

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Conant Public Library
Sterling, MA
Minutes of February 14, 2022**

Open Meeting:

Call to order 7:02 pm

Roll Call:

Present: Trustees Akerson, Carlin and Petullo, in person; Trustees Martin, Sayut and Scannell, via Zoom; Library Director Betsy Perry, in person

Members of the public present: Dick Maki, in person

Review/Approve January 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept: Carlin. Second: Akerson.

Unanimous

Review/Approve February 7, 2022 SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) Exercise Meeting Minutes

Trustee Carlin asked for the SOAR Exercise meeting minutes to be amended to reflect his objection to carrying out discussion in virtual breakout rooms.

Motion to accept as amended: Scannell. Second: Martin.

Unanimous

Reports

Director Perry reported that circulation is up and foot traffic is strong. She noted that the availability of tax forms may be drawing more people into the library. She also noted that magazine circulation is rising, but that more signage may be necessary to ensure patrons are aware of new magazine offerings. Youth programs remain well-attended, and planning is underway for the 2022 summer reading program.

At 59% through the fiscal year, total spending is at 51% of the budgeted amount. Spending is expected to continue on track, including on the lines for utilities and staff salaries.

Director Perry reported that there has been some difficulty in keeping the library building heated on recent frigid days, noting that the library maintains very high air exchange levels as a COVID-control measure. The problem was alleviated after a service technician added refrigerant to the system.

She further reported that the library's elevator failed its latest inspection in light of repairs needed to an access hatch. Director Perry emphasized that the issue is not related to safe functioning, and that a repair is already scheduled for an estimated \$2,050. Trustee Carlin expressed some reluctance to make

repairs to an elevator that will soon be replaced in whole, and asked if a conditional pass or other recourse is available in this situation. Director Perry said she would investigate.

A quote has been requested to remove the automatic doors at the entrance to the library and to partly enclose the door opening. This would create space that could potentially be used as a community bulletin board.

Director Perry reported a number of meetings, including several with strategic planning consultant Barbara Alevras, MLA boards and committees, the CW MARS executive committee, the Friends of the Library, and an anti-racist webinar.

She noted that book vendor Ingram has improved the speed of their shipments, resulting in more availability of new books. (She clarified that this was a systemic problem, and not specific to the Conant Library.)

The Friends of the Library will hold their next meeting via Zoom on March 10. Friends participated along with trustees in the SOAR exercise on February 7.

The town-wide classification and compensation study is ongoing and library staff have all completed one-on-one interviews.

Regarding the strategic planning process, Director Perry reported that SOAR exercises have been completed by Friends, trustees and staff, with the next Strategic Plan Action Committee meeting coming up on February 28. The online community survey is live through February 22, and response has been strong so far. Focus groups are scheduled and participants are being recruited.

New Business

Director Perry reported that a position is currently open for a Library Associate I, and that she would like to reclassify the position as a Library Associate II. The reclassified position would have the same hours, but would carry more supervisory responsibility along with a specialization in planning and promotion of programs. Pay ranges for the two classifications overlap, so wages would be similar, and would be well within currently budgeted amounts.

Motion to reclassify the open position from a Library Associate I to a Library Associate II, Planning and Promotion: Sayut. Second: Akerson.

Unanimous

Director Perry presented a draft of the library's annual report, including text, photos and an infographic, to be incorporated into the Town of Sterling annual report.

Motion to approve annual report as presented: Scannell. Second: Carlin.

Unanimous

Wireless Electronic Device Policy

Director Perry reported that the library's wireless electronic device policy was still mostly applicable, despite dating back to 2006. One short section was removed, reflecting that patrons are now permitted to connect their own wireless devices to library printers.

Motion to accept wireless electronic device policy as amended: Akerson. Second: Carlin.
Unanimous

Director Perry informed the trustees that the Wachusett Regional School District, which serves a five-town area including Sterling, will discontinue its mask mandate as of February 28. She further noted that the Sterling Select Board has recently instituted a mask mandate for municipal buildings, but that this will be reconsidered at their next meeting on March 2. The library building has had a mask mandate in place since November; now, Director Perry asked trustees to consider how the library would like to respond to the changing mandates and the differing policies across different institutions.

Trustees' discussion centered on making sure young patrons and their caregivers feel safe, and ensuring that people who wish to remain masked are supported in doing so. They also considered how the library staff would be impacted by the responsibility of enforcing a policy that potentially diverges from school district and town policies. Trustees ultimately coalesced around the option of aligning the library with the rest of the municipal buildings in town, removing mandates if and when the Select Board votes to do so on a town level. After the removal of the library mask mandate, masks would still be recommended in consideration of the young patrons who remain ineligible for vaccination.

Motion to retain the library's mask mandate until the Town of Sterling Select Board votes to eliminate the mask mandate for municipal buildings, at which time the library will revert to a policy of recommending rather than requiring masks: Akerson. Second: Carlin.
Unanimous

Director Perry noted that, with the expected retirement of Trustee Carlin, there will be room on the board for a new trustee. Any interested candidates would have to obtain nomination papers from town hall by March 17 and submit signatures by March 21.

As part of an ongoing discussion on disaster planning, trustees considered the use of security cameras at the library. While the library does have some areas that are difficult for staff to monitor, trustees were cognizant of the need to balance security with patron privacy. Trustee Scannell noted that in the interest of transparency, signs should be posted notifying patrons of any security monitoring taking place. Trustee Akerson further noted that a policy would be needed to determine how long to retain footage. Director Perry said that she would query fellow area library directors regarding their best practices.

Next posted meeting date: March 14, 2022
Motion to adjourn: Akerson. Second: Carlin.
Unanimous
Adjournment: 7:57 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary