

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting  
November 7th, 2022**

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The meeting was called to order by Trustee Frances Gallugi at 6:40pm, with PATV confirming presence at 6:29pm and quorum having been reached at 6:36pm. The meeting was held in the Sutton Room at the Peabody Institute Library, on Zoom, and broadcast live on PATV's television station. Trustee Gallugi cited open meeting laws, mentioning in particular the extended provisions.

The roll call was taken:

**Present**

Peter Bakula  
Frances Gallugi  
Don McAllister  
Kate O'Brien  
Anne Quinn  
Richard Shruhan  
Jennifer Smith  
Ruth Titelbaum  
Katrina Vassallo

**Absent**

Stephanie Dallaire  
Stephanie Najjar  
Thomas Pappas

**Approval and Discussion of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

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

All in Favor: Yes      Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

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**Receipt of Communications**

None.

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**Director's Report**

**Staffing**

Longtime evening custodian Dave Farley retired last month, and we will be posting his position soon.

Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater is working towards her contract-required Library Science master's degree, and Director Merlin requests this evening approval of tuition reimbursement for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, as well as pre-approval for the Fall 2022 semester.

**Programs & Initiatives**

The Library's last long-term strategic plan for fiscal years 2020-2024 ends on June 30, 2024. In order to begin to prepare the strategic plan for FY25-29, which will begin on July 1, 2024, work will begin in the Spring of 2023, and Assistant Director Al Hayden is reaching out to potential consultants to work with us on this project. More information will be coming soon.

The West Branch has been bustling with multiple events and programs, and every program has been almost completely booked in terms of registrations- patrons are excited to be doing in person events again. The Speed Reads collection recently expanded to the West Branch, and has been very popular, with circulation numbers that are almost half of the Main Library's. Storytimes are beginning at the West Branch this month.

Recurring programs for children at South Branch have started up again, with After School LEGOs every other Monday and Family Bingo every other Thursday. Ms. Sanfilippo's 3rd grade class from the South School have been visiting the Library regularly to check out books and many students from the Passos Avante preschool have signed up for library cards. Artist Don Hammontree has his work hanging in the library until December 3rd.

The Main Library Teen Department is busy after school, and both the Main and West Branch teen volunteer groups have large consistent attendance. The Main Library Children's Library is also bustling, with the addition of a weekly yoga class on Monday afternoons in addition to Tuesday mornings, the October Pumpkin Painting Party and Book or Treat Halloween event with Peabody Main Streets, where Children's staff gave out over 400 new books to children and teens. Baby, Toddler, and Preschool Storytimes have been very popular and busy.

At the Main Library, Professor Theo Theoharis has finished his fall lecture series, and will return in the Spring, to lead a new session on Shakespeare. Jeff Belanger, a New England storyteller, is coming to the Sutton Room tomorrow night to share scary stories from around the region, and event registration is full with over 50 people attending. Indigenous educator and activist Claudia Fox Tree will present a program about "Decolonizing Contributions by Indigenous People" at the Lynnfield Library on November 16th, in collaboration with Lynnfield and Beverly Libraries. Outreach at Brooksby Village continues to be very popular. New versions of the Browse page of our website (carousels of new and upcoming releases), and the Database website (with a better user experience and the addition of new databases including the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and others) are coming soon.

### **Audubons & Local History**

The most recent set of conserved Audubon prints will be returned to the Library this Thursday, November 10th, at 10am. The next batch of 15 prints will be picked up by Studio TKM Associates at the same time.

Director Merlin inquired as to the order of restoration, and Deborah LaCamera, Senior Paper Conservator at TKM, reports that,

“A group of works was treated at the Peabody Essex Museum before our studio took over the project. Those treatments were not in numerical order, nor were they all carried to completion. They may have been chosen on the basis of condition rather than numerical order. By 2000-2002, when our studio began the project the treatments proceeded in numerical order.”

Director Merlin has begun the process of reaching out to local fine arts auction houses to request quotes for a complete appraisal of the Library’s fine art and local history collection, so that the city fine arts insurance policy may be updated and fully cover all of our art and artifacts. Director Merlin will keep the Board updated on my progress.

### **Budget**

The current budget is unavailable due to our bookkeeper’s absence.

### **Building & Grounds**

Director Merlin continues to work with the City Security Supervisor Keith Bloom, getting quotes for upgrades to our security system. Director Merlin is, with the help of City Purchasing Agent Dan Doucette, finalizing the requests for proposals for Courtyard lighting and landscaping upgrades, and hopes to send out those requests to three landscaping companies soon. These are slow projects, but are beginning to take shape.

### **Policy**

At the suggestion of Trustee Smith regarding the Safe Child Policy, Trustee Vassallo, Assistant Director Hayden, and Director Merlin met with Assistant City Solicitor Liz Lashway, and she is reviewing this sensitive policy, based on both their trepidations and the concerns raised by the Trustees at our last meeting. Director Merlin wants to ensure that the Library is not only a safe space for all patrons, but that patrons will be appropriately responsible without putting responsibility on staff that are well out of their job description.

Once she has given feedback, Director Merlin will edit the policy and bring it to the Board for further discussion.

More policy updates are in the works and will be ready for discussion and approval at the December meeting, including the Meeting Room policy and Collection Development policies. This evening, Director Merlin is requesting one last update to the Computer Equipment policies, adding that while Chromebooks and Hotspots may be checked out by patrons ages 13 and up, the Library requires a parent/guardian signature at the time of Chromebook checkout due to the potential cost of replacing the item, and stating that both Chromebooks and Hotspots will be

remotely locked or disabled once they are one week overdue, which renders them essentially useless to anyone looking to keep the devices longer than permitted.

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**Discussion and Questions for the Director**

Regarding the need for a parent or guardian signature for Chromebook checkout for minors, Trustee Gallugi asked at what age such parent/guardian signatures would no longer be required. Director Merlin replied that the Library does not require parent/guardian signatures for checking out Chromebooks for patrons ages 18 and up. Director Merlin went on to clarify that this is a matter of liability due to the cost of the Chromebooks.

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

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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**Reports of the Committees and Sub-committees**

**Executive Committee:**

Nothing to report.

**Audubon:**

Nothing to report.

Trustee McAllister asked how many prints were left for maintenance and restoration. Director Merlin replied approximately one hundred. Director Merlin explained the state of organization in the Library vault. TKM will be at the Library on Thursday, November 10th and they will be present for print review. Trustee McAllister asked if TKM prioritized items most in need of restoration and Director Merlin replied no; the studio is attending to the prints in numerical order. The Peabody Essex Museum, however, attended to prints in order of need. TKM has never communicated with Director Merlin about a print (or prints) that is in particularly poor condition.

**Building and Grounds:**

Nothing to report.

Trustee Shruhan asked to see the contract and quote for the new security system. Director Merlin stated that the new security system would comprise new cameras that have zoom and pan capacity, new wiring, a replacement DVR recording system. The new system will enable Director Merlin to see security data remotely with a smartphone. Trustee Shruhan asked if the police could access the visuals and Director Merlin replied no; law enforcement can only access the data if there is a warrant. Director Merlin clarified that she, Assistant Director Alysa Hayden, and custodians will be able to access the data.

**Personnel:**

Nothing to report.

**Policy and Procedures:**

Nothing to report.

**Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:**

Nothing to report.

**Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:**

Trustee Quinn reported the following events:

**Thursday, November 10th** - a lecture by the curator of the New England Quilt Museum on Civil War era quilts.

**Saturday, November 11th** - crafts fair and apple bake; decorating the Felton House.

**Sunday, December 4th** - holiday event at the Felton House.

There was a **MOTION** to receive the reports of the committees and subcommittees by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Vassallo.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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### **Unfinished Business**

None.

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### **New Business**

There was a **MOTION** to assemble all Library Trustees at the Main Library on December 5th at 6pm for a photo in front of the Queen Victoria portrait in the Main Reading Room by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to hold a December meeting at Gallo Nero by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to approve tuition reimbursement for Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater by Trustee Vassallo. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Trustee Shruhan commended the Speed Reads feature, praising the improved availability of books and Director Merlin stated that they are looking to extend the feature to ebooks. Director Merlin went on to state that there will be improvements to the browsing page of the Library website ([peabodylibrary.org/browse](http://peabodylibrary.org/browse)) including rotating carousels and reporting features. Trustee McAllister praised Library administration and staff for their apt navigation of pandemic vicissitude. Director Merlin added that features instituted for public health safety (e.g., MeeScan stations, the Welcome Desk) have remained as they still benefit the patrons.

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### **Resolution**

The next meeting will be held on December 5th, 2022.

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There was a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Smith.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07pm.

Submitted by,  
Sarah Boçi  
Recording Secretary