

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting  
October 3rd, 2022**

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The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Pappas at 6:40pm, with PATV confirming presence at 6:31pm and quorum having been reached at 6:34pm. The meeting was held in the Trustees' Room at the Peabody Institute Library, on Zoom, and broadcast live on PATV's television station. President Pappas cited open meeting laws, mentioning in particular the extended provisions.

The roll call was taken:

**Present**

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

**Absent**

Stephanie Dallaire  
Frances Gallugi  
Kate O'Brien

*Alysa Hayden, Assistant Director of the Peabody Institute Library*

**Approval and Discussion of Agenda**

President Pappas inquired about an approval for the agenda; Director Merlin replied that it was not presently necessary. President Pappas tabled the discussion for another meeting.

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

There was a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Trustee Najjar after the Board paused to review. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister..

All in Favor: Yes      Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Before the meeting began, Trustee Shruhan asked if the Board would vote on the policies individually or as a whole. President Pappas posited that the policies would be discussed individually and voted as a whole, but that a discussion would take place during the meeting at the appropriate time.

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**Receipt of Communications**

None.

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## **Director's Report**

### **Staffing**

Part-time evening custodian Dave Farley will be retiring, effective October 29th. Director Merlin is in talks with Facilities Director Jim Hafey regarding posting his position, and our current custodians will cover his hours with the help of other Facilities staff for the time being.

Collective bargaining negotiations with the Peabody Federation of Teachers for Unit E (Library Staff) will begin later this month.

Due to Director Merlin's ongoing illness and staff workload, she made the decision to cancel this morning's All Staff Training. Director Merlin would like to reschedule this meeting for next month, and am requesting this evening that the Trustees approve the late 12pm opening of all 3 locations on Monday, November 14th, for an all-staff training from 9-11am.

Senior South Branch Librarian Amy Titus and Public Services Librarian Sharon Janus continue to take classes towards their respective required degrees. Tonight, Director Merlin is requesting the approval of tuition reimbursement for Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 classes, and pre-approval of tuition reimbursement for their Fall 2022 semester classes, as is required by their contract.

Senior West Branch Librarian Amory Thomas completed her MLS degree this summer. Director Merlin is requesting this evening the approval of tuition reimbursement for her Spring 2022 classes.

### **Programs & Initiatives**

Staff launched the Main Library's Speed Reads collection this summer, a collection of multiple copies of brand new titles that are available for immediate checkout, without having to wait for a hold to arrive. These titles are available for a one-week checkout period with no renewals, and are not holdable, so it encourages patrons to come to the Library in person to see what's available. Staff will also be launching smaller Speed Reads collections at the Branches this fall.

The Children's Library will once again participate in Peabody Main Street's Nightmare on Main Street on Thursday, October 20th, and will hand out candy and free books to children at "Book or Treat". The South and West Branches will also host Book or Treat events that same evening, and all are welcome!

The Children's & Teen Departments are jointly applying for Peabody Cultural Council and Mass Cultural Council grants in order to fund mental health initiatives for Peabody youth.

Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater has done many school outreach events already this school year, including at Higgins Middle School, Peabody High, and the Peabody Learning Academy at Northshore Mall. She checked out 184 books at Higgins and created over 600 cards for 6th graders, and checked out 75 books and created 191 cards at the High School. Teens are

excited to return to the Library this year, and there are large teen volunteer groups at both the Main Library and West Branch Library.

In order to make the West Branch Library's Teen area more welcoming to teens, and to give other patrons a quiet place for computer work, the West Branch will be undergoing some reorganization. Senior West Branch Librarian Amory Thomas will be moving the adult computers (that are currently in the middle of the Teen Area and not conducive to quiet adult work or to teen programming) to a new location near the quiet study tables, and will be adding three new computers to the teen area, as well as a new table and seating for teens.

This past month, the South Branch welcomed a third grade class from the South Elementary School to check out books, and Senior South Branch Librarian Amy Titus visited two Passos Avante Pre-K classes to talk about the Library and read stories. Trustee Jennifer Smith will host an Introduction to DNA in Genealogical Research class on Thursday, October 20th. A counselor from the SHINE Program will host an Introduction to Medicare program at the South Branch on Thursday, November 3rd.

Senior Local History Librarian Catherine Badal applied for and received a grant from the MBLC that funded a professional Preservation Assessment, performed in June by Elena Cordova, Contract Preservation Specialist at the NEDCC Northeast Document Conservation Center. After a day spent in the Sutton Room and our collections, Ms. Cordova put together a final assessment of the collection and its current state, including suggestions as to future preservation needs. Director Merlin has included today her Conclusions and Appendix A of the 50-page document, which summarizes suggested short, medium, and long term priorities. Director Merlin will send the full document to anyone who would like to read the entire text and assessment.

Senior Public Programming Librarian Gabriela Toth and Senior West Branch Librarian began hosting a monthly pop-up library at Brooksby Village in August, and it continues to be a great success, as they spread the word about Library services, create library cards, and bring books and resources for Brooksby residents to check out on the first Tuesday of the month. Crafting programs for adults continue to be popular, as do our concerts and upcoming lectures series with Professor Theo Theoharis.

### **Technology**

Last year, the MBLC launched a year-long program providing free T-mobile wifi hotspots to libraries for patron checkouts. This program just ended, and we saw all 20 of those hotspots, plus the 10 that the Library already lent out, checked out nearly constantly by patrons at all 3 locations. Therefore, with the ending of this program, and due to continued patron demand, we have added 20 hotspots to the 10 that the Library has always funded, and will permanently have 30 hotspots to lend- 20 at the Main Library, and 5 at each Branch. Senior Technology Yunan Guo negotiated with TMobile for a discounted cost, and the Library will be paying a total monthly fee of \$900 for service for all 30 hotspots. The hotspots themselves are free, and Tmobile also upgraded the original 10 hotspots to their newer technology.

The lending of hotspots and Chromebooks has proven to be incredibly popular, with nearly all of each checked out at all times. However, this also means that access to all patrons is somewhat

limited, as not included in the initial policies any limits on number of checkouts, or a delay in checking out a device directly after returning it. So, in this evening's policy updates, we seek to address this issue, and to ensure that all patrons have an equal opportunity to have access to this free technology.

Senior Technology Library Yunan Guo has also been busy replacing multiple computers in the Children's Library, Custodian Office, and Tech Services office, as well as upgrading network equipment at the Branches and setting up teen computers for the West Branch.

### **Audubons**

The 15 Audubon prints that were sent for conservation in March are nearly ready to be returned, and a new set of the next 15 prints will be picked up at the same time for conservation. Director Merlin will be requesting that the Foundation continue to fund part of the project, and will be spending the remainder of the Sawitsky Trust, and State Aid funds, on this next batch, as usual. As soon as Director Merlin receives Foundation approval, she will arrange a date for dropoff/pickup with Studio TKM and let the Board know in case anyone wants to join us, as it is an exciting process to see the recently conserved prints be returned, and to send off a new batch.

As of this batch to be returned, the Library, with the incredibly generous support of the Sawitsky Trust, Foundation, and State Aid funds, has conserved 326 of 432 prints (76%). With an approximate cost of \$1,000-\$1,500 per print (based on condition), at least \$315,000 has been put towards this project, with an estimated \$105,000 in costs remaining. The Audubons are conserved in the order of their plate numbers, not based on level of damage, so these costs are approximate and based on previous costs.

### **Budget**

Director Merlin has included the current budget; nothing is of concern at this time. She is completing the MBLC's required annual financial reporting this week, and anticipates no issues regarding full certification.

### **Building & Grounds**

Today, Director Merlin submitted Capital Improvement Project requests to the City for the next 5 years. These project are:

FY23- No request, as Director Merlin will be funding the first stage of our security system upgrades with State Aid funds. This first stage will include upgrades to the existing camera system at the Main Library (replacing current cameras, adding cameras to existing wiring, new DVR/server), as well as adding cameras at the Branches.

FY24- Further Upgrades to Main Library Camera/Security System- Director Merlin is requesting that the City spend roughly the same as we are on adding additional cameras at the Main Library, which will require extensive hard-wiring (i.e. in the Sutton Room, outside, etc).

FY25- New Phone System- our current system is over 30 years old, needs to be updated to VOIP so it is accessible from home and can connect between Branches.

FY26- New Carpets at the West Branch

FY27- New Carpets at the South Branch

These are all projects that had been requested by previous Director Robinson, so are consistent with previous needs.

### **Policy**

Assistant Director Hayden, Trustee Vassallo, and Director Merlin have begun a full review of all existing policies. With the guidance and input of Trustee Vassallo, we have eight policies tonight that are either completely re-written or updated, and Director Merlin is happy to explain the reasoning behind each change or update when we discuss New Business this evening. She is also requesting that the Trustees vote to approve each of these eight policies this evening.

### **ARIS & State Financial Reporting**

Director Merlin distributed tonight Assistant Director Al Hayden's summary of her ARIS (Annual Report & Information Statistics), including comparisons of the three past fiscal years:

FY2020: July 2019 - June 2020, closed entirely March-June

FY2021: July 2020 - June 2021, curbside only July-April, partly open April-June

FY2022: July 2021 - June 2022, partly open July-Aug, full open beginning September

Director Merlin invites you to read Assistant Director Hayden's incredibly thorough and fascinating summary and analysis of the past three years of data, as it all bodes well for us, both in terms of statistics and attendance. Assistant Director Hayden is attending this meeting remotely tonight, and will be happy to give a summary of her findings and answer any questions during New Business.

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### **Discussion and Questions for the Director**

President Pappas congratulated Senior West Branch Librarian Amory Thomas for completing her Master's Degree and reported positive feedback regarding Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater, stating that the Library does much for the community. The staff is active and engaged, pursuing grants and establishing programs. Assistant Director Alysa Hayden's report showed an increase in circulation after a decrease due to the pandemic. Trustee Smith is shepherding a genealogy program.

Trustee Shruhan commented that he enjoyed the detailed Audubon data. Director Merlin replied that said data is also helpful to her in learning more information about the status of the Audubon materials. President Pappas shared that he had thought that the Audubon prints were being restored in order of damage; instead, the prints are being restored in numerical order. Director Merlin shared that the last time the Audubon prints were collected, she and Senior Local History Librarian Catherine Badal struggled to remove the prints from the vault because of the precarious storage method. Senior Librarian Badal is developing a new storage system for the prints. Trustee Najjar asked if the Audubon Society had any storage recommendations and Director Merlin replied that map storage may be effective.

Trustee McAllister added that his understanding was that TKM were taking the most damaged prints first and that perhaps since there are fewer prints needing restoration now, that TKM can shift from numerical order to order of damage. Director Merlin replied that there was a range of damage to the prints; if they were to remove them in order of condition, it would result in more

handling than is safe for some materials. Trustee McAllister replied that TKM had originally reported that they would restore the prints in order of most- to least-damaged, but as long as the prints were getting restored, it was acceptable. Trustee Bakula asked Trustee McAllister about the timing of the Audubon restoration project. Since it started nearly twenty years ago and the prints are 75% completed, would previously restored prints not need further restoration? Trustee McAllister replied that TKM has discussed the issue with Library staff. Initially, the storage of the prints gave way to atmospheric risks, so present improved storage would maintain prints for longer.

Trustee Quinn asked if Library staff could meet the Trustees at a future all-staff training to encourage more personal interaction. Trustee McAllister suggested that the interpersonal knowledge could be helpful in the event that discipline is necessary. President Pappas asserted that discipline was not the role of the Board and that, when he goes to the Library, he introduces himself to the staff and thanks them for their work.

Trustee Najjar asked if patrons are responsible with the seven-day turnaround for the Speed Reads collection. Director Merlin replied that occasionally patrons will not respect the shortened loan time, but not enough to hinder the effort. Trustee Quinn asked what a Speed Read was and Director Merlin explained that it refers to popular works in the collection that are not holdable and have a shortened loan time. While the books are the same as those found in the stacks, the circulation process is different. It encourages more in-person Library use and a faster turnaround of materials.

Trustee Najjar asked whether the \$900/month bill for technology was paid out of collections. Director Merlin replied yes. While it is a significant sum, the Library has healthy collection funds which were moved to focus on popular, useful areas. A meeting was held with a Massachusetts Library Systems consultant who audited the collection, finding that, in the Main Library, most circulation is of Teen and Children's materials and the second and third floors (housing fiction and non-fiction, respectively) are largely storage with very little traffic. When the money is centered towards what circulates the most, or what is most needed, it allows the Library to spend said money on HotSpots, Speed Reads, and other such things that will be used consistently. The provided public access is worth the expense.

Trustee Najjar asked if the Children's Room at the West Branch had ever been redesigned. Director Merlin replied no. Trustee Najjar asked if money had been set aside for such a project, and Director Merlin reported that it was never spent. She hopes to get approval to replace the carpet in 2025, because replacing the carpet will yield the space for further restoration. Covid stalled progress, but the delay provided better timing to make whole, rather than piecemeal or random, restorations.

Trustee Bakula asked if Wi-Fi use and HotSpots were the same thing and Director Merlin replied that Assistant Director Hayden would discuss that.

Trustee McAllister suggested that Director Merlin formally thank Custodian David Farley for his years of service on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Director Merlin agreed.

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

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.

**Building and Grounds:**

Nothing to report.

**Personnel:**

Nothing to report.

**Policy and Procedures:**

Trustee Vassallo stated that Policy and Procedures reporting would be covered by Assistant Director Hayden in her presentation to the Board. She thanked Director Merlin and Assistant Director Hayden for their work.

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

Trustee Najjar had finished a meeting prior to the Board meeting with the Starry Starry Night events committee to discuss details of the event, which will take place on October 19th. The Foundation’s quarterly meeting will be on Tuesday, October 11th, at 5:30pm.

**Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:**

Trustee Quinn reported an exhibit about Peabody’s involvement in various wars which houses uniforms and artifacts, among other things. The Society is hosting an Open House on November 11th, Veterans’ day, and promoting the Open House at the Veterans’ Day breakfast hosted by the Mayor. The Society has established a database of Peabody women who served in the military which will be searchable through the Society’s website. Some entries date back to the American Civil War. The Society plans to solicit information from current veterans. On October 12th, historian and one-woman show Anne Barrett will host a lecture on Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton.

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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**

**George Peabody Medal**

Trustee Najjar reported that the high school has moved to a new administrative team. Trustee Najjar spoke with Stephanie Darley, of said administrative team, who completes the medal orders. The team was overwhelmed and had no bandwidth to discuss the medals. Trustee Najjar will reach out to Josten’s. Production of the medal hinges on its material; with the prohibitive price of gold, the medals will be mixed metal. President Pappas asked about lead time, and Trustee Najjar replied that the beginning of the school year is overwhelming for everybody, especially with a new principal and vice principal in office.

### New Business

There was a **MOTION** to change the resolution made on October 3rd by the Board to approve the Director's request for a staffing training session on November 14th that will result in a late opening of the Main Library and both branches by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to allow for the preapproval of tuition reimbursement Librarians Titus and Janus as their contract dictates by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to approve the request for tuition reimbursement for Librarian Thomas for Spring 2022 graduate classes by Trustee Vassallo. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

### Policies and Procedures

Assistant Director Hayden shared the ARIS (Annual Report Information Survey) statistics report. This is the third year she has completed ARIS statistics on behalf of the Library, but it is the first year the statistics have been meaningful due to the pandemic. Director Hayden completed a full workup of the data. Director Merlin provided relevant handouts prior to the meeting. Assistant Director Hayden called attention to the comparison between FY20 and FY22: although the Library was closed for three months during FY20, similar limitations occurred at the beginning of FY22.

Assistant Director does not believe the statistical increases seen in the report are a fluke; rather, they appear to be believable, substantial data. Circulation and usage have increased dramatically. Overall collection, which includes books, DVD's, Library of Things, HotSpots, Chromebooks, etc. increased 18%. Those numbers had previously decreased. These data indicate the efforts and wise budget use of staff who work in collection development. Database usage increased 88%, which Assistant Director Hayden found astonishing. Our databases tend to go unknown by most patrons, but Hoopla, Kanopy, etc. are widely used, often because the staff use them and promote them individually. The increase in database usage also shows that patrons are getting more from the Library website.

Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin have a plan to further promote Library databases. Ebook use increased 34% as more people used digital media during the pandemic when not all physical media was accessible. Ebook use is another way to reach out to younger patrons and create lifelong readers. Collection usage, which comprises circulation numbers and database usage, increased 26%. WiFi sessions increased nearly four times; these are listed as physical items under collections and means that patrons are logging on to Library WiFi on their own devices. Assistant Director Hayden does not believe that staff WiFi use is included in this data.



This use of Library WiFi on personal devices indicates that the Library is being used as a space to study or work. This data can inform how we redesign Library spaces.

Website hits did not increase from 2020-2021 during closures, but they have increased nearly 50% from 2020 to 2022 which indicates that the more in-person Library use, the more hits the website will get. The website is effectively a digital branch, as patrons are placing holds, registering for programs, and using the website as a portal. Director Merlin and Assistant Director Hayden work constantly with staff to ensure the website is up-to-date. The takeaway is that not only has the Library recovered from the pandemic, people are coming back to it more out of necessity or desire or possibly both. These data can inform long-term planning.

President Pappas commented that the inclusion of both percentages and statistically significant numbers was very interesting. He asked whether Assistant Director Hayden had developed this format and if other Libraries conduct similar reporting. Assistant Director Hayden responded that it is possible, although she does not know. She had developed the report to be a more digestible presentation of ARIS data. President Pappas said that Assistant Director Hayden's work is precisely what he envisioned when he had asked for library statistics.

Trustee Najjar asked whether Assistant Director Hayden's complete report went to the MBLC. Director Merlin replied no; the State has an online form for such data and that Assistant Director Hayden created this report for the Board. Trustee Najjar asked if the information could be presented to state counselors at budget discussions and praised the Library's recovery from the pandemic. Trustee Najjar congratulated Assistant Director Hayden on her report.

Assistant Director Hayden will recalculate the data found on the ROI (Return on Investment) posters found at the Library. She reported that she is happy to share the data she curates.

Trustee McAllister commended the work and went on to say that patrons have discovered the many ways they need the Library, and perhaps the pandemic made them discover everything the Library has to offer. Director Merlin revealed that that was going to be the focus of the All-Staff meeting.

President Pappas suggested that the third floor could house servers for the databases. Director Merlin replied that non-fiction is heavily weeded. The fiction stacks will be moved to the Old Building on the third floor, so that the third floor will be fiction and nonfiction and the second floor will be programming space. There are too many books and not enough space which is problematic for a programming library such as ours. While the West and South branches are reading libraries, the Main Library is a programming library. After renovations, the second floor will have new hallways, glass doors and dividers to change the space as needed.

While circulation is increasing, it is mostly new material, Teen's, and Children's collections. The materials on the second and third floors are not circulated as much. Trustee Najjar asked if circulation numbers indicated print books. Assistant Director Hayden replied that Children's and Teen's materials circulate often, as did adult materials, but audiobook statistics increased dramatically because the collection had been extensively weeded. Counterintuitively, circulation increases when there are fewer books because patrons are better able to browse efficiently. The

weeding project planned by Director Merlin will increase circulation statistics.

Director Merlin added that it is important to remember that the Library is not a “last resort” – we are part of a greater local and statewide network. Eliminating a print book makes room for another, and those books will still be available to patrons from other libraries. Weeding does not mean gone forever, Director Merlin stated; rather, it means using the space differently. Trustee Najjar was happy to hear that people still check out print books. Director Merlin promised more information from the consultant. There is a report that can be run to investigate what in the collection is actually being used. The goal for any collection is high turnover checkout. This is a large-scale, involved project, which is why we are not moving forward with second floor renovations. A balance must be found between weeding effectively and weeding excessively.

### **Policy and Procedures**

There are six new Policy and Procedures items.

1. Museum Passes
  - a. Patrons may check out one pass per institution per week. This restriction was implemented to prevent patrons monopolizing passes.
2. After-hours dropoff containers
  - a. Patrons may drop items in the bins at all three branches twenty-four hours a day. “Circulation desk” changed to “Public Services Desk”. Chromebooks, HotSpots, and Library of Things items must be circulated at the Public Service Desk and may not be deposited in bins after hours. Staff will inspect items at checkout and checkin.
  - b. Trustee Najjar asked how this would be enforced because patrons may drop Library of Things in bins. Director Merlin replied that the terms were in the lending agreement that patrons must sign when they check out a Library of Things item. Trustee Shruhan questioned whether Things would fit into the bins and Director Merlin replied that some Things would. Trustee Bakula asked about a penalty for returning an item in a bin that needed desk circulation and Director Merlin replied that borrowing privileges would be revoked in dire circumstances.
3. Material circulation policy
  - a. Limitations on audiobooks were removed. Children’s checkout limitations were scrapped; if a patron is abusing the collection, staff will talk to them. It is inappropriate to establish limitations for one age group. DVD limitations were adjusted to five new DVD’s and ten old DVD’s at the Main Library, and four new DVD’s and six old DVD’s at the branches. Video circulation has decreased due to streaming services. Wonderbooks, books in the Children’s Library that come with an audiobook and make sounds indicating time to turn the page, are \$60 apiece so they are limited to five checkouts per card with no renewals. President Pappas asked if Wonderbooks were durable and Director Merlin replied that we have not seen any issues yet. SpeedReads may be checked out at five per card per week. Previously, Chromebooks could be checked out for two weeks and HotSpots got one renewal, but patrons would check them in and check them back out immediately, thus monopolizing the items and access. Now, Chromebooks may be checked out for two weeks with no renewals and one checkout per month. Library of Things items may be checked out at five items per card for two weeks with no

renewals, one reservation per item per month. Patrons are encouraged to pay all bills online.

- i. President Pappas questioned fines and Director Merlin confirmed that they were for loss or damaged items. At six weeks overdue, the Library bills for the item. When a patron is billed for an item, they are blocked from borrowing until they pay or return the item. President Pappas asked if we do not earn money from fines, and Director Merlin confirmed that we do not. Fines did not inspire cooperation so they were scrapped in Peabody. The fines mentioned herein are fines for other libraries. Only three NOBLE libraries charge fines.
- ii. Trustee Quinn asked how the amount is determined for a lost or damaged item and Director Merlin replied that it was determined by replacement cost.

#### 4. Safe Child Policy

- a. Assistant Director Hayden stated that Library staff cannot and may not provide child care. Patrons must understand that it is our aim to create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for all families of all ages; however, patrons occasionally expect librarians to watch over their child specifically. Since the Library views a child with their own card as a patron of the same standing as any other, they are responsible to act appropriately. We must let caregivers know that these expectations exist. We are not responsible for ensuring a child acts appropriately. The Library is a public building and so children must be safeguarded by their caregivers. Staff and caregivers must know what to do if a child is left unattended.
  - i. Trustee Najjar asked about defining childhood in terms of age. Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin replied that such a distinction is at the discretion of the caregiver. Trustee Najjar asked if children are often left without supervision. Recording Secretary Boçi confirmed that children and teens are often left to their own devices in the Libraries for extended periods of time.
  - ii. Trustee Quinn reported that, while she was going through the downstairs exist, she saw an unattended little boy and a little girl. There was an adult in the stacks, but Trustee Quinn was unable to determine if the adult was responsible for the children in question. Director Merlin reported that in such a case, staff are trained to keep an eye on the children and make sure they are safe.
  - iii. Trustee Najjar expressed appreciation for the vestibule at the Children's Room because it enables librarians to see what adults enter and exit with the children. She then asked if these policies were available in multiple languages, to which Director Merlin replied that it was certainly possible.
  - iv. Trustee Quinn asked about children leaving with other adults. Director Merlin stated that librarians have no say in who leaves or enters the library with a child and cannot prevent an adult and child from interacting except in extreme circumstances. President Pappas questioned the language in the policy, suggesting that the wording be changed to indicate that staff do not hold power in such situations rather than implying that there is no will to protect children. Trustee Najjar pointed out that the Library is like any

other public place in which others cannot interfere if they see something uncomfortable. Director Merlin replied that the policies also protect staff in case of an emergency or dire situation. President Pappas asked if this policy could be further examined and Assistant Director Hayden replied yes; that she had found the Stranger Danger idea from Boston Public Library's policies.

- v. Trustee Najjar pointed out that we cannot determine who is an appropriate chaperone and cannot prevent an inappropriate chaperone's interactions. Director Merlin promised an update later in the week. Trustee Smith stated that attorneys should examine these policies. Trustee Titelbaum asked how the policy covered adults with special needs, to which Director Merlin replied that once someone reaches the age of majority, they are treated as an adult. It is not the Library's place to determine special needs. Determining who needs extra help or protection becomes too complicated for staff to be reasonably expected to handle on day-to-day transactions. President Pappas suggested reaching out to Boston for feedback and guidance on policies. Trustee Najjar asked if there was a legal age that children could not be left unattended.

#### 5. Patron rights and responsibilities

- a. This is a combination of five previous outdated policies. It comprises reasonable behavior, what patrons may expect from the Library, what the Library can expect of patrons, etc.
  - i. President Pappas mentioned sound levels and that Libraries should be quiet, which Director Merlin refuted. All appropriate uses of the Library are valid; for example, a teen playing a computer game and an adult doing work are both valid and appropriate uses of the Library's resources.
  - ii. Patrons' expectations of the Library is an important part of the policy because it was not previously included. It is there to protect patrons from inappropriate staff behavior, as we are responsible for good customer service. It explains guidelines for situations that may escalate.
  - iii. Trustee Quinn asked about protection and safety of the staff and Assistant Director Hayden said that although such language is included, it could be put in the forefront. Director Merlin replied that it is reasonable to include for the protection of staff and facilities and patrons as well. Staff, as well as patrons, deserve safety.
  - iv. President Pappas questioned the omission of marijuana in the guideline that patrons will not smoke, drink, or use drugs on Library property.
  - v. Trustee Quinn questioned the item on the third page, third paragraph of placing items in hands of someone other than the borrower. Trustee Bakula clarified that this means leaving items unattended and Trustee Vassallo stated that whether the item was left unattended at home or in public was immaterial. Assistant Director Hayden asserted that an item left unattended at home was not unattended because it was in a safe space. The Library encourages patrons not to leave any belongings or items unattended if they go elsewhere.
  - vi. Trustee Najjar asked if we allow food and drink in the library; we do.

- vii. President Pappas asked if patrons could vape and enter the library and Director Merlin replied that as long as a patron is behaving appropriately, nothing can be done as long as the substances were not consumed on library property. Patrons often enter the library intoxicated, but if their behavior is safe for themselves and others, staff may not take action.
6. Computer Equipment Policy
- a. This policy replaces Chromebook policy. WE now have policies for Chromebooks as well as HotSpots because the items require lending agreements. The information is largely the same but for language about patron access, limits, etc. Computers are checked out as a kit. Staff will note the physical state of all included items and the patrons sign and acknowledge the agreement. The items are checked again upon return.
  - b. Trustee Quinn asked what a HotSpot was, to which Director Merlin replied that it is a portable device that provides wireless access.
  - c. Trustee Najjar asked if reading this policy was necessary for signing the Chromebook lending agreement and Director Merlin replied yes.

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There was a **MOTION** to accept the updated policies by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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**Resolution**

The next meeting will be held on November 7th, 2022.

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

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Submitted by,  
Sarah Boçi  
Recording Secretary