



BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

NEAL DECHILLO, CHAIR ELLEN WINKLER, VICE CHAIR TRIPT SEMBHI, SECRETARY
JONATHAN NICHOLS, DIRECTOR

Minutes

August 10, 2022

Attending: Ellen Winkler, Neal DeChillo, Jonathan Nichols, Susan Conner and Laureen Perkins.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Baldwin Room of the Swampscott Public Library.

Laureen Perkins, a resident of Swampscott, introduced herself as a loyal patron of the library and requested an opportunity to speak. She expressed concerns with the hiring process in connection with filling the vacancy for the position of Library Director. In addition she asked how patrons could give feedback and express concerns.

Neal DeChillo explained that the Trustees could not discuss any personnel matters in open session. He did thank Ms. Perkins for coming to the Trustees meeting and let her know that the Trustees and the Director share her desire to see all vacant positions at the library filled as soon as possible, and that our goal is to create a positive work environment for the employees with an emphasis on excellent service to patrons.

Jonathan Nichols let Ms. Perkins know that she is welcome to come to him directly with any concerns.

Ellen Winkler also encouraged Ms. Perkins to come back to the Trustees in the future if she has any ongoing concerns about the library.

Ellen moved to approve the minutes from the prior meeting. The Trustees voted to approve the minutes.

In his Director's report, Jonathan addressed the following:

He provided the Trustees with a report on the status of the MER. The Library has spent 22.39% of the required amount to date and is on track to meet required spending in this fiscal year. Large bills typically come in at the beginning of the fiscal year; spending should taper in the next months.

State aid for the current fiscal year is expected to be approximately \$31,000.00. Jonathan has earmarked these funds for the purchase of service desks for Circulation and Childrens Room, as well as needed additional furniture and furnishings. He put together a capital improvement plan and intends to work with the Massachusetts Board of Corrections on ordering customized pieces that are made by inmates. No bidding is required. The cost is substantially lower than market rate prices from other vendors. This is a short term solution until changes can be made to the circulation area and Children's Room under the Master Plan.

State aid paperwork has been completed. Jonathan gave the paperwork to Neal to review and sign.

Jonathan has developed an idea for “September savings with your Library Card.” This is an incentive to get more members of the community to get library cards by offering a merchant discount from local merchants in September. The library currently has 7-8,000 card holders out of a potential 13,000. September is National Library Card sign up month. The Library budget has \$10,000 for community outreach. The cost of writing to all local merchants could be covered by the budget. The Trustees approved the plan.

The library will be closed on December 24th and December 31st. The Trustees concur.

Susan reported that all approvals for the lilacs to be planted in honor of Lou Gallo have been received. She is waiting for a quote from Barbuzzi for the plants and planting.

Jonathan made a presentation for the use of ARPA funds for a EV van for a mobile library. It was well received. He was encouraged to present additional ideas.

Susan brought up the bonuses given to town employees for COVID. Library staff received \$750 each; less than was paid to other employees in Town. Alyce and Susan did not receive any bonus payments. Neal agreed to ask Sean about that.

The part-time Russian librarian retired effective August 5, 2022. The job was posted internally. There were no internal candidate, as no one speaks Russian. The position will be posted externally.

There is an internal candidate for the Reference Librarian position, which will be retitled as Head of Reference and Young Adult Services. This will create a new position for Community Outreach. Further discussions with the Town Manager and head of HR are pending.

Jonathan is leaning toward hiring a website developer rather than working with the company used by the Town.

Jonathan met with Max Kasper regarding the \$150,000 allocated by capital improvements for the “envelope” of the building. This would address rotting trim, exterior painting, roof repair and repointing. It would not address the leakage problem.

Discussions are ongoing about a joint capital project with Town funds to be applied to upgrades to the building entrance. There is \$23,000 left over from the bathroom project on the second floor.

Next meeting is scheduled for August 30th at 6:00 p.m. at the Library.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Winkler, Trustee