

PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of Meeting
February 13th, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Kate O'Brien at 6:32pm, with PATV confirming presence at 6:31pm and quorum having been reached at 6:23pm. The meeting was held in the Sutton Room at the Peabody Institute Library, on Zoom, and broadcast live on PATV's television station. President O'Brien cited open meeting laws, mentioning in particular the extended provisions.

The roll call was taken:

Present

Peter Bakula
Don McAllister
Stephanie Najjar
Kate O'Brien
Thomas Pappas
Anne Quinn
Richard Shruhan
Jennifer Smith
Ruth Titelbaum
Katrina Vassallo

Absent

Stephanie Dallaire
Frances Gallugi

Approval and Discussion of Minutes from Previous Meeting

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

Trustee Quinn had supplied small edits to Library Director Merlin, who adjusted the draft accordingly.

Director's Report

Staffing

Four new part-time Aides have begun over the past few weeks, and the Library is now fully staffed (knock on wood)! Director Merlin is in talks with the City regarding the hours to post for the currently vacant part-time evening custodian position, and is continuing union contract negotiations this Thursday.

Building

The West Branch roof was repaired yet again, and we await the next rain storm to see if these repairs have worked. Some carpet that had been water damaged at the West was replaced.

All lighting fixtures (90) at the South Branch are now obsolete, as the light bulbs needed are no longer manufactured and therefore not replaceable. The City Facilities Department has been working with a local lighting company on a discounted quote to replace all fixtures with new LED fixtures and bulbs, and Director Merlin received a quote for \$6,000 to replace all 90 fixtures, with labor being provided at no charge by City Facilities Staff. Director Merlin is incredibly grateful for the partnership with the Facilities Department, as this work would be incredibly expensive if the Library had to hire an outside contractor, and will be moving forward with this project.

Programs & Initiatives

Please mark your calendars for this coming Friday, February 17th at 8am, as the PIL hosts the region's annual MBLC Legislative Breakfast, which will be attended by local politicians, MBLC staff members, local library staff, and library advocates. This is the chance for libraries and their advocates to make the case for increased funding for other state budget line items such as State Aid, and is a perfect opportunity to show off what the PIL's state aid goes towards- the Audubons, collections, and local history. Breakfast will be catered by Breaking Grounds and sponsored by NOBLE and the PIL Foundation.

The monthly pop up library at Brooksby Village run by Senior Adult Programming Librarian Gabi Toth and Senior West Branch Librarian Amory Thomas is popular and has expanded to three hours for each visit, checking out books, delivering holds, and providing tech help.

Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater visited the Peabody Learning Academy at North Shore Mall School last week, and will be visiting Higgins Middle School next week. She has a consistent and regular schedule of school visits, and Director Merlin commends her commitment to sharing resources with the schools.

The Main and West teen volunteer groups are incredibly successful, and there is a need for a second day or increased opportunities at the Main. There is also a new coding club in partnership with the Creativity Lab, and teen after school yoga will begin in March.

Senior Children's Librarian Jenny Usovicz reports successful programs with Little Groove: Baby Wiggle and Jonah Twists Balloon Animal Workshop. The monthly pajama story time has been going well, and she is working on Family Literacy Take-home Kits funded by a grant from the Mass Center of the Book.

Senior West Branch Librarian Amory Thomas and Senior Children's Librarian Usovicz are adding more Children's programming at the West Branch, and thus far, demand is higher than it was prior to COVID. Director Merlin plans on requesting the addition of a full time Children's Librarian for the West Branch in next year's budget, as there is clearly a need at the West, and it would benefit the Children's Department at the Main as well, as Senior Librarian Usovicz could focus on one location.

The South Branch Library will be holding a Community Puzzle Swap on Saturday, March 4th from 9-12. The preschool class from Little Angels Early Education Center on Lynn St. will be visiting this month as part of their curriculum on "community helpers." The art of Ruth Ann Mowder, founder and president of the Peabody Art Association, is on display until April 5th.

Senior Technology Librarian Yunan Guo has finished setting up the large-scale scanner at the Main Library. It will be available to the public once the city electrician installs the electrical outlet at the location where it will be located. She also recently replaced a public computer at the West Branch, replaced the public printer in the Children's room, added a printer in the Teen/Children's Office, and will be replacing the public printer at the Main Public Services Desk.

Audubons & Local History

Senior Local History Librarian Catherine Badal and Director Merlin will share recent interesting discoveries about George Peabody with the Peabody Rotary Club on Thursday morning, and Senior Librarian Badal will also have some artifacts available for viewing at the Legislative Breakfast on Friday morning.

Director Merlin is getting two more quotes for an appraisal of the PIL's art and artifacts, since the collection is large and varied, and the price Director Merlin was quoted requires three bids.

Budget

The current budget is provided; nothing is of concern. Director Merlin expects to receive information from the City regarding putting together next year's budget request in the next few weeks, and will keep the Board updated.

Policy

Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin continue to work with the Asst. City Solicitor regarding the Meeting Room Policy, so meeting room reservations are paused for the moment. At the March meeting, Director Merlin will have an updated Meeting Room policy for your approval, as well as four other smaller policies to complete the policy review for the year.

Discussion and Questions for the Director

Trustee Najjar asked why policy editing and adjustment required a city solicitor, to which Director Merlin replied that library meeting room policies are not cut and dry and are more restrictive than is allowed by the First Amendment. Libraries are not obligated under the First Amendment to allow outside groups to use their spaces, but if their spaces are open to the public, there can be no restrictions as to who can use them based on content or viewpoint; additionally, the Library would be required to post any relevant flyers. The Library may not refuse any particular group unless they are actively breaking Library policy. The city solicitor's advice will help clarify policy language in these matters.

Trustee Shruhan asked when new lights would be put into the South Branch. Director Merlin replied that Custodian Sean Meagher intended to replace the lights, but could not find any since those lights are now obsolete. The Facilities Department did not have any such lights, either. Trustee Pappas asked if we could control the temperature of the lights so they would not be too harsh because some of the public lighting can go up to 5000 watts, which is too high. Director Merlin and Trustee Pappas went on to discuss puzzle swaps. Trustee Shruhan commented that the new lights were inexpensive and that lights would not be installed with any haste as Facilities has many tasks. Director Merlin commented that lighting is one of her long-term goals. The West Branch also needs to change to LED lights, but that will be a more complicated job as the lighting at the West is recessed. The Main Library had a lighting upgrade in 2013 with CFL lights, not LED's. The lights are not extremely bright, as is seen in the Sutton Room. Completing smaller lighting projects first (e.g., the lighting at the West and South branches) will give an idea of time and expense. Trustee Shruhan acknowledged that that would save the City money and suggested that Facilities could look into whether there is a recommended light for public spaces.

There was a **MOTION** to approve the Director's report by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports of the Committees and Sub-committees**Executive Committee:**

Nothing to report.

Audubon:

Nothing to report.

Building and Grounds:

Trustee Shruhan asked if the South Branch roof was leaking, as there were still drop buckets present, and Director Merlin clarified that the leaks occurred at the West Branch. Trustee Shruhan asked if the roof was being patched and Director Merlin replied yes, piecemeal. The Facilities Department is monitoring repairs. Trustee Bakula asked if there had been any thought to redesigning the roof at the West, and Director Merlin replied no, due to the pitched-roof

design.

Personnel:

Nothing to report.

Policy and Procedures:

Nothing to report.

Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:

Trustee Najjar reported that the Foundation had held a meeting at 5:30pm to discuss the Birds and Bubbly event on April 28th at 6pm. They would like John Sibley to speak, but the cost is prohibitive. They would also like TKM to attend and discuss the restoration process.

Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:

The Society sent out their annual report. They have a program called Postcards of Peabody's Past, in which participants receive emails with postcards related to a particular topic of Peabody's past. Society staff filled 74 research requests, and 494 items were accessioned. They held a series of lectures with help from the Peabody Cultural Council. 95 events were held at the Smith Farm including 84 weddings. The next event will be a lecture by genealogist Anne Lawthers on February 26th at the Smith Barn. 2025 will be the sesquicentennial of the Revolutionary War; Trustee Quinn hopes the Library Archives and the Historical Society can coordinate to commemorate the date.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Policies proceed apace.

Resolution

The next meeting will be held on March 6th at 6:30pm

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52pm.

Submitted by,
Sarah Boçi

Recording Secretary