the lights that shine onto the library sign at Center Street are functional; Kathy will investigate.

FRIENDS NEWS: The holiday ornaments have arrived! This year's ornament features the Historical Society building. The Friends will continue to cover the staff copier lease costs.

FOUNDATION NEWS: Bob DeMarzo has ideas on what the Foundation would like to support; the Trustees will invite Bob to a meeting in the near future, to brainstorm.

NEW BUSINESS: *New Director hired* – The Negotiating Committee and Marcie Walsh-O'Connor agreed on a Director's starting salary of \$80,000 annually, with 20 vacation days per year. Her start date will be Monday, January 10, 2022. Marcie signed the Offer of Employment and the Employment Agreement on December 6, 2021 and December 7, 2021, respectively. The last of the Trustee signatures was obtained on December 14, 2021, and a scan of the signed employment agreement was e-mailed to Bill Chenard, Town Manager, Interim Director, Kathy Benvie, and Sabrina Chilcott, Assistant Town Manager. Per Kathy, the required CORI check was performed on December 14th and the SORI will be performed tomorrow, Thursday, December 16th. Kathy will provide Marcie's Payroll Authorization Form to Town Hall.

MBLC notification form due – The Board Chairperson must submit a Permanent Director Verification to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) as soon as possible, so that the new Director's credentials may be verified and her new position recorded.

A copy of the blank form is included in this meeting's document packet.

Future budget/state certification concerns – During negotiations, Marcie inquired as to whether or not the library would retain the difference in budgeted salary for this fiscal year and whether or not the library's budget would be decreased next year, due to the difference in salaries of the outgoing and incoming Directors.

This is an important question; in order for the library to continue to meet state certification standards, the Town must appropriate a figure of at least the average of the last three years' municipal appropriations to the library for operations, increased by 2.5%. There is a significant salary difference between the outgoing and incoming Directors' salaries; having the library's budget decreased by such an amount, next fiscal year, would jeopardize the library's certification status (as we currently operate at the minimum level at which to remain certified).

Jill corresponded with Bill Chenard, Town Manager, about these concerns. Bill confirmed that the library's budgeted funds for this fiscal year will remain in place, which is excellent news. Regarding next fiscal year, however, Bill said he believed the MBLC expenditure standards would likely be waived or exempted, and stated that Town funds are too tight and that changes will be made as we budget for next year.

Jill corresponded with Maura Deedy (Library Advisory Specialist) and Liz Babbitt (State Aid Specialist) from the MBLC, the latter of whom confirmed that they "do not adjust the requirement due to a decrease in the salary line" (meaning there is no waiver or exemption, as Bill believed). She continued, "It's expected that the money would be used to improve staffing and services in some other way". So, regardless of what the new Director's salary is, the library's budget must meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR), as well as the Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L., c.78, s.19A) guidelines, described above.

See <https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-arls/regs-standards.php#mar> for more information.

As explained by Maura, "say the new Director is starting at \$10,000 less, that \$10,000 is not a savings and does not go back to the town. In doing so, it would decrease the library's budget by \$10,000 and the library may not meet the MAR. It should be redistributed within the library budget". We will need to ensure the library's budget is not decreased in the next FY.

Jill notified Bill of the MBLC guidance and has not yet received a response. Jill passed along these details to Marcie and Kathy, as well.

Interim Director acknowledgement – The Trustees intend to offer a financial bonus to the Interim Director and other staff who have worked to bridge the gap between the outgoing and incoming Directors. Jill and/or Mary Beth will reach out to Bill Chenard, Town Manager, to inquire about the most appropriate way to disperse bonuses (one-time or periodic payments).

NY Times & Kanopy available – Kanopy is a new online streaming content provider; there are streaming videos, courses, and all types of media for all ages. Anyone with a library card can sign up.

Trustees e-mails – The Trustees personal e-mails are hyperlinked on the library website; Melissa will switch the Trustees e-mails to a different format so they receive fewer spam e-mails. Jill will also change the Trustees' gmail password and distribute the new password to the Trustees.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.

Mary Beth moved to adjourn the meeting, Sean seconded. Roll call vote: Mary Beth, yes – Jill, yes – Larissa, yes – Sean, yes. So voted. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillian Taylor
Secretary