

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

October 19, 2023

DATE: November 20, 2023
TIME: 10:18 AM

Vice Chair Corinne Olmsted called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference through Zoom technology. Also attending were Co-Chairs Kathy Keohane and Elaine Alligood, Trustees Mark Carthy, Gail Mann and Mary Stearns, Library Director Peter Struzziero, staff member Grainne Griffin, and member of the public, Susan Lewis.

Public Comments

None.

Vice Chair Olmsted noted that the meeting would move into executive session and reconvene as a public meeting at the conclusion of the executive session. Vice Chair Olmsted then moved that the meeting move into executive session, and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The roll call vote on the motion was as follows: Co-Chair Keohane: aye; Co-Chair Alligood: aye; Vice Chair Olmsted: aye; Trustee Carthy: aye; Trustee Mann: aye; and Trustee Stearns: aye.

The meeting returned to open session at 7:58 p.m.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the September 21, 2023 Trustees meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Trustee Mann.

Director's Report

Director Struzziero referred to his Director's report included with the meeting materials.

Library Operations Update

Director Struzziero noted that programming in the current building was winding down in anticipation of shut down and move. Space heaters have been purchased to deal with heating system failures.

FY 2025 Budget Update

Director Struzziero reported on a meeting with the Town Administrator, staff, and warrant committee representatives to review the Library's initial FY 2025 budget submission. Other than adjustments made by the Town to reflect expected salary increases, there are currently no changes to the Library's original budget submission shared with the Trustees. He noted that a proposed mid-year hire of an additional technology librarian is included in the proposed budget, funded by reallocation of funds.

Director Struzziero noted that Town officials cautioned that alternative budgets would need to be prepared in the event the planned operating override is not approved. Officials also inquired about uses of State Aid received by the library. The Library's policy specifies that state aid should not be used to fund the normal operating budget. Director Struzziero was asked to recirculate the policy to the Trustees.

Temporary Space

Co-Chair Keohane reported that an update on temporary space planning would be presented at the October 23 Select Board meeting. Packing has begun, with the building to be closed to the public on November 22. Working with the OPM, an RFP has been issued for a moving company. Director Struzziero reported that he is still working on finding temporary space for young adult services. The staff is working to move and be up and running in the various temporary locations as quickly as possible after building closure.

The importance of realistic, timely, clear and concise communication about the move and temporary space, with a focus on patron-centered activities, was stressed by the Trustees.

Co-Chair Keohane noted that a celebration of the old building would be held on Saturday, November 18 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Co-Chair Keohane reported that the working groups for the Benton site and the Beech Street Center were about to kick-off. She mentioned that Town officials would be following up on traffic concerns at the Benton and that the floor load requirements at the Benton may impact the volume of books at the location and/or require remediation.

Building Project Update

Co-Chair Keohane reported that building demolition documents are expected to go out soon. Counsel is involved with review of demolition and construction documents. The move must be completed quickly as building demolition could begin before the end of the calendar year.

Co-Chair Keohane noted that additional fundraising moneys are scheduled to be transferred to the Town for the project in November and January. Short-term borrowing is likely in advance of the main borrowing for the Library project.

Co-Chair Keohane shared renderings and noted that interior design work is ongoing, with a desire for the space to be brighter and bolder than the current renderings.

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Co-Chair Keohane noted that the Belmont Library Foundation continues to do outreach for fundraising and sponsorship opportunities. Requests for satisfaction of remaining grant intentions have been sent and payments have started coming in. Additional grant opportunities are being explored. She noted that there is work to be done on the "wall for all".

Trustee Stearns reported that the Friends completed a successful final book sale at the current building. A Halloween costume event was scheduled for the end of the month. New Board members were elected at the October 10 meeting. Friends' annual membership letters will be going out soon. Trustee Stearns noted that the Friends were spearheading efforts to deal with the plantings on the current Library grounds.

Trustee Stearns also noted that the Friends were looking again at making museum passes available to non-residents in 2024 to increase usage and request the opinion of the Trustees.

Schools Update

Vice Chair Olmsted reported that the Library is sponsoring a team at the annual FBE (Foundation for Belmont Education) Run.

State Bills

Director Struzziero noted that there was a nationwide discussion going on about intellectual freedom. The MBLC (MA Board of Library Commissioners) is working collaboratively with legislators. Director Struzziero will keep the Trustees apprised of developments.

Next Meeting: November 16, 2023 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Vice Chair Olmsted moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, October 19, 2023
- Director's Report October 2023
- September 21, 2023 meeting minutes
- September 2023 Statistics
- Assistant Library Director position description
- Belmont Public Library Design Update