

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Conant Public Library  
Sterling, MA  
Minutes of January 9, 2023**

**Open Meeting:**

Call to order 7:02 PM

**Roll Call:**

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

**Recognize Other Attendees:**

None

As it was Trustee Flaherty's first meeting, brief introductions were made.

**Review/Approve December 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Akerson. Second: Petullo.

Carlin, Sayut and Martin vote in favor. Flaherty abstains.

Motion carries.

**Review/Approve December 12, 2022 Executive Session Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Carlin. Second: Petullo.

Akerson, Sayut and Martin vote in favor. Flaherty abstains.

Motion carries.

**Reports**

Director Grebinar reported that the library building's thermostats have been reprogrammed to save on energy costs and that security alarms have been tested and found to be in good working order.

The open Assistant Director's position was advertised internally and has been filled by promoting veteran staff member Deborah Orr. In order to attract more applicants for the open Library Associate I position, Director Grebinar plans to reconfigure it as two positions, each of which would require working fewer evening hours.

Director Grebinar further reported that she has led several programs, and noted that programming in general has been very well-attended, with both rosters and waitlists filling up in many cases.

Library staff have a training scheduled with the Worcester Talking Book Library, which provides visually impaired customers with accessible material, including digital books, large type, described videos, and Braille resources. Located inside the Worcester Public library, the Talking Book Library serves patrons in person as well as via mail order.

Director Grebinar's meetings over the past month included check-ins with individual staff members; a virtual community chat for circulation staff at libraries across the Commonwealth; and training from the Dementia Friends organization. Colleagues from the Age and Dementia Friendly Sterling initiative have requested that the library's next "One Book One Town" selection spotlight a character with dementia, and Director Grebinar is reviewing some possible choices.

Two monthly staff meetings have been held, one in the morning and one in the evening, to accommodate all staff schedules while still allowing for front desk coverage.

Director Grebinar shared that staff member Ian Brodrick found some antique money inside a book donation and, through careful investigation, was able to return it to the family it belonged to. Trustees commended Mr. Brodrick on his detective work!

Director Grebinar further reported that weeding of collections continues, most recently with paperback romances and children's picture books.

She also noted that Thayer Memorial Library in Lancaster will host a library legislative breakfast on the morning of February 17.

At 50% through the fiscal year, the library budget is tracking right around 50%. Trustees briefly discussed the library's trust funds, with Director Grebinar clarifying that, generally, only the interest accrued by the trust funds may be spent, while the principal must remain unspent as a vehicle to generate continued income. Trustee Flaherty asked whether the trust funds are administered in-house or by a trust administrator. Director Grebinar answered that Town of Sterling accounting personnel advises the library on the trust funds' performance and what yields are available to spend. The library's Director or Assistant Director may then use their discretion to apply that amount against library expenses.

Director Grebinar reported no concerns with circulation, and noted that library cards continue to be issued to new patrons at a very healthy rate.

Youth Services has posted another busy month of programs, including Storytime and Musictime, and plans are in place to pilot a new drop-in model for baby playtime. Two train sets generously donated by a patron were raffled off to children who participated in the "disguise a gingerbread kid" challenge.

### **Annual Calendar and Annual Report**

Director Grebinar presented an updated annual calendar of activities requiring trustee involvement, including budgeting, town meeting/election, and Director evaluation. She also presented a draft annual report to be included as a section in the Town of Sterling annual report. Trustees suggested some minor edits to the document.

### **Long Range Goals**

Trustees reviewed a schedule of the long range goals identified by the recent strategic planning process. Director Grebinar noted that many of the activities are already underway or soon will be. Trustees suggested adding a few lines on ongoing activities to the annual report so taxpayers know that the strategic plan is being actively implemented.

### **Elevator/Lift**

Director Grebinar reported that the company that performed the recent elevator inspection expressed an interest in the library's elevator/lift update project. Funds for the project are currently available, but the original procurement process did not result in any bids to complete the work.

### **Director Evaluation**

Trustees discussed a draft Director Evaluation form. Trustee Carlin noted that the formalization of this process is relatively new, and that the subcommittee had worked hard to codify trustees' expectations of the Director into a comprehensive document. No vote was taken at this time; trustees suggested some minor edits, which Trustee Carlin said he would make before circulating a final draft for vote at the next meeting. Director Grebinar also took the opportunity to clarify some of her goals as written.

### **Hoopla/Kanopy**

Director Grebinar reported that one patron had requested that the library consider purchasing subscriptions to the streaming services Hoopla and Kanopy. Hoopla offers books and audio books, television shows, music and movies, while Kanopy offers movies and Great Courses series. Some libraries in the area do subscribe to one or both of these services, but others do not, and the cap on how many items may be checked out per patron varies from library to library.

After researching their offerings, Director Grebinar reported that she didn't believe adding these services would significantly reduce wait times for popular materials, nor would they offer access to materials that Sterling Conant patrons are not currently able to access through other means. Trustees were concerned that subscribing to these services would be a large and unpredictable expense, since items are priced differently and are charged to the library per "checkout."

Director Grebinar also noted that Sterling residents (along with all Massachusetts residents) are eligible for a free Boston Public Library eCard, which entitles patrons to 10 items per month from Hoopla and 4 items per month from Kanopy. Signing up for the eCard is very quick and easy via the BPL website.

Trustees agreed that, for now, patrons interested in accessing Hoopla or Kanopy can do so through BPL; this will help keep Conant Library costs low and will allow for a more predictable budgeting process. Library staff are able to help with the BPL eCard signup process as needed. If public demand for Hoopla and Kanopy increases, or if patrons find that they are running out of checkouts via the BPL, the trustees stand ready to revisit the question.

Next posted meeting date: February 13, 2023

Motion to adjourn: Carlin. Second: Akerson.

Unanimous.

Adjournment: 8:57 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary