

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting
December 5th, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Pappas at 6:36pm. The meeting was held in-person only at Gallo Nero restaurant in Peabody.

The roll call was taken:

Present

Peter Bakula
Stephanie Dallaire
Frances Gallugi
Don McAllister
Stephanie Najjar
Thomas Pappas
Anne Quinn
Richard Shruhan
Jennifer Smith
Ruth Titelbaum
Katrina Vassallo

Absent

Kate O'Brien

Assistant Library Director Alysa Hayden

Approval and Discussion of Minutes from Previous Meeting

There was a **MOTION** to accept the agenda of the meeting by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Smith.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Receipt of Communications

None.

Director's Report

Staffing

Interviews for Aide positions continue. If any Trustees know of anyone who would be a good candidate for a part-time Aide position, please refer them to Assistant Director Hayden.

Due to illness and time off requests, full staffing of all buildings has been a struggle over the past

month, and Director Merlin hopes to discuss the chronic understaffing issues, specifically the need for additional Librarian-level full time staff, when the FY24 budget process begins in the Spring.

Programs & Initiatives

The Main Library will once again host the Fall Semester Peabody High Art Show & Coffee House Musical Showcase on Friday, January 13th.

Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater has her hands full with a crowded and enthusiastic Teen Room daily after school, and is applying for grants to fund programming and food for the rest of the school year. She and Senior Children's Librarian Jenny Usovicz have applied for a Peabody Cultural Council grant funding mental health initiatives for children and teens, and will be applying for a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant to supplement this initiative.

Senior Children's Librarian Jenny Usovicz has planned additional Music and Movement programs with the CFCE, a series of early literacy programs with Little Groove for their Musical Baby Wiggle program, a Balloon Animal program scheduled for January 28th, and a Pajama Storytime on December 14th. Future plans for the Children's Department include adding the 1,000 Books before Kindergarten initiative to passive programming and literacy challenge, and adding a Book Bundles request form on the Children's website which include curated lists of books by librarians for educators and caregivers on a topic of their choice, bringing back a program that was popular when the Library was only open for curbsider in 2020/202.

The South Branch Library will be having Genealogy office hours starting in January with genealogist and Trustee Jennifer Smith. She will be providing one-on-one assistance for patrons researching their family history. The Attorney General's office will be providing a presentation on scam prevention for seniors which is tentatively scheduled for January 26th. The West Branch is preparing for its annual tax preparation sessions in conjunction with AARP, beginning late January.

2023 Legislative Breakfast

Assistant Director Hayden is a newly active member of the Massachusetts Library Association's Legislative Committee, having joined in the fall. The group's primary objective is to impress upon State and local legislatures the essential nature of Libraries to Massachusetts citizens. They achieve this by being involved in legislative communications among other Massachusetts Library groups (ex. MBLC), training MA libraries in advocating for themselves, sponsor Legislative Date at the State House in Boston and provide communication and support for Legislative Breakfasts. They also advocate for the annual state budget line items which fund the State Aid to Libraries program, regional library consortiums like NOBLE, the Mass Center for the Book & Talking Book Library, and the MBLC itself. For more information, their website is:

<https://www.masslib.org/committees/legislative>

Pursuant to the last group objective, AD Hayden has been outlining a plan for Peabody to host its own Legislative Breakfast with the group's assistance. The last time we hosted one was in 2016 and the last time one was hosted for the NOBLE network was in 2019 at the Danvers Library. Assistant Director Hayden sees this as a prime opportunity not only to impress upon our City and State Legislators the myriad ways the Peabody Institute Library is essential to its citizens but also to celebrate George Peabody and tie in how essential he felt libraries were to an educated, functioning society.

To that end, she has registered the Peabody Library for a Legislative Breakfast on Friday, February 17 as a unique way to celebrate the history of our library, the vision of our founder and the ways we are moving our library into the future to remain an essential part of our community. We hope that you all will be able to not only attend and celebrate George Peabody's birthday, but to spread the word about this unique opportunity to talk up the library to legislators and to thank our patrons for their support.

Audubons & Local History

The most recent batch of conserved Audubon prints was returned last month, and another group of 15 was picked up at the same time by Studio TKM Associates. Director Merlin and Studio TKM will be setting up a group tour of the studio in the Spring once conservation begins.

