

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Conant Public Library
Sterling, MA
Minutes of July 19, 2021**

Open Meeting:

Call to order 7:04 pm

Roll Call:

Present: Trustees Akerson (corrected 8/9/21), Carlin, Petullo, Martin, Sayut, and Scannell; Library Director Pat Campbell (all in person)

Absent: None

Members of the public present: Arden Sonnenberg (remotely)

Review/Approve June 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Scannell offered two corrections to the minutes. The original sentence "Trustee Scannell suggested devoting a few minutes at each meeting to by-law review" was amended to read "Trustee Carlin suggested devoting a few minutes at each meeting to policy review."

Motion to accept with corrections: Scannell. Second: Akerson (corrected 8/9/21). Unanimous.

Director's Report

Circulation

- Director Campbell noted that circulation has been robust, and highlighted a 29% increase in electronic materials. She advised a continued investment in electronic books and e-audio downloads, which the Friends of the Library has strongly supported to date.

Finance

- The library is \$372 under budget. Due to the support from the CaresAct for COVID-related expenses, and the lack of public use of the building last year, savings in electricity, technology, dues and conference expenses offset several expensive repairs. Director Campbell again highlighted the support of the Friends in providing an upgrade to the library's phone system during the COVID shutdown. She noted that the wages line in particular is \$12,500 under budget due to reduced staff hours.
- Another staff member has given notice in order to take a similar job elsewhere with higher wages. Director Campbell urged the trustees to support and advocate for a re-examination of salary ranges for town positions. She reported that after a long period of stability with regard to personnel, unadjusted salary ranges are becoming less competitive and employee retention is starting to suffer.

- Director Campbell noted that Alex Grebinar has taken on a great deal of extra responsibility in the absence of a Director of Youth Services, and that her workload is likely to grow even more with the most recent staff departure and, eventually, Director Campbell's own retirement in August. She asked the trustees to consider an additional stipend for Ms. Grebinar in recognition of this extra work. The trustees enthusiastically supported such a stipend, and Director Campbell said she would recommend an amount in the weeks to come, for the trustees to approve virtually or in a special session. She would also contact Town Administrator Kellie Hebert to determine what would need to be done to execute such a stipend on the town level. Director Campbell commended all of the library staff for pitching in to fill gaps and maintain as many quality services for the public as possible while additional staff is recruited.

Motion to approve a stipend for Ms. Grebinar, for an amount to be determined: Carlin. Second: Akerson (corrected 8/9/21). Unanimous.

Facilities

- The estimate to repair the leak in the attic sprinkler pipe is \$5,400, since several pipe lengths are corroded. Surrounding pipes have been evaluated and are still sound. There is also the potential for an additional \$1,500 cost if the antifreeze in the system cannot be reused. Work will be scheduled for a Friday and coordinated with the fire department. Funds for this work will come from the repairs and maintenance budget line.
- A drawing is complete for the new lift, which will run an estimated \$33,000. There may be a way to reconfigure the lift's orientation to allow for disability scooter access to the library's main floor, but depending on door swing it this could require creating a new opening in the wall at the current location of the audiobooks.
- The company working on modernization of the interior elevator has been bought twice since the beginning of the library's relationship with them. An evaluation by this company, now called RePhase, showed that the elevator's cart, piston and jack are still sound, but that modernization would require a new electrical panel and a new climate control system to service the new electronics. Director Campbell expects a price quote soon, and notes that any quote would have to move to the building committee for approval, before being presented to the trustees, to the town capital committee, and finally to the citizens at town meeting. Trustee Scannell, a member of the building committee, pointed out that any quote received would only be valid for a limited time. Arden Sonnenberg, drawing upon her knowledge as a Select Board member, noted that the DPW also has a time sensitive request and that a fall town meeting may be convened.

Youth Services

- Director Campbell reported that a new Director of Youth Services has been hired and will begin working 32 hours per week in September. The summer reading program is in full swing, with 112 participants logging 16,843 minutes of reading as of the end of June.

Sensitive Materials Policy

- Director Campbell and her team have researched sensitive/controversial materials policies per the American Library Association and at area libraries. All of them stress libraries' responsibilities to uphold the 1st Amendment and to offer patrons access to all legal materials.
- Director Campbell reported that the library is tasked with collecting materials of popular interest, and that every effort is made to shelve materials according to appropriate age groups – but that ultimately responsibility lies with parents, rather than with librarians, to manage their children's library usage.
- There is a procedure in place to register a formal complaint against specific items, with complaints evaluated and voted on by the trustees.
- Director Campbell offered to draft a recommended sensitive materials policy to be formally adopted at a future meeting and posted in the name of transparency.

Director Search

- The subcommittee comprising trustees Akerson, Carlin and Petullo reported that the Director position has been posted on MBLC and the Massachusetts Library Director listserv. Trustee Carlin suggested posting the job on the library website as well.
- The subcommittee is receiving and screening applications, with an initial deadline of July 27. Trustee Carlin noted that the subcommittee is hoping to reduce the field to about three leading candidates to recommend to the full board of trustees for an interview. He stressed that timelines are tight, and asked that, if other trustees wish to peruse and comment on the full slate of applicants, they do so as soon as possible.
- Trustee Akerson (corrected 8/9/2021) asked if the interviews would be conducted in Executive Session, to preserve applicant confidentiality. Arden Sonnenberg drew on her recent experience hiring for the DPW to emphasize that open meeting rules still apply to job interviews; although they don't necessarily have to be recorded and broadcast as many other meetings are, it is still required to post meeting dates in advance and publish agendas. Several trustees raised concerns about applicants who may not wish their current employers to know they are job hunting. The subcommittee said that they would try to reduce the field as much as possible before moving into an open meeting format for final interviews.
- The subcommittee also advised that the trustees should be prepared to meet more than once in August to allow for interviews, possibly during business hours so that candidates can observe the library while it is open.

Next posted meeting date: August 9, 2021

Motion to adjourn: Scannell. Second: Martin

Unanimous

Adjournment: 8:29 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary