

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Conant Public Library
Sterling, MA
Minutes of April 25, 2022**

Open Meeting:

Call to order 7:02 pm

Roll Call:

Present: Trustees Lisa Akerson, Al Carlin and Sara Petullo, in person; Trustees Heide Martin, Amanda Sayut and Matt Scannell, via Zoom; Library Director Betsy Perry, in person.

Members of the public present: none

Review/Approve March 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Carlin noted that he was listed as seconding the March 14 meeting adjournment, despite being absent from the meeting. Trustee Sayut said she would refer back to her handwritten meeting notes and make the necessary correction.

Motion to accept meeting minutes with correction: Akerson. Second: Martin.

Abstaining: Carlin.

Unanimous among remaining trustees.

Reports

Director Perry reported that circulation numbers have been very strong, with circulation in March up more than 1,000 items from February.

Youth services have remained popular, with an indoor mini-golf event attracting 80-90 people, many of whom are not regular library patrons.

At 75% through the year, the budget is well on track, with both payroll and operations costs expected to come in under budget. Staff are hoping to direct leftover funding into some technology upgrades at year end. Chairperson Petullo noted that the supplies line is tracking at 91% and inquired whether that is a cause for concern. Director Perry said program staff have been planning ahead for spring/summer programming and purchasing craft supplies in advance. She assured the trustees that there is plenty of funding available in gifts and that another tranche of state aid was just received. In the absence of emergency expenses, this funding will be saved for future use.

Director Perry reported that elevator repairs were carried out and the elevator passed its re-inspection. She also reported that the Select Board has offered use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for the elevator/lift upgrade project, so there will be no need to bring a request to town meeting. She said the bidding process can begin once the new town admin is in place.

Other facilities updates included the removal of the sliding doors near the front desk and replacement of some roof shingles that had blown loose.

Director Perry reported on some of her major March activities. She facilitated a composting program and two craft programs for the public, as well as two seminars, on pronoun use and writing programs, for consortium library staff. (The writing program seminar was developed based on interest by Conant's own Director of Youth Services, Alisa Iannucci.) She coordinated weeding of collections on the first floor and rearrangement of resources for a more open layout. She attended a variety of meetings, including board and committee meetings for CW MARS, the ALA and the CMLA; she noted that two webinars in particular, one called Keeping Governance on Track and the other called Performance Management, were especially useful.

On the operations front, Director Perry noted that new staff member Leah Brooks started on March 28 and has been doing a great job with social media, including setting up a brand-new Conant Library Instagram page. Trustee Carlin stressed the importance of trustees extending a warm welcome to new staff members.

She noted that planning is underway for the annual Friends of the Library craft fair, and that even at this early date nearly all the vendor spaces are filled.

The last strategic plan focus group has taken place and Ms. Alevras, the strategic planning consultant, is analyzing collected data. A final Strategic Planning Advisory Committee meeting will take place in June.

Director Perry said that she would be in attendance at town meeting to answer any questions that arise regarding the library budget. Trustee Martin asked whether there was any news of potential candidates for the open library trustee positions. Director Perry reported that no one pulled nomination papers by the deadline, and that she hasn't heard any news of write-in campaigns being mounted. Trustees also confirmed that they were not aware of any write-in campaigns underway. Chairperson Petullo noted that Trustee Carlin had expressed a willingness to be a write-in candidate, to allow for continuity on the Director Evaluation Committee.

Mission Statement

Trustees discussed a new mission statement for the library. Various trustees identified elements that they felt were important to include and also spoke in support of a shorter, one-sentence mission statement. Ultimately a consensus was reached to adopt a new mission statement as follows:

The Conant Public Library provides equal access to cultural, educational and technological information and resources, to support patrons in their enjoyment of reading and their pursuit of lifelong learning.

Motion to accept the new mission statement: Akerson. Second: Martin.
Unanimous.

Security Camera Policy

Chairperson Petullo asked which stakeholders would need to be involved in the creation of a formal security camera policy for the library. She suggested that the discussion may need to be sidelined until a new police chief and a new town administrator could be brought on board. Trustees asked Director Perry if she had any thoughts about where security cameras could be useful, and she suggested the parking lot, the back of the building, stairwells, and other primarily low-visibility areas. She was not sure of the cost, but reiterated that there may be a budget surplus at the end of this fiscal year. She said she would flesh out a strategy with more detail and present it at the next meeting. Meanwhile, trustees would familiarize themselves with policies and feedback from other libraries regarding signage, video retention, number and distribution of cameras, privacy concerns, etc.

Suffolk Certificate Program

The trustees discussed the Massachusetts Municipal Association/Suffolk University certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management that Director Perry had expressed an interest in attending. Trustees noted a few roadblocks, particularly that Director Perry would not yet have attained one year of service by the commencement of the program, which is a requirement for tuition reimbursement per the Town of Sterling employee handbook. Trustee Scannell asked whether the tuition reimbursement would be drawn from the library budget or the town budget; with no sitting town administrator, trustees were concerned this and other questions would be difficult to answer. An additional concern was raised around the amount of time off needed, as the course takes place over 25 consecutive Fridays. While the time off would be predictable and spread out over several months, trustees thought it may be easier to plan around once Director Perry has been on the job longer. Trustees affirmed that the certificate program seemed valuable but coalesced around a plan of forgoing this year but revisiting next year.

Director Evaluation

The Director Evaluation Subcommittee confirmed that the trustees were set to meet with Director Perry for her six-month evaluation on May 5 at 5 PM. Trustee Carlin noted that he had sent the committee's draft evaluation to the other trustees and asked them, when responding, to focus on providing concrete detail rather than overall impressions or opinions. This would best allow him to synthesize feedback into a cohesive final evaluation, which he said he would email to trustees prior to the May 5 meeting.

Next posted meeting date: May 16, 2022 (corrected 5/17/22)

Motion to adjourn: Carlin. Second: Akerson.

Unanimous.

Adjournment: 8:40 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary