

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Conant Public Library  
Sterling, MA  
Minutes of September 11, 2023**

**Open Meeting:**

Call to order 7:03 PM

**Roll Call:**

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

**Recognize Other Attendees:**

Kirsten Newman, Select Board liaison

**Review/Approve August 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Motion to accept: Carlin. Second: Flaherty.

Motion carries unanimously.

**Director's Report**

Director Grebinar reported that the sign in front of the library is beginning to split. It was recently repainted by staff but will need replacing soon. Inside the library, new biographies have been relocated to make room for more new fiction to be displayed.

Director Grebinar further noted that Sterling Facilities Manager Chuck Goss had visited to familiarize himself with the library, and had briefed her on a new computerized system for town work orders currently under development.

After research and consideration, Director Grebinar purchased an annual library subscription to the arts and crafts database CreativeBug, for use both by the library's programming staff and by patrons. The subscription was reasonably priced and includes access to thousands of video tutorials as well as downloadable templates and patterns. Director Grebinar felt it was a cost-effective way to enhance and complement the library's extremely popular craft programs.

Academy Glass visited the library to provide quotes for replacing windows in different sections of the library. Di-Rock Electric also visited to quote a switch from fluorescent lights to LEDs, as fluorescents are less efficient and are becoming increasingly difficult to source. (These projects are discussed in more detail later in the agenda.)

Both Director Grebinar and Assistant Director Orr participated in a virtual training on submitting forms for state aid; although both were familiar with parts of the process, neither had ever shepherded it from start to finish. Director Grebinar reported that state aid forms are nearly completed, and noted that the earlier they are submitted the sooner state aid funding will be forthcoming. She expects to submit the forms well before next month's due date.

Director Grebinar led one-to-one and group staff meetings, covering the many new and updated policies approved at the August trustees' meeting, as well as the procedure for requesting time off. She participated in several CWMARS committee meetings, including circulation and resource sharing.

This year's Youth Summer Reading Program was very successful – 283 young readers logged a total of 7,555 hours of reading, and 51 kids completed the 100 Books of Summer reading challenge. The Adult Summer Reading program was a success as well, with 415 participants in the running to win 27 prizes donated by 15 local businesses. Director Grebinar and the trustees expressed their gratitude for all of the generous community support that made both the Youth and Adult Summer Reading Programs possible.

Director Grebinar noted that the library's new Hotspots are slowly beginning to circulate. As of yet there have been no issues with the borrower's agreement approved at the August trustees' meeting.

The Friends of the Library are resuming their meetings in September after a summer hiatus, and will be in the home stretch of planning the November craft fair.

Director Grebinar reported that the budget is on track and asked the trustees what, if any, level of expenditure should be cleared with them in advance. Trustees said that they appreciate being kept in the loop, but that ultimately they have full trust in Director Grebinar's judgment.

While library attendance is up, Director Grebinar noted that circulation has dipped slightly. She observed that while activities are extremely popular, not all attendees check out books.

Youth services was primarily occupied with the conclusion of summer reading program during the month of August. Director Grebinar reported that they have begun to keep track of how many young patrons take part in the table craft, as those numbers can be applied to passive programming.

### **Capital Projects**

Director Grebinar presented a list of anticipated capital projects, with rough cost estimates where available. Lighting upgrades are the top priority for the near future, and have been quoted at about \$30,000, with some potential for grant funding. Trustee Carlin suggested that it may be possible to retrofit existing fixtures to accept LED bulbs.

Farther down the road, in FY26, Director Grebinar anticipated needing to replace some main level windows. These are still functional, but are starting to fog. She has not yet obtained a quote for this project.

Also in FY26, she would like to consider replacing the library's water heater, as it will be approaching the end of its projected lifespan. This would cost about \$8,000.

In FY27, she would suggest replacing the clerestory windows near the ceiling on the second floor. This would double the R-Values of the windows and result in energy and cost savings over time. The cost of this project has been estimated at \$20,000.

In FY30, the asphalt shingles on the library roof will be nearing the end of their projected lifespan. There has also been some cracking on the slate-shingled portion of the roof. At that time, different options would need to be considered, including the possibility of metal roofing. Costs will vary significantly depending on options selected.

### **Additional Library Associate I Position**

Director Grebinar advocated for the creation of one additional Library Associate I position, which would have very limited Saturday-only hours (3.5 hours/week in the summer and 5.5 hours/week during the school year). While some existing staff are interested, they have limited eligibility to increase their current hours and remain non-benefited. The additional position would improve library coverage on Saturdays and would also allow for Saturday programming, which was of interest to the Sterling community in the recent strategic planning exercise. Assuming a pay rate of \$18.50 an hour, the total cost of the position would be about \$5,000 per year. Director Grebinar acknowledged that it may be hard to fill the position given the limited hours, but trustees speculated that a college student, retiree or stay-at-home parent might find it to be a good fit for their schedule. Ms. Newman noted that there is an upcoming special town meeting and it may be possible to add a new library position to the agenda.

### **Director Evaluation**

Trustees discussed the evaluations they had each filled out for Director Grebinar and compiled them all into a master document to be written up by Trustee Sayut. They commended Director Grebinar for her excellent work.

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

Next posted meeting date: October 23, 2023

Motion to adjourn: Flaherty. Second: Carlin.

Motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment: 8:29 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary