

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Conant Public Library
Sterling, MA
Minutes of April 10, 2023**

Open Meeting:

Call to order 7:03 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Trustees Al Carlin, Dan Flaherty, Heide Martin and Sara Petullo in person; Trustee Amanda Sayut via Zoom; Library Director Alex Grebinar, in person.

Absent: Trustee Lisa Akerson.

Recognize Other Attendees:

Richard Maki

Review/Approve March 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept: Carlin. Second: Flaherty.

Motion carries unanimously.

Director's Report

Director Grebinar reported that, at 75% through the fiscal year, the budget is on track and that materials spending is being closely watched to ensure we meet the threshold for state funding. Since the library's popular break-in bags are developed and built in-house, trustees inquired whether staff time can be applied to materials spending in this case; Director Grebinar said that staff time cannot, but the supplies for creating the break-in bags can be.

Cultural Sector Recovery grant funds have been received in the amount of about \$39,570, and will be applied to materials and programming. Reporting on the grant is due in July to the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Weeding of adult fiction continues, with discarded books available free in the library vestibule.

Director Grebinar reported that she is looking into options for replacing the plastic snow and ice guards on the library roof, which are getting older and starting to fall off. She also noted that a deposit of about \$47,000 has been paid for the elevator project, and an updated quote has been requested for the lift project.

Following up on the prior month's discussion on security cameras, Director Grebinar reported that, per the contractor, the library can start with any number of security cameras and can opt to add more at a later time, up to a total of 24.

She noted that she has been matched with a CW MARS mentor, Joe Mulé of Thayer Library in Lancaster, and that she has also met with Alexander Lent of Leominster in a similar capacity. Both have indicated

that she can call on them with questions, and are interested in exploring the idea of a hyperlocal library group, with an eye on sharing information and potentially splitting the cost of programs.

Director Grebinar reported that she has spent significant time learning how to create warrants and budget reports, and has led two adult craft programs and a cookbook club.

Book and audio orders were placed for May, and a new associate was trained (the second of two new hires). Currently, Director Grebinar is also interviewing candidates for a third associate's position. She met with staff members individually as well as in larger groups.

Director Grebinar noted that the CW MARS Users' Council is still considering whether to switch the patron-side catalog system to Aspen, and that no vote has been taken yet.

The Library of Things has grown to about 30 items to date, and has been very popular. One item, a children's metal detector, proved not to be sturdy enough to withstand repeat circulation and has been withdrawn.

Surveys were sent out to patrons who participated in March programs, yielding many useful comments. Director Grebinar reported that respondents are especially interested in history, genealogy and adult craft programs, and special efforts are being made to schedule programming of these types.

As a condition of Massachusetts Library System membership, Conant Library is required to participate in a bi-annual delivery survey, which gauges the volume of books being sent to and received from other libraries as part of the inter-library loan system. Information on how delivery is used helps to determine how MLS allocates funding during the budgeting process. Director Grebinar submitted data for two weeks in March to ensure typical delivery activity was accurately reflected.

The library closed for inclement weather on March 4 and March 14.

A selection of Nintendo Switch games were added to the collection after staff noticed that patrons were frequently requesting them from other libraries. The games have been very popular to date.

Director Grebinar reported that Phil Gold is retiring after 18 years at the Conant Library. The trustees expressed appreciation for his dedicated service.

Budget Report

Director Grebinar noted that budget lines are mostly on track but that she does expect that the Supplies line will be exhausted before the end of the fiscal year. She said that excess funds from the Education and Training line should be available to fill the gap.

Trustees commented that electricity costs have gone up, and asked whether the Electricity line should be adjusted. Director Grebinar replied that there is a limit imposed by the town on how much budget lines can be increased, but that she expects there will be funds available in other lines to cover any shortages. She also noted that usage has decreased and that she will continue to seek out ways to reduce consumption.

She also noted that this month's budget shows the deposit for the elevator project slated for 2024 (on the expenses side), as well as the Cultural Sector Recovery Grant (on the income side).

Circulation Report

Since mid-November, puzzles have circulated 137 times, although this may start to decline as the weather improves. Programming continues to be very popular – in May and June, more programs are being offered than ever before.

Director Evaluation

Trustee Carlin noted that the form used for Director Grebinar's first evaluation is lengthy, but reflects the need for clear expectations on both the trustees' and director's sides. He suggested that a pared-down version summarizing strengths and weaknesses may be sufficient for Director Grebinar's evaluations going forward.

Director Grebinar's first evaluation was extremely positive, and trustees were supportive of the goals she had set out for herself for the next review period.

Trustees Flaherty and Petullo expressed appreciation for the thoroughness of the evaluation tool and counseled its use going forward. Director Grebinar also spoke in favor of the tool, noting that the clear expectations were helpful.

Circulation Policy

Director Grebinar noted that the existing circulation policy is slightly out of date, since the library has eliminated fines and moved to an auto-renewal system. She made additional minor updates to reflect the expanding breadth of collections.

Trustees also suggested some small edits and asked clarifying questions about borrowing privileges available to patrons under 12, patrons under 18, and adult patrons.

Motion to approve circulation policy with changes as discussed: Sayut. Second: Carlin.

Motion carries unanimously.

Next posted meeting date: May 15, 2023

Motion to adjourn: Carlin. Second: Petullo.

Motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment: 7:55 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary