

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Conant Public Library  
Sterling, MA  
Minutes of January 8, 2024**

**Open Meeting:**

Call to order 7:00 PM

**Roll Call:**

Present: Trustees Sara Petullo and Amanda Sayut in person; Trustee Judith Doherty, Dan Flaherty and Heide Martin via Zoom; Library Director Alex Grebinar, in person.

Trustee Al Carlin was absent at the time of roll call but arrived shortly thereafter.

**Recognize Other Attendees:**

none

**Review/Approve December 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Flaherty. Second: Doherty.

Motion carries unanimously among trustees present.

Trustee Al Carlin arrived at 7:02.

**Director's Report**

Director Grebinar noted that the library was forced to close for about 45 minutes on December 18 due to a rainstorm and resulting power outage. The same storm caused a leak in a known problem area of the roof; subsequent evaluation suggested that the copper flashing along the roofline was not lying flush with the decorative brickwork and should be replaced. Replacement began on December 20 and was paid for from the town's facilities budget. In addition, the new snow retention system was completed on December 30.

In the course of preparing for and monitoring these repairs, the library's usual contractor did note some brittle shingles on the roof, but felt that the current anticipated replacement timeframe of FY29 was still reasonable, assuming there isn't excessive activity on the roof between now and then.

Director Grebinar reported that all staff evaluations are complete and will be sent to the town administrator in January. The FY25 budget has also been submitted to the town administrator and accountant.

For the second year in a row, a generous member of the community donated a train set to be raffled off in the children's room during the holiday season. The lucky winner was notified in December.

An inventory of the growing Library of Things was added to the website at [www.sterlinglibrary.org/Pages/Index/227101/library-of-things](http://www.sterlinglibrary.org/Pages/Index/227101/library-of-things) for patron reference.

Staff carried out extensive shelf weeding and some collections were moved to optimize space. Large-print books, biographies and adult audiobooks were relocated to an area with better lighting. Audiobooks were also shifted up from the lowest shelf after a patron noted that they were hard to see so close to floor level. Mass market paperbacks were integrated into the regular fiction and mystery sections; their former display shelves were repurposed for mystery kits and break-in bags.

The Rutland schools contacted the library about an upcoming NASA downlink during which student questions will be answered live from the International Space Station. Since the event will take place on a Friday, the Sterling Conant Library will not be open to host a watch party, but will promote the link on the library website.

The annual Friends of the Library Craft Fair was a huge success, with a total of \$6,205 in funds generated. The Friends membership drive also began in December, and Director Grebinar noted that response has been great so far. The Friends' next meeting will take place in January 11. Trustees were very grateful for the Friends' hard work and dedication to the library.

### **Budget**

At 50% through the fiscal year, most budget lines are on track. The staff wages line is tracking slightly behind due to some unexpected staff absences – in the weeks to come, Director Grebinar will offer interested staff extra hours, and this line will normalize.

Director Grebinar and the trustees discussed the potential for the Massachusetts Library System employment service, BiblioTemps, to help during periods when the library is understaffed. Director Grebinar noted that the cost and steep learning curve for temporary employees may be prohibitive in many cases. Trustees did encourage her to be open to the possibility if it becomes necessary to avoid employee burnout.

Director Grebinar also noted that some elevator-related expenses would appear in next month's budget, as a minor repair was needed to the first-floor button in the elevator. Both the elevator and the lift passed their inspections. The elevator contractor did recommend updating the fire alarm system, which can be done independently of other upcoming elevator upgrades; this recommendation was referred to the town administrator.

On the income side, Director Grebinar pointed out that the first tranche of state aid funding had been received in the amount of \$10,216.

### **Circulation**

Circulation remains steady overall. Children's magazine circulation has been very slow, and Director Grebinar plans to let current subscriptions lapse.

### **Youth Services**

Successful youth programs in December included family paint nights and a marshmallow dreidel activity. Teen volunteers were asked for feedback – while more space is high on their wishlists, they are overall happy with library offerings and interested in continuing volunteer opportunities.

### **Identifying Incumbents**

Trustees reviewed which trustees are up for re-election in 2024. Chairperson Petullo noted that nomination papers will be available from the Town Clerk in February.

### **Annual Report**

Director Grebinar presented a draft annual report. Trustees suggested highlighting teen volunteers in the benchmarks section, and identified some minor copyedits.

Motion to approve 2023 Annual Report as amended: Sayut. Second: Petullo.

Motion carries unanimously.

### **Social Media Policy**

Director Grebinar presented a draft social media policy. Trustees asked for clarification on the audience for the policy, and after some discussion, it was decided to rewrite the policy as a solely external, patron-facing document. Staff guidelines for the use of official library social media will be incorporated into the employee handbook and will remain internal policy.

### **Virtual Reality Set Borrower's Agreement**

Director Grebinar presented a draft borrower's agreement for the library's new virtual reality device. In line with CW MARS's general policy on fines, if the VR device is returned late, the borrower will be charged \$5 per day for five days, for a maximum fine of \$25. That \$25 fine will remain in effect for 23 additional days (for a total of 28 days), after which the VR device will be considered lost and the borrower will be charged for the full amount of the item. The replacement cost of the VR device is broken down in the borrower's agreement, along with the terms and conditions for at-home use of the device.

Motion to approve Virtual Reality Borrowers Agreement: Flaherty. Second: Petullo.

Motion carries unanimously.

### **Other Business**

Director Grebinar distributed a list of upcoming legislative breakfasts, which are held regularly to connect lawmakers with library stakeholders. Currently, the only one on the schedule in close proximity to Sterling will be in Worcester on February 2. Director Grebinar said she would update the trustees if any additional breakfasts in the local area were added to the schedule.

There being no other business to bring before the board, the meeting adjourned.

Next posted meeting date: February 12, 2024

Motion to adjourn: Sayut. Second: Carlin.

Motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment: 7:50 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary