

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Conant Public Library  
Sterling, MA  
Minutes of December 12, 2022**

**Open Meeting:**

Call to order 7:00 PM

**Roll Call:**

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

**Recognize Other Attendees:**

Dick Maki, in person.

**Review/Approve November 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Akerson. Second: Martin.

Unanimous.

**Reports**

Acting Director Grebinar reported that the library has received its first tranche of state aid, which will allow it to supplement budgeted spending on circulating materials so that it can qualify for state aid in future years. She clarified that there is about a \$16,500 difference between the \$62,500 approved at town meeting to be spent on circulating materials and the total of about \$79,000 (calculated at 16% of the library's total budget) that needs to be spent in order to continue to receive supplementary state aid. Other sources of funds to make up the difference include contributions from the Friends of the Library and occasional bequests.

Acting Director Grebinar further reported that she has completed library staff's evaluations and met with the town Finance Committee's liaison to the library to begin developing a budget for FY24. She noted that the library will ask the voters to approve a 1.5% operating budget increase, along with a cost-of-living adjustment of about 3% for wages (although the budget request will reflect a slightly higher percentage increase due to step adjustments and longevity).

At 7:10 PM, member of the public Dan Flaherty joined the meeting and spoke briefly as one of multiple candidates interested in filling the current Library Board of Trustees vacancy. He was advised by trustees that his candidacy would be voted on by the Select Board during its meeting on December 21. Trustees also noted that additional board vacancies are likely to become available in May, on the normal election cycle. Mr. Flaherty departed the meeting with the trustees' thanks at 7:20.

Acting Director Grebinar resumed her report, noting that she completed Part 2 of the Basic Library Techniques course. She reported that the Friends of the Library's annual Craft Fair was very successful,

and the trustees expressed their sincere appreciation for the Friends and all of the volunteers who helped execute the event.

Acting Director Grebinar reported that most budget lines are well on track. One line that she noted may stand out to trustees is the materials line, which at first glance is tracking high at 47% spent. This is due to the fact that the budget line reflects the \$62,500 approved at town meeting while, as discussed earlier in the meeting, the library spends closer to \$79,000 on materials primarily by drawing on funds from the state and from the Friends of the Library.

Acting Director Grebinar said that the library has started to circulate puzzles, and that staff is planning to set up a community puzzle on the main level. She also highlighted the memory kits that are now circulating as part of the Age and Dementia Friendly Sterling program. Memory kits vary by theme, but generally include activities and resources for people experiencing memory loss and their caregivers. The memory kits are designed to cultivate conversations and engaging interactions, and to support caregivers with information and resources.

The automated external defibrillator training was enthusiastically received by staff, and a new AED cabinet has been mounted on the main level.

Youth services had a busy month, with a wide variety of well-attended programs. The 3rd-4th grade book club format was tweaked to become a "Series Celebration," discussing beloved book series, a change that was well received.

Trustees discussed the existing photocopier policy in light of a recent complaint about the cost of black-and-white printing. Currently, the library offers either black-and-white or color printing at the same cost (25 cents per page). Particularly since it can be easy to print in color by accident, this pricing eliminates unexpected costs for patrons, while still helping to offset the considerable cost of ink cartridges. Trustees reviewed pricing structures at other area libraries and decided not to make any changes to the policy at this time.

Trustee Carlin asked for a calendar of major library business that requires trustee involvement (e.g. budget development, director evaluations, etc.) so that the board can know what to expect in the coming months. He noted that this is especially important as trustees cycle on and off the board.

Trustees conducted an interview of Acting Director Grebinar for the position of Library Director, with each trustee having the opportunity to ask several prepared questions.

Motion to appoint current Acting Director Alexandra Grebinar as Library Director: Carlin. Second: Akerson.  
Unanimous.

Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of employment contract negotiations: Sayut. Second: Carlin.  
Unanimous.

Trustees entered executive session at 8:21

Open session re-entered at 8:41

Motion to accept contract as negotiated: Akerson. Second: Petullo.  
Unanimous.

Next posted meeting date: January 9, 2023

Motion to adjourn: Carlin. Second: Akerson.

Unanimous.

Adjournment: 8:50 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary