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DATE: February 21, 2024
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BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

January 25, 2024

Co-Chair Kathleen Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference through Zoom technology. Also attending were Co-Chair Elaine Alligood, Vice Chair Corinne Olmsted, Trustees Mark Carthy, Gail Mann and Mary Stearns, Library Director Peter Struzziero, and Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfendner.

Presentation by Ed Barker

Ed Barker, President of the Belmont Library Foundation, joined the meeting. His presentation included a history of the Belmont Library Foundation from its founding to the recent fundraising and support efforts in connection with the new building project. He discussed collaboration with the Friends of the Library. Co-Chair Keohane commended the Foundation's efforts and encouraged a continuing dialogue among the Trustees and the support organizations about future support for the Library and its programs and services.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the December 14, 2023 Trustees meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Co-Chair Alligood.

Library Operations Update

Director Struzziero reported that the move to the various temporary locations is now complete and that the relocation vendor has been excellent. He thanked everyone involved for their hard work on the move. Director Struzziero noted that the "keys" are scheduled to be turned over to the demolition contractor at the beginning of the week of January 29th. Director Struzziero noted that there would be a staff appreciation brunch on February 1 at the Town Hall.

Director Struzziero noted that most services, including technology services, are now operational in the temporary locations and that the Town's new phone system is being set up and should be operational shortly. He thanked the public for their patience. He referenced the need to accommodate competing demands for space, particularly with respect to programming.

In connection with ongoing services, Director Struzziero is working on publicizing the Library's Books on Wheels program, which is designed to service those patrons that are not able to access directly Library services in person or on-line, and he is working with the Chenery principal to promote the Library's programs and services to middle schoolers.

Director Struzziero reported that the Library's Facebook page is not operational and discussed plans to redo the page. Co-Chair Keohane requested an update on social media strategy at the next meeting.

Building Project Update

Co-Chair Keohane reported on the efforts in Town to remove and save the mural outside of the Children's Room. Given the weight of the mural the process of moving it and finding an appropriate place to store it is challenging and ongoing.

The Library Building Committee is obtaining a third cost estimate, after which construction documents will go out to bid in the February-March time frame. The new estimates will take into account new code requirements and design changes required to address these but no major reengineering is contemplated at this time. Fundraising is on track to meet commitments made to the Town. Co-Chair Keohane reported that all pledges scheduled for payment at the end of 2023 have been satisfied.

FY 2025 Budget Update

No significant updates to information previously provided. Town officials are focused on the override vote scheduled for April; a failed override will result in budget reductions (including a proposed new technology librarian) but the overall budget would remain within the MAR (municipal acquisition regulations). Director Struzziero reported on the mid-year FY 2024 budget run rate.

Key Topics

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Trustee Stearns reported that the Friends next meeting was scheduled for February 13th and that the organization was alternating between in-person and zoom meetings. She noted that the funds on hand at the close of the last fiscal year were in excess of budget but that the Friends were concerned about future revenue due to book sales being paused during construction of a new building. The Friends is planning an event for Chinese New Year. Trustee Stearns noted that the Friends has set up a subcommittee to review its charter and by-laws.

Schools Update

Vice Chair Olmsted and Director Struzziero reported that they spoke with the Chenery Middle School principal to collaborate on how best to advise families about YA (young adult) books and resources. Vice Chair Olmsted advised that the 2024-25 school year calendar has been set. She noted that she is scheduled to attend a School Committee meeting in February.

Next Meeting: February 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Co-Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, January 25, 2024
- Director's Report January 2024
- December 14, 2023 meeting minutes
- Belmont Public Library summary project schedule
- December 2023 statistics