

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Conant Public Library  
Sterling, MA  
Minutes of February 13, 2023**

**Open Meeting:**

Call to order 7:27 PM

**Roll Call:**

Present: Trustees Lisa Akerson, Al Carlin, Dan Flaherty, Heide Martin, Sara Petullo and Amanda Sayut in person; Library Director Alex Grebinar, in person.

**Recognize Other Attendees:**

Richard Maki

**Review/Approve January 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Flaherty. Second: Akerson.

Motion carries unanimously.

**Director's Report**

Director Grebinar reported that the elevator passed its most recent inspection, and that the company that performed the inspection submitted a proposal to the Town Administrator for the elevator update project. Due to the contractor's schedule, the work would not take place until calendar year 2024. Director Grebinar noted that a full discussion on the elevator project was scheduled for later in the meeting.

In other updates, the library closed early due to weather on January 23; generally, in cases of bad weather, the library follows town hall's lead when making the decision to close.

Fire alarms were tested on January 30, and are in good working order.

A new break-in puzzle bag has been made available for circulation. Patrons can request it at the desk and will be added to a waitlist if necessary.

Both Library Associate I positions have now been filled, with one new employee starting in mid February and the other in mid March.

Director Grebinar led two adult craft programs and hosted an organization class with Jenna Elliot. She also devoted time to learning bookkeeping procedures from Assistant Director Orr, including compiling warrants, reconciling accounts, making deposits and using Quicken, with an eye on developing redundancy in this area.

Director Grebinar carried out individual staff meetings and attended a New Director Zoom meeting with the head of CW MARS. Since she has some experience acting in the capacity of director, she reported that most of the meeting's content was already familiar to her. CW MARS also hosted a demonstration

of Aspen, a new catalog system being considered for library patrons. Aspen is more user-friendly than the current patron-side system, but if it were adopted it would mean that staff and patrons would be using two different interfaces. More discussion is warranted within the CW MARS Users' Council, which comprises directors of the CW MARS member libraries; the Council will vote on whether to adopt Aspen at its March meeting.

Director Grebinar led two staff meetings with discussion on recent trainings, including a Niche Academy training on patrons with dementia, and a training from the Worcester Talking Book Library on resources for patrons with visual impairments. Staff also discussed the recently-approved changes to the historical collections policy and new Saturday rotations.

*Making Rounds with Oscar: The Extraordinary Gift of an Ordinary Cat* by David Dosa was selected for the One Book One Town program. It will complement the upcoming community dementia education initiative, which will be offered first to town employees and then to the public.

The Friends of the Library organization is seeking volunteers to help with the craft fair, which will be transitioning to new leadership in 2024.

Director Grebinar also noted that nomination papers for local government positions are available through March 16. Signatures are due on March 20. Trustees Flaherty and Martin have both pulled papers to run for further three-year terms on the Conant Library Board of Trustees.

### **Budget**

At 59% through the fiscal year, the budget is on track. The Director's Salary line is currently over, due to vacation time reimbursed, but as the library has been short-staffed for some time, there will be extra in the wages line to offset this overage.

### **Circulation**

Director Grebinar reported very healthy circulation. She noted that a wide array of popular programs as well as new apartments in town seem to be driving a surge in library card registration. With program seats in such high demand, trustees briefly discussed how to minimize no-shows, while also acknowledging that weather and seasonal illnesses will always affect attendance to some degree.

### **Youth Services**

Youth programming was somewhat limited in January to allow time for planning. The Head of Youth Services intends to restart the staff-led "BabyTime" story hour, since the new Library Associates I have both expressed a willingness to help with this program.

Researchers from Worcester State University will be visiting the children's room when it is closed to the public to learn about Conant Library's youth programming as part of a study called "Bringing the Library Home: Fostering Library Engagement and Family Involvement," undertaken by Dr. Colleen Sullivan.

### **Authorization of Assistant Director to Sign Payroll and Time Sheets**

Director Grebinar asked the trustees to authorize the assistant director to sign payroll and time sheets, in order to create redundancy in this function.

Motion to authorize Assistant Director to sign payroll and time sheets: Sayut. Second: Carlin.  
Motion carries unanimously.

### **Review of Elevator Proposal**

Trustees reviewed the proposal from Otis Elevator on the elevator update project.

Under the proposal, work would be carried out during calendar year 2024. The elevator's capacity and speed would remain unchanged, and the cab would not be replaced. Remote monitoring capabilities would be added, along with some safety features (for example, the elevator would no longer stop at any floor with a smoke alarm activated).

The quote of \$117,723 does not include some ancillary costs, such as necessary upgrades to the fire panel (this has been separately quoted at about \$10,000). Due to an ARPA grant received by the town, an appropriation at town meeting would not be necessary; however, the \$200,000 earmarked for this project must also cover lift upgrades, which are expected to run about \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Trustees reviewed some optional add-ons, most significantly a new cab interior quoted at \$20,000. Trustees did not have major concerns about the cosmetic appearance of the elevator cab and agreed that this was not a high priority. Trustee Akerson did suggest asking whether these add-ons could be contracted at a later time or whether they were part of a package of work. Trustee Carlin asked for clarification on hoistway ventilation and whether that would be addressed by the elevator contractors or by HVAC contractors. (Director Grebinar was later able to confirm with the Town Administrator that the current venting meets code and will not need to be addressed further.)

Motion to accept elevator proposal in the amount of \$117,723, while declining the additional options at this time: Akerson. Second: Carlin.  
Motion carries unanimously.

### **Review of Emergency Procedures**

Trustees reviewed the current emergency procedures document, adapted from a resource from the Massachusetts Library Association, and suggested some minor changes.

Trustees asked whether drills were conducted, and were told these would be forthcoming.

### **Review of Director's Goals**

Trustees reviewed a draft Director's Goals document to be used for evaluation purposes, asking Director Grebinar some clarifying questions and making some minor edits to wording.

### **Review of Library's Town Annual Report Section**

Trustees reviewed a library annual report written for inclusion in the town-wide annual report. Some minor edits were suggested for clarity.

Motion to approve annual report with changes as discussed: Akerson. Second: Martin.  
Motion carries unanimously.

**Other Business**

It was noted that the trustees' May meeting as currently scheduled conflicts with the town election. A tentative plan was made to postpone the meeting by one week. The Baker Room will be reserved and the schedule will be solidified as the date draws nearer.

Next posted meeting date: March 13, 2023

Motion to adjourn: Akerson. Second: Sayut.

Motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment: 8:38 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary