

**Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Conant Public Library
Sterling, MA
Minutes of May 15, 2023**

Open Meeting:

Call to order 7:02 PM

Roll Call:

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

Recognize Other Attendees:

Richard Maki

Chairperson Petullo offered her thanks to Lisa Akerson, whose board term had recently concluded, and welcomed new trustee Judith Doherty, elected at last week's town election. She also congratulated trustees Flaherty and Martin on winning new three-year terms. Members of the board introduced themselves and spoke briefly on their backgrounds, with a love for libraries and for reading evinced throughout.

Trustee Sayut was unanimously elected to continue as board secretary, and Chairperson Petullo was unanimously elected to continue as chair.

Review/Approve April 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept: Carlin. Second: Petullo.

Motion carries unanimously, with Trustee Doherty abstaining.

Director's Report

Director Grebinar reported that, with the recent hiring of a third new Library Associate, the library is fully staffed for the first time since October.

Weeding of collections continues, with infrequently-circulated materials withdrawn and made freely available to patrons on shelves in the front entrance and upstairs.

Computers were switched from a Comcast network to the CW MARS network, which is expected to increase speed. Trustees inquired whether there were plans for the library to switch the Local Area Mobile Broadband (LAMB) service offered by Sterling Municipal Light Department. Director Grebinar said she prefers to remain with CW MARS, which offers its own IT services.

Director Grebinar further reported that her activities had included filling the open Library Associate I position; arranging for free pickup by Bay State Books of 40 boxes of discarded books and audiobooks; and scheduling CPR/AED trainings for herself and for new staff.

She began the second of four Basic Library Techniques courses through the Massachusetts Library System (the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners requires Directors without Masters degrees in Library Science to take these courses within five years of their appointment). She expects to complete the second course in May.

Although the Age and Dementia Friendly Sterling committee did not meet in April, Director Grebinar was given a list of local businesses that she will contact to enlist support and offer training opportunities.

One-on-one meetings were held with all staff members to discuss individual priorities and goals. A two-part all-staff meeting (one for day staff and one for night staff) was also held to cover scheduling and task rotations.

Director Grebinar, Head of Youth Services Alisa Ianucci, and Library Associate I Jordana Wasylyshyn were all delighted to be awarded grants from the Massachusetts Library System grants to take online courses through the Library Juice Academy. In October, Ms. Ianucci will take a course on Supercharging Storytimes, while Ms. Wasylyshyn will take Intro to Cataloguing. In November, Director Grebinar will take Supervision and Management. Each course will require about 3.75 hours of asynchronous work per week for four to five weeks.

Director Grebinar further reported that staff have been active in seeking out other opportunities for trainings, including many that are free of charge or covered by grants, that will enrich the library's offerings. These include trainings on neurodiversity in programming, homeschooling in libraries and adult programming. Trustees were enthusiastic and encouraged Director Grebinar and her staff to continue to identify these opportunities for skill-building and professional growth.

Director Grebinar noted that the library has faced some challenges as programs grow in popularity. Although the library is primarily funded by Sterling taxpayers, programs are open to residents of any town, and many fill up very quickly. Furthermore, budget and staffing considerations generally place a firm upper limit on how many participants can be accommodated. Trustees and Director Grebinar discussed how to ensure that the Sterling residents are able to access popular programs, and trustees were very supportive of modifying the online registration system to give priority to Sterling patrons' registration requests. Director Grebinar noted that, since program registration tends to be less competitive over the summer, it is a good time to pilot this change.

She further reported that the Friends of the Library craft fair is almost full on vendors, with only five tables left. Plans are underway by the Friends to institute a passport system encouraging craft fair customers to visit all of the several rooms of vendors.

Long Range Plan Updates

Director Grebinar offered some updates on elements of the Long Range Plan completed in 2022. She reported lots of interest in the new Library of Things, which was a result of the planning process. With regards to updating the library's physical space, she noted that Tucker Interiors would be examining ways to reconfigure shelves and add new seating on the lower level. Programming continues to grow as staff members take on new programs and expand marketing efforts, with passive programming

initiatives (activities available on a drop-in basis) proving popular as well. Intergenerational outreach efforts continue, with a new patron added to the home delivery program and Community Journals now available for checkout, allowing patrons of all ages to contribute their own reflections on several topics. Finally, on the technology front, computers have been updated and informational sessions offered for patrons on using the CW MARS and Libby apps. At this time, Director Grebinar reports very limited community interest in 3D printers or hot spots, but is happy to consider adding these when and if demand increases.

Budget

Director Grebinar noted that she and the staff continue to seek out opportunities to spend grant funding and Friends funding on circulating materials over and above what was appropriated in the library budget approved at the 2022 town meeting. In doing so, the library becomes eligible for additional unrestricted funding from the state, and residents of Sterling gain access to a greater variety of resources.

She further noted that the Director's Salary line is expected to run higher than budgeted due to the transition period between directors. This will be offset by the Staff Wages line.

She reported no updates on the lift project.

Circulation

Director Grebinar reported strong circulation numbers, noting that puzzle circulation increased again after a brief slump and that Nintendo Switch games have proven popular. As discussed earlier in the meeting, program participation is also very high.

Youth Services

New staff have stepped up to help the Head of Youth Services carry out a very full slate of children's programming, including storytimes and school-age book clubs. Several of these clubs will pause or slow down over the summer to allow more time for coordination of the summer reading program.

Passive programming for children and youth has also been popular, including writing poems in the style of Emily Dickinson, a March Picture Book Madness bracket challenge, and a Pete the Cat storywalk on the library lawn.

Town Meeting and Election

Director Grebinar and the Trustees briefly discussed Trustee roles and responsibilities, with reminders to fill out the campaign finance form and complete conflict of interest training.

Several articles from the recent annual town meeting pertaining to the library were also discussed. Director Grebinar noted that funding for security cameras was approved, and that a second quote has been obtained by the town. The library's set of cameras would focus primarily on the front and back exterior, with some coverage of the back hallway and the lobby; this configuration would maintain privacy while also enhancing security. The funds for the project do not become available until July 1, but in the meantime Director Grebinar plans to work on a written policy and signage.

Also at town meeting, the Head of Youth Services was reclassified from Grade 3 to Grade 4. This change will take effect July 1, and will more accurately reflect her many responsibilities and her vital role as an ambassador to local families.

Discussion of Saturday Hours

Director Grebinar proposed reconsidering the library's 10 AM opening on Saturdays, reporting that walk-in traffic is being missed. She suggested shifting the library's July/August Saturday hours, currently 10 AM – 1PM, to 9 AM – 12 PM instead. The September-June Saturday hours would shift from 10 AM – 3 PM to 9AM – 2 PM.

She clarified that this would be a shift and not an expansion of total hours open, since the latter would have staffing and budget implications. She also noted that weekday hours would need to remain the same to allow for evening programs to begin at 6:30 or 7 after the typical workday. Library staff are in favor of the change.

Motion to approve new Saturday hours of 9 AM – 12 PM in July and August and 9 AM – 2 PM from June to September, effective July 1: Sayut. Second: Doherty.

Motion carries unanimously.

Next posted meeting date: June 12, 2023

Motion to adjourn: Doherty. Second: Flaherty.

Motion carries unanimously.

Adjournment: 8:22 pm

Amanda Sayut, Secretary