

## BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

February 22, 2022, 7 PM

In-Person Meeting

- 1. Call to order of Board of Library Trustees Meeting.** Present: Jeff Billingham, Clare O'Connor, Nancy Gilbert, Joan Barry, April Jones Prince, Poornima Tekumalla, Chair Deb Lebeaux and Library Director Priya Rathnam. Absent with notice: AnneMarie Bird, Lisa Powers
- 2. Review and act to approve minutes of January 25th, 2022 meeting.** Minutes were reviewed and approved with no changes. A motion to approve was made by Nancy Gilbert, seconded by Clare O'Connor, and was unanimously approved.
- 3. Miscellaneous business (taken out of order to facilitate presenters).** Chair of the Community Preservation Committee Jason Molina and Planning Board CPC Representative Steve Boulay addressed the Trustees to solicit information on any CPC-related needs for the coming year or beyond. Possible issues the CPC could help address include preservation of the older (Howe) part of the building or preservation of artifacts, books, or other documents. Clare and Joan reported having gone through the Local History collection, including the Artemas Ward collection, with former Library Director Ellen Dolan. Several of those books need restoration work. Before the pandemic, there had been discussion of giving some or all of the Artemas Ward collection to the Artemas Ward House/Harvard. The Ward House is still closed due to Covid, but talks can resume when they reopen. Donating/sharing some books would create space for local historian Michael Perna's local history collection, which he would eventually like to donate as part of his estate.
- 4. Review and act to approve Director's report of activities of January 2022.** Despite reduced library hours in January due to the Omicron Covid surge, all Director's activities took place. Priya reported on the progress of hiring the Digital Services Librarian and Technology Specialist. For technology librarians, we tend to receive fewer applications than for Circulation, YA and Youth librarians, etc. The library received four applications for the Digital Services Librarian position; the leadership team interviewed all four candidates via Zoom and invited two of the four to in-person interviews at the library. Priya will have more news shortly about any offers extended and/or accepted. The library received six applications for the Technology Specialist position; the team interviewed five of them via Zoom and invited one to interview in person at the library. That candidate was offered the job but declined, so Priya will repost the position. A motion to approve the Director's report was made by Joan Barry, seconded by Jeff Billingham, and was unanimously approved.

- 5. Programs & Services: Director's report of programs and services offered in January.** As with the Director's activities, all events staff had planned took place virtually even though library hours were reduced.
  
- 6. Financial and Legislative: Review and act upon FY2022 YTD report.** Priya noted that spending was on track, with 78% of the budget used so far. She also reported that Town Manager Kevin Mizikar approved the library's enhanced budget request for FY2023, which included funding of a seasonal circulation aide, increased library page hours, and two teen aides. The latter will be especially helpful, given that 2-300 young people have been coming to the library after school on Fridays and on early release days, and keeping the situation under control with the usual 10 staff members in the building at a time can be a challenge. Students visit all parts of the library, sometimes running, riding the elevator, or throwing rocks in the children's courtyard. Last Friday, Shrewsbury police were called because middle schoolers were riding their bikes inside the building. The Board discussed its desire to continue welcoming youth to the library while also ensuring safety, accessibility, and comfort for all patrons. Ideas for ways to maintain safety and decorum included limiting the number of unaccompanied young people allowed in the building at a time, having them sign in, and asking the School Department and Sherwood and Oak middle school principals to relay expected library conduct to middle school students and parents.
  
- 7. Facility, Equipment and Grounds.** Nothing new to report.
  
- 8. Gifts and Grants.** Nothing new to report.
  
- 9. Personnel.** Priya reported on the status of hiring the Digital Services Librarian and the Technology Specialist during discussion of the Director's activities of January 2022, outlined above. Deb summarized the Board's Evaluation of the Library Director, thanking Priya for her steadfast service and expressing the Board's gratitude at having Priya as library director. The Board appreciates Priya's strong advocacy to keep the library open, providing services and maintaining normalcy as much as possible over the past two years of the pandemic. Board members also expressed admiration for the ways Priya has advocated for her staff, done what it takes to stay open, and repeatedly turned on a dime to address changing Covid regulations and circumstances. Amidst all this, she has helped our community generate conversation and dialogue around diversity. Deb also reported that the Board's Personnel subcommittee would like to revisit the process of the Evaluation of the Library Director next year to reflect a broader numerical evaluation than the current 1-4 system allows. The subcommittee would also like to solicit staff feedback in the future.

10. **Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation.** Nancy reported that the Foundation is soliciting statements of interest for new Board members to replace a recent vacancy. She said the Foundation Board had received one application, and Priya added that the library had just received an additional application. The Foundation Board will discuss and bring their recommendation to the Board of Trustees soon.
  
11. **Friends of the Library.** Nancy reported that the FOL had earned about \$50 so far via the Stop and Shop Giveback program this month and that more is expected before the promotion ends on 2/28. Deb encouraged Board members and the community to renew their Friends membership on an annual basis!
  
12. **Policies.** The Board reviewed the updated Collection Development Policy, which reflected changes resulting from 2020 Census data, changes to acquisition policy for the youth summer reading program, and the addition of the Library of Things. A motion to approve the 2022 Collection Development Policy was made by Nancy Gilbert, seconded by Poornima Tekumalla, and was unanimously approved.
  
13. **Next Trustees meeting: March 22, 2022. Finance Committee budget hearing: March 24, 2022 at 8:35 pm.** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Deb Lebeaux, seconded by Joan Barry, and was unanimously approved.

Submitted by Trustee April Jones Prince