Senior Local History Librarian Catherine Badal and Director Merlin decided upon custom display furniture to order for the Main and West Branch buildings, so that the collection may be on display for more patrons to see. This furniture will be paid for with State Aid funding. Senior Librarian Badal has also written a history of the portrait of Queen Victoria, and we have purchased a display so that patrons may read about the Queen, and take home a postcard summarizing the history of the Queen, the vault, and their connection to George Peabody.

Budget

This month's budget is provided for your reference. Nothing is of concern.

Building & Grounds

The slow processes of requesting proposals for our Courtyard and for a fine arts appraisal continue, and Director Merlin hopes to have some final information by early January.

Policy

Assistant City Solicitor Lashway provided feedback to the proposed updates to the Safe Child Policy, and Director Merlin has provided copies of the final language for your review and discussion tonight, with the hopes that this policy may be approved this evening.

Last week, Director Merlin requested the approval of some changes to our Facilities Operation & Closing Policy. Trustee Quinn provided some very valuable feedback, so while Director Merlin's changes were approved via email vote, she would like to propose some additional changes, and ask for your final approval this evening.

There was a **MOTION** to receive the Director's Report by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dallaire.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports of the Committees and Sub-committees

Executive Committee:

President Pappas congratulated the Library for its resilience during the pandemic; in particular, the increase in Library use as evidenced by statistics reported by Assistant Director Hayden. President Pappas thanked Director Merlin, Assistant Director Hayden, and Library staff for their efforts. President Pappas discussed the affidavit regarding the robbery of the Audubon prints and suggested brainstorming the idea of painting Audubon prints as murals on city buildings. Trustee Najjar stated that the City has muralists. Discussion ensued regarding the attention this effort would bring to the Library and its collections.

Audubon:

Nothing to report.

Building and Grounds:

Nothing to report.

Personnel:

Nothing to report.

Policy and Procedures:

Nothing to report.

Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:

Trustee Najjar mentioned the poinsettia sale and reported that there are plants available for purchase. Statistics remain to be seen.

Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:

Nothing to report.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

There was a **MOTION** to ratify the use of the Library courtyard by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to accept policies regarding building opening vis-a-vis staffing and safety and closing procedures regarding the portrait of Queen Victoria by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Vassallo.

Trustee Titelbaum asked about staff who commute between branches; in particular, how will they get there if they do not, or cannot, have their own transportation. Director Merlin responded that the Library will assist such staff.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

There was a **MOTION** to approve safe child policy updates. The motion was seconded. Assistant Director Hayden reported that the first change before submission to the City's assistant solicitor was based on Trustee feedback. The Library does not provide childcare. While Staff are trained and expected to maintain the safety of patrons, we cannot supervise children. Other adjustments to the policy were based on further clarifying definitions. In the second paragraph, clarifying language regarding the term "caregiver" was added on the bottom of the first page. Library staff will be guided by this policy in situations included by not limited to situations outlined in a section about what to do if it is determined that a child is unattended. The instructions are also clarified so that staff members have guidelines and steps to follow, including contacting caregivers. If the caregiver cannot be reached and the Library is closing, staff will call the non-emergency police number. Staff will never take a child out of the building. In the case of a medical emergency, staff will contact emergency services and then contact the caregiver. In addition, children who have their own Library cards may borrow materials in accordance with borrowing rules. We do not censor as we are not a substitute for parental guidance. Trustee Najjar stated that sensitive policies such as this one carry much responsibility. Director Merlin stated that, in essence, the policy states that it is acceptable for a child to be alone in the Library barring certain circumstances; in other words, a child can be alone in the Library within reason. Unless the child is too young, or the Library is closing, or the child is behaving badly. Children have privacy as patrons. Director Merlin praised the Assistant Councilor for her understanding and Assistant Director Hayden for her composition of the policy. Other adjustments were minor, such as grammatical updates. Trustee Quinn asked how often such a situation would arise, and Assistant Director Hayden replied that while these are rare circumstances, sometimes a child will be left in the Library because a caregiver did not notice the time. There have been differences in opinion on the maturity of a child between the caregiver and Library staff. We must inform caregivers about unsafe behavior when we can. Director Merlin also discussed times in which teenagers were caregivers; this policy expands the language to include young people as caregivers. President Pappas asked if the Library had any age-related restrictions and Director Merlin replied in the negative.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution

The next meeting will be held on January 9th.

Trustee Quinn mentioned that topics introduced over email among Trustees must be discussed in person at the meeting.

There was a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by Trustee Bakula.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm.

Submitted by,
Sarah Boçi
Recording Secretary