

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Conant Public Library  
Sterling, MA  
Minutes of February 12, 2024**

**Open Meeting:**

Call to order 7:00 PM

**Roll Call:**

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

Trustee Dan Flaherty was absent at the time of roll call but arrived via Zoom shortly thereafter.

**Recognize Other Attendees:**

Dick Maki

**Review/Approve January 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Martin. Second: Carlin.

Motion carries unanimously.

**Director's Report**

Director Grebinar noted that a number of January updates took place near the beginning of the month, and were therefore already discussed at the January 8 meeting: for example, roof flashing replacement, elevator call button repair, and elevator/lift inspections.

Fire alarm systems were tested on January 30 and were found to be in good working order.

Director Grebinar completed parts 1 and 2 of the Basic Library Techniques course on cataloging. She also began a four-week American Library Association course on the Library of Congress classification system, using a grant from the Massachusetts Library Service. Furthermore, Director Grebinar applied for and received a grant from Library Juice Academy to take a course on creating dementia-friendly library services; the course will begin in April and she expects that it will help to inform her continuing efforts as part of the Age and Dementia Friendly Sterling workgroup. Director Grebinar noted that the Library Juice Academy still has funding available, so some staff are pursuing grants for back-to-back courses.

Audio and book orders were placed for the month, and March\April programs were finalized. Program registration opened at 10 AM on the day of the trustees' meeting, and Director Grebinar reported that interest was high, with many programs filling quickly.

Director Grebinar met with Lyman Signs for a quote on replacing the sign in front of the library, which is starting to show wear and has required increased maintenance. She noted that this project will be paid for using state aid funds.

The final staff evaluation was completed and all evaluations were submitted to town hall.

Director Grebinar completed the first part of a virtual training course in Aspen Discovery, the new patron-side library catalog software due to be implemented soon. She noted that, although staff will not be the primary users of Aspen, they do want to be in a position to help patrons navigate the software. She expects that Aspen will offer better searching capabilities; among other features, it offers autocorrection of minor spelling mistakes and the ability to filter results by fiction versus non-fiction.

Director Grebinar also reported on the work of the CW MARS Circulation and Resource Sharing Committee, of which she is an active member. The Committee has recommended CW MARS system libraries move to an online renewal system for physical library cards (which currently have to be renewed in person or over the phone).

Staff meeting topics this month included social media use, snow policies and use of sick time. Since the library's professional cleaning service does not clean library staff desks, these were assigned to individuals for cleaning.

Adult Book Bingo began January 2 and will run through June 1. About 100 Bingo cards have been distributed to date; every row/column completed is good for one entry in a raffle for three gift certificates to Emma's Café.

There has been a great deal of demand for the Blind Date with a Book program, in which patrons check out a wrapped book (packaged with a chocolate treat!). The program will run through the end of February.

Director Grebinar noted that, this month, paper newsletters listing upcoming programs were placed on display in advance of the program registration window, to align with the timing of programs being published on the library website. (Previously, paper newsletters were not distributed until the day program registration opened.) Her hope is that this will improve access for patrons who do not use the internet or who prefer to mark up a hard copy of the newsletter as they plan. An electronic version of the newsletter is available as well; going forward, the e-newsletter, paper newsletter, and program listings on the website will all become available at the same time.

On the main level, one computer table was removed to clear space for new magazine shelves. The table was donated to another local library.

To save on cost and reduce waste, plastic cutlery is being discontinued for use by staff and in programs. The library has invested in reusable stainless steel cutlery that will be used instead.

Jordana Wasylyshyn received a Library Juice grant for a training course in cataloging. Ms. Wasylyshyn is also taking some of the Basic Library Techniques courses offered through the Massachusetts Library System.

The Friends of the Library membership drive has been successful to date; the next Friends meeting is on March 14.

## **Budget**

At 59% through the fiscal year, all budget lines are on track.

Director Grebinar reported that the library anticipates disbursing some state aid funding in the next week on new shelving and end panels. The current state aid balance is about \$31,000.

## **Circulation**

Although the winter months have been historically quiet, Director Grebinar reported that circulation is doing well across all categories.

Circulation of electronic resources continues to trend upwards. Director Grebinar noted that there has been no corresponding drop in circulation of physical materials, suggesting that e-materials are supplementing, rather than replacing, physical materials.

She further noted that the Library of Things was popular this month, particularly Nintendo Switch games. Starting on March 4, the Library of Things will expand with a seed library.

## **Youth Services**

Storytimes and Musictimes continue to be among the library's most popular offerings. As per the strategic plan, Youth Services has also looked for opportunities to offer more crafts, contests and other passive programming.

The Intergenerational Puzzle Race was very successful. It will be repeated in the future, along with a variation that will allow adult-only teams to compete.

Picture books, easy readers and young adult books were weeded to make room for new materials.

## **New Business**

Board vacancies were discussed and it was noted that nomination papers are now available at town hall.

Director Grebinar offered an update on the elevator project – the contractor, Otis Elevator, is projecting that this project will be on their schedule for June, and will require an elevator outage of as much as four weeks. Trustees discussed how to minimize impacts on the summer reading program and suggested a temporary display of children's materials on the main level.

Otis recommended upgrading the elevator's fire panel before the rest of the updates take place over the summer, to avoid further delays. Emergency Signals started this project on the day of the trustees' meeting. Since this is a necessary element of the elevator update, it will be paid for from the ARPA funds earmarked for the project.

Trustees briefly discussed how best to assist a patron with limited mobility during a fire emergency, when elevators cannot be used for safety reasons. Director Grebinar noted that staff would ideally help them move to the fire escape stairwells, which are fireproofed, to await further assistance from first responders. Since the Sterling Fire Department is located less than 200 yards from the library, they would be on the scene extremely quickly.

Director Grebinar further reported that the town is still waiting on more information from Garaventa on the lift update project. To date, no other contractors have been interested in this project.

Trustees reviewed a rewrite of the library's social media policy that focused more specifically on patron use of library social media.

Motion to approve the rewritten social media policy: Sayut. Second: Petullo.

Motion carries unanimously.

Director Grebinar distributed a list of resources for trustees from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Trustees reviewed the bylaws governing how members of the public can suggest additions to meeting agendas. Some minor modifications were suggested for consideration, including adding a request that the petitioner attend the meeting in question. This topic will be revisited pending research into other town departments' policies.

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

Next posted meeting date: March 11, 2024

Motion to adjourn: Doherty. Second: Martin.

Motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment: 7:52 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary