

BELMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

February 15, 2024

DATE: March 28, 2024
TIME: 9:54 AM

Co-Chair Kathleen Keohane called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The meeting was held as a teleconference meeting through Zoom technology. Also attending were Co-Chair Elaine Alligood, Vice Chair Corinne Olmsted, Trustees Mark Carthy and Gail Mann, Library Director Peter Struzziero, Assistant Library Director Lauren Pfindner, staff member Grainne Griffin, and member of the public, Pamela DeLalla. Trustee Mary Stearns did not attend the meeting.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the January 25, 2024 Trustees meeting were approved unanimously on a motion made by Co-Chair Keohane and seconded by Co-Chair Alligood.

Library Directors Update

Director Struzziero referenced his Directors' Report furnished with the meeting materials.

He provided an update on the Library's efforts to create a new Facebook page, noting the importance of social media, that data from the previous inoperative page has been saved and that staff are working on driving engagement.

Director Struzziero summarized state aid spending for the fourth calendar quarter of 2023, noting that spending was minimal because much of the activity at the library during the quarter was focused on the move to temporary locations. In response to questions, he noted good community engagement with the children's story hour at the Benton location and that the staff will continue to promote this. The Trustees thanked Director Struzziero and the entire Library staff for their efforts in completing the move to temporary locations.

FY 2025 Budget Update

Co-Chair Keohane reviewed the budget submission previously approved by the Trustees, which reflects a 2.8% increase over the current year budget. She discussed proposed Town adjustments reflect likely scenarios for hiring timing and levels. Co-Chair Keohane noted that the proposed adjustments would affect the MAR (Municipal Appropriations Requirement) and Director Struzziero intervened with the Town to make sure the MAR is met. Co-Chair Keohane and Vice Chair Olmsted emphasized to the Town Administrator the importance of communication in this regard. Co-Chair Keohane also noted that the rules of engagement at the temporary locations have changed which may require adjustment of proposed budget line items. She also discussed longer-term budget issues for FY 2026 when the new building is completed as well as the impact of a potential negative vote on the operating override, stressing the importance of the budget satisfying the MAR and requirements for participation in the Minuteman network. On motion made by Trustee Carthy, seconded by Co-Chair Alligood, the Trustees voted unanimously to reaffirm the Library's original FY 2025 budget submission, taking into account recent changes proposed by the Town and patron expectations of programs and services.

Library Trust Accounts

Trustee Mann discussed the status of the Library's various trust and other accounts held by the Town in anticipation of moving a portion of the income earned on these funds in FY 2024 to expenditure accounts. Trustee Mann noted the increase in income earned on several of these accounts. The Trustees concurred with deferring specific action to move funds to the March or April meeting after Co-Chair Keohane and Trustee Mann meet with representatives of the Town Treasurer's office to review and confirm the status of the accounts and the Town's process for income allocation and tracking balances.

Building Project Update

Co-Chair Keohane reported that construction documents for the new library went out to bid and that a walk-through was scheduled. Abatement efforts at the existing building are complete and the demolition contractor is awaiting final permits and approvals to demolish the facility. Co-Chair Keohane noted that add alternate items were being tracked. The Library Building Committee expects to review bids and award the contract at its March 26 meeting. Co-Chair Keohane reported that to date, \$2.9 million dollars has been transferred to the Town for the project from fundraising proceeds and an additional \$300,000 is expected to be transferred in March. The Belmont Savings Bank Foundation is expected to satisfy its \$2 million grant intention after the construction contract is awarded.

Director Struzziero will send the Trustees the most recent OPM (owners project manager) report.

Key Topics

Tangible Gift Policy

Co-Chair Keohane requested that the Trustees review the Library's Tangible Gift Policy, consider whether any modifications are necessary, and be prepared for further discussion at the next meeting.

Friends/Library Foundation Update

Co-Chair Keohane presented Trustee Stearns' Friends update. She reported that the Friends membership drive met its targets. The Friends has new board members and its governing documents are under review. Pamela DeLalla noted that Ed Barker's (President of the Belmont Library Foundation) presentation to the Friends was well received and that the Friends would like to explore collaboration opportunities with the BLF. Co-Chair Keohane thanked the Friends for all it does for the Belmont Public Library.

Co-Chair Keohane reported that the Foundation was still encouraging donations and communicating about the project.

Schools Update

Vice Chair Olmsted reported that the February 13 School Committee was cancelled due to weather and that she and Assistant Director Pfendner planned to reschedule a Library update for a future School Committee meeting.

Other Business

The Trustees inquired about the staff's adjustment to the various temporary locations. Assistant Director Pfendner and Circulation Supervisor Griffin said everyone was settling in and the space configuration was evolving. Patrons have been understanding. Director Struzziero noted that department heads meet once a week and there is an all hands meeting scheduled monthly. The Trustees thanked the staff for all they've done to facilitate the transition.

Director Struzziero reported that he would be taking a medical leave in March. Assistant Director Pfendner will serve as Acting Director.

Next Meeting: March 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. (subject to change to accommodate Candidates' Night)

Adjourn

Co-Chair Keohane moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Mann seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail S. Mann, Secretary

Exhibits:

- Agenda, February 15, 2024
- Director's Report February 2024
- January 25, 2024 meeting minutes
- January 2024 statistics