

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Conant Public Library
Sterling, MA
Minutes of August 9, 2021**

Open Meeting:

Call to order 7:04 pm

Roll Call:

Present: Trustees Akerson, Carlin, Petullo and Martin, and Library Director Pat Campbell in person; Trustees Sayut and Scannell remotely.

Absent: None

Members of the public present: None

Review/Approve July 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Akerson pointed out that her name was misspelled in several instances and was omitted from the roll call in error.

Motion to accept with corrections: Carlin. Second: Akerson. Trustee Scannell was temporarily absent from the meeting due to technical difficulties, but the motion was passed unanimously among the trustees present for the vote.

Trustee Scannell's technical difficulties were resolved and he returned to the meeting at 7:10.

Director's Report

Director Campbell reported that circulation numbers are increasing across categories between 43-63%. With more cultural institutions reopening, pass circulation is up 500%. Visits to the library building are also slowly increasing, with 2,305 visits in the month of July (4,800-5,000 is a more typical number for July). More library cards are also being issued.

Director Campbell also offered a clarification on the budget to date – she noted that since the fiscal year just turned over, several lines have no charges because bills have yet to be received. Other lines are reflecting large amounts for subscriptions and other services that are paid upfront at the beginning of the fiscal year (for example, McNaughton Book Rental, CWMARS membership, technology services).

She added that there is also a large bill pending for the sprinkler system, which was fully repaired along with the update of 25 gallons of new antifreeze added, which should not need replacement for three years. Superior Kitchen is also finishing up their renovations, which have garnered many compliments from the public.

Director Campbell further reported that the building committee still needs to meet to discuss quotes for the lift and elevator updates. The present quote for the lift includes a large scope of work to allow for mobility scooter accommodations, but since these accommodations are looking impractical in terms of multiple door swing issues, the quote will need to be corrected to reflect a more modest scope of work. Director Campbell has checked with the town administrator to see if multiple bids for the work will be required, or if the library will be able to move forward with the current vendor on the strength of their existing relationship, since this is the company that services and maintains the elevator.

She noted that the DPW is planning to make a funding request at fall town meeting, so the library may work with the Capital Committee to make a request for elevator funding at that time. Meanwhile, she reports, both the elevator and the lift passed their inspections and are in working order.

The trustees brainstormed some ways to potentially overcome the door swing problems and achieve mobility scooter accessibility – for example, through a sliding/barn door or a turntable inside the lift. Director Campbell replied that the door needs to be secure and openable from inside the lift, and needs to be located within the lift so that the lift car has integrity. She said that a large-scale renovation will likely be required to fully address accessibility issues, and that the limitations of the existing building and lot make this an expensive option.

Trustee Carlin asked for clarification that the scooter access in question is above and beyond requirements. Director Campbell confirmed that it is. She noted that access requirements are based partly on the age and limitations of the building and that the library building is in full compliance.

Trustee Scannell added that a two-phase plan to increase accessibility in concert with a major renovation would likely be a hard sell for the town, and that he would recommend our current focus remain on the reliability of current elevator.

Director Campbell began the youth services report with praise for Alex Grebinar, who has stepped up cheerfully to fill gaps in staffing, particularly with regards to the labor-intensive summer reading program. Her praise for Ms. Grebinar was echoed enthusiastically by a number of trustees.

An additional stipend for Ms. Grebinar was already approved, with the exact amount pending, at the board meeting of July 19. Director Campbell proceeded to do some research and presented a recommendation to provide Ms. Grebinar with a stipend of \$200 per week retroactive to July 1, until the new Head of Youth Services begins her normal schedule in September. She re-emphasized that there is money in the wages line for this.

Motion to set the amount of Ms. Grebinar's stipend, approved on July 19 in an amount TBA, at \$200 per week retroactive to July 1 until the new Head of Youth Services begins in September: Akerson. Second: Scannell.

Unanimous

Director Campbell outlined her rationale for an additional stipend for Ms. Grebinar to compensate her for work in the capacity of interim/acting director. Trustee Petullo asked if we should vote separately on approval and amount and Director Campbell recommended one comprehensive vote.

Trustee Petullo clarified that the board was voting to allow an additional stipend of \$300 per week commencing on or around Director Campbell's retirement date (possibly earlier to allow for Pat to off-ramp), until a date TBA (the start date of a new director). Trustee Martin added that if the new director needs support at the outset we can vote on that separately, as it might entail an adjusted amount.

Motion to provide \$300 week while Ms. Grebinar is acting director, with some flexibility in start and end date: Akerson. Second: Carlin.

Unanimous

Director Search

Trustee Carlin reported that five preliminary interviews have been conducted in executive session, and that second interviews will take place in open session with all trustees present. He said that initial interviews consisted of 10 questions, with responses evaluated using a rubric. He and the rest of the search committee are checking references and working to narrow the field down to 3-4 candidates, all of whom will interview on one day (tentatively the afternoon/evening of August 23). The final screening will focus on more global questions, but trustee Carlin invited fellow trustees to nominate questions from the first screening to be revisited.

Controversial Materials

Director Campbell emphasized the need for freedom of access. She noted that we may choose to shelve some materials from children's to adults' collections, but said that our existing policy is well in line with ALA Bill of Rights, industry standards and other local libraries. Trustee Sayut asked if the policy would be posted on the website for transparency, and Director Campbell said that it is currently posted under "Library Policies" but that our review offers a chance to make updates. Trustee Carlin suggested linking to the ALA Bill of Rights directly from the text of the policy. Trustee Martin suggested also creating a hyperlink to the existing Citizen's Request for Reconsideration for Library Materials, which a patron may fill out if he or she believes an item should be removed from the library's collection. Trustees Martin and Akerson also complimented the request form as comprehensive and thought-provoking.

Next posted meeting date: September 13, 2021

Motion to adjourn: Carlin. Second: Akerson

Unanimous

Adjournment: 8:19 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary