

PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of Meeting
January 4th, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Pappas at 6:33pm, with PATV confirming presence at 6:31pm and quorum having been reached at 6:27pm. The meeting was held in the Sutton Room at the Peabody Institute Library, on Zoom, and broadcast live on PATV's television station. President Pappa's cited open meeting laws, mentioning in particular the extended provisions.

The roll call was taken:

Present

Peter Bakula
Frances Gallugi
Don McAllister
Stephanie Najjar
Kate O'Brien
Thomas Pappas
Anne Quinn
Richard Shruhan
Ruth Titelbaum

Absent

Stephanie Dallaire
Jennifer Smith
Katrina Vassallo

Approval and Discussion of Minutes from Previous Meeting

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to suspend meeting rules for Recording Secretary Boçi to facilitate elections for the offices of President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Board of Trustees made by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to disregard choosing seating number order from the 2022 election and keep the voting order made by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gallugi.

All in favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to nominate Kate O'Brien for President of the Board of Trustees by President Pappas. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

There was a **MOTION** to nominate Frances Gallugi as Secretary of the Board of Trustees by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by President Pappas.

There was a **MOTION** to nominate Peter Bakula as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by President Pappas.

The results of the elections are as follows:

President:	Kate O'Brien
Treasurer:	Peter Bakula
Secretary:	Frances Gallugi

All votes were unanimous and all nominees accepted their positions. Liaisons to the committees and subcommittees remain unchanged.

There was a **MOTION** to close the election by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a **MOTION** to restart broadcasting by President O'Brien. The motion was seconded by Trustee Pappas.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Receipt of Communication

None.

Director's Report

Staffing

Staffing is at a minimum level currently, with absences due to vacations, holidays, and many illnesses. Due to this combination of circumstances, Director Merlin made the decision, along with President Pappas, that the Library was not able to open the South Branch Library on Saturday 12/24 and Saturday 12/31, as there were simply not enough staff present to safely open all three buildings at our minimum staffing levels. Last minute illnesses combined with holiday season time off made it impossible to find last-minute coverage, so the Library was faced with this hard decision. Director Merlin decided to close the South Branch both times due to its location, in that patrons would have an easier time traveling to the Main from the South, than to the Main from West Peabody. Director Merlin apologized to all patrons for this inconvenience, and truly believes that this will not be a problem going forward, as illnesses are seasonal as are so many vacations at once.

Union negotiations begin next Thursday, January 12th, and Director Merlin will be discussing with the Union and City the Library staffing situation, and will be revisiting minimum staffing levels so as to stop low-staffing closures from ever happening again, as it is simply unacceptable to not provide consistent patron access to our services.

Two new part-time Aides begin next week, and the Library will be posting the position of evening custodian soon.

Programs & Initiatives

The Main Library will once again host the Fall Semester Peabody High Art Show & Coffee House Musical Showcase on Friday, January 13th from 6-7:30pm, featuring art on the first floor and music in the Sutton Room.

Please mark your calendars for the morning of Friday, February 17th at 8am, as the Library 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 state aid goes towards- the Audubons, the collections, and the local history. Breakfast will be catered by Breaking Grounds, and Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin are beginning the planning and invitation process this week.

Individual tax preparation help appointments at the West Branch Library with AARP volunteers will begin on February 6th, with sign ups beginning on January 23rd. Patrons will need to call or come into the West Branch to sign up ahead of time, as these usually fill up within a matter of days.

The Children's Library will be welcoming three new programs coming in January: Jonah Twists (balloon animal workshop class) and Baby Wiggle by Little Groove, an early literacy program featuring singing, dancing, and getting little ones to use instruments. CFCE Music and Movement Program remains popular, as does monthly Pajama Storytime led by Senior Children's librarian Jenny Usovicz, and a new beginning sewing program.

Senior Children's Librarian Jenny Usovicz and Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater received a Peabody Cultural Council grant of \$1,900, for programming focused on mental health and well-being for children, teens, and families. Programming using the grant funds will begin in the Spring.

Senior Teen Librarian Allison Bridgewater also received a \$1,000 grant from the Massachusetts Library Initiatives for Teens and Tweens organization, to use for Teen programming during the spring and summer.

Audubons & Local History

Senior Local History Librarian Catherine Badal and Director Merlin, with the help of custodians Sean Meagher and Jeff Spencer, upgraded Vault storage for the Audubon prints and installed new temperature and humidity monitors. They will conduct a survey of the prints before the next Studio TKM pickup sometime in late Spring.

On the bottom shelves of the old vault storage, Director Merlin and Senior Librarian Badal discovered massive folios donated by Eliza Sutton and are getting professional advice on how to proceed with them. The folios are bound maps of Egypt that were surveyed during Napoleon's campaign there in the late 1700s, and printed in 1809. These are even older than the 1820-30s Audubon prints, and appear to have been heavily browsed by the Suttons, based on the fingerprints present on the corners of the pages. The folios have not been preserved well, are not in good shape, and also do not appear to have much monetary value, but are very impressive, and they hope to be able to preserve them enough to be viewed by the public.

Director Merlin has begun speaking with the Winston Art Group in Boston regarding the valuation and appraisal of the fine arts and historical collection here, and hopes to have an idea of cost and timeline as soon as this Friday. Director Merlin is also embarking on a long-awaited examination of the Queen and other items in the vault, including replacing the plexiglass and cleanings of the objects, and Director Merlin plans on seeking Community Preservation funds for this project, as she feels it is a perfect fit for their goals.

Budget

This month's budget is provided for your reference. Nothing is of concern. Director Merlin is requesting this evening the approval of allocations for FY23 MBLC State Aid grant funds. In

very positive news, the State budget line item for State Aid was increased again this year, so the award has gone up as well. The Library received full MBLC certification in December and the first payment of \$55,605 was received this week. The second payment will be received in the Spring, and is anticipated to be roughly the same as the first, for an anticipated total of \$110,000.

Please note that as State Aid awards always arrive half way through the FY that they are meant for, Director Merlin noted below the FY awards and that those funds are actually spent during that FY's calendar year- so, FY23 funds will be spend during this current 2023 calendar year, and FY22 funds, received beginning Dec. 2021, were spent during the past 2022 calendar year.

Proposed Allocations and Changes:

1. Shifting funds out of the Utilities line item since the Library has not spent any funds from that item in years
2. Shifting some funds out of the Audubon line items which leaves approximately 3 years of funding still set aside that can be added to with future State Aid grants
3. Requesting the approval of a new Professional Development line item that will fund conferences, trainings, and workshops for staff.

Category	FY22 Allocations	FY22 Total Budget	FY22 Expenses (2022 Calendar Year)	Total Remaining	Proposed FY23 Allocations (spent 2023 Calendar Year)	Proposed FY23 Total Budget	% of Total
Utilities	\$2,000	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000	-\$15,000	\$3,000	2%
Operating	\$3,000	\$28,000	\$33,520	-\$5,520	\$25,000	\$19,480	11%
Books & Materials	\$15,000	\$17,000	\$34,233	-\$17,233	\$50,000	\$32,767	19%
Audubons	\$15,000	\$42,000	\$3,140	\$38,860	-\$10,000	\$28,860	17%
Programs	\$5,000	\$35,000	\$20,441	\$14,559	\$20,000	\$34,559	20%
Building & Grounds	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$28,604	\$16,396	\$20,000	\$36,396	21%
Public Technology	\$10,000	\$19,000	\$23,522	-\$4,522	\$20,000	\$15,478	9%
new Professional Development					\$5,000	\$5,000	3%
TOTAL	\$95,000	\$204,000	\$143,460	\$60,540	\$110,000	\$170,540	100%

You will notice that a few line items were overspent in 2022, as costs increased dramatically and some public technology needed to be replaced unexpectedly. The requested 2023 allocations are in line with what was spent the previous year, and those line item budgets will not be overspent this year, now that the Library has a better understanding of costs and needs in a post-pandemic Library.

Policy

Tonight, Director Merlin is requesting discussion and hopefully approval of the overhauled Meeting Room Policy that has not been edited since 2004. The updated policy now gives the Library more specific parameters by which to approve or deny meeting room reservations, and brings the Library in line with the other libraries in the NOBLE system. Along with this policy comes a new Meeting Room Use Agreement Form, an annual form that each organization must update each January- once this application is approved by Director Merlin or Assistant Director Hayden, an organization may begin to request meeting room reservations via the usual Assabet online calendar system, but this allows the Library to vet each organization before that last step. Director Merlin is happy to give an overview of the policy and major changes during New Business, and to answer any questions or concerns.

Discussion and Questions for the Director

Trustee Pappas asked about budget numbers. Director Merlin explained the amount of the budget and that it is a grant account that the City holds for the Library. These monies are our state aid and cover expenses that the City does not. Trustee Pappas asked if this was separate from the City's budget and Director Merlin replied yes; at the end of the fiscal year the Library always overspends. Any additional money is a bonus with which the Library pays for furniture, landscaping, and any programming that is not funded by the Foundation.

Trustee McAllister asked if the Garden Club paid for landscaping. Trustee Gallugi confirmed. Director Merlin explained that Garden Clubs beautify Library outdoor properties while landscapers maintain them.

Secretary Boçi had a coughing fit at this juncture during which some details may have been missed. Trustee Quinn asked about staffing, particularly in regard to having to close the South Branch due to lack of staff. She went on to ask if staffing requirements were too high. Director Merlin replied that staffing requirements could not be lower. The Main Library requires five staff, whereas each Branch requires two. Due to holidays, half days, illness, and vacations, attendance during the last half of December and first week of January was strikingly inadequate. Director Merlin wants to increase minimum staffing to ten people across the Branches as opposed to nine, as it is unsafe to open a Branch with only one person.

Trustee Najjar expressed desire to hear about teen programming and what will happen with the newly acquired grant money.

Director Merlin reported that the Legislative Breakfast would take place in the Sutton Room on Friday, February 17th at 8am. Food will be provided in the Tech Lab and the speaking events will occur in the Sutton Room. This event serves to "sell" the Library to local politicians. Trustee

Pappas asked if the Trustees chamber could be displayed and Director Merlin reported an intention to clear the room. The chairs in the Trustees Room should not be used as they are nearly two hundred years old. Director Merlin did agree that showing the Trustee chamber was a good idea.

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

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:

Trustee Pappas is the new liaison for the Audubon committee. Senior Local History Librarian Catherine Badal changed the framing and storage of the Audubon prints. The frames had been improperly done, with acidic backings. Trustee Pappas asked if TKM had reported a need for replacement of frame work. Director Merlin replied yes. Trustee Quinn asked if the prints had been handled by the Peabody Essex Museum previously; Director Merlin replied that some prints (the most damaged) were conserved by the PEM, before the Library began the large conservation project with Studio TKM circa 2000. They were able to utilize space for the prints that had been previously unused, with LED lights that will be gentle on the materials. Director Merlin went on to say that the Library would purchase additional shelving that provides adequate space and storage and that she and Senior Librarian Badal are in charge of wireless temperature and humidity sensors that alert their phones when levels become unsafe. Trustee Pappas asked if there is a procedure in place for excessive humidity to which Director Merlin responded that opening the door and installing a fan in the space in question would be adequate. It is not feasible to install an HVAC system in the space; since there is no new mold, the methods used are suitable for the present. Director Merlin also explained that features of the prints such as tears, fingerprints, etc. are part of their history and are displayed as such. Director Merlin and Trustee Pappas went on to discuss how it is safer to handle the prints with bare, clean hands rather than cotton gloves, as the latter causes more damage. Trustee McAllister added that the Library owes proper maintenance and security to the items we have received over the years as they add immeasurable value to what the Library can offer the community. Trustee Pappas asked if the prints could be displayed in the new Children's Museum. Director Merlin replied in the negative due to a lack of security systems. The prints will be displayed at an April fundraiser called Birds and Bubbly, followed by a family-friendly event called Birds and Books during which members of the Audubon Society work with children. The event will require a police detail. New easels and display apparatus will be purchased. Director Merlin hopes that this event will become an annual occurrence.

Building and Grounds:

Nothing to report.

Trustee Gallugi reported having seen drip buckets at the West Branch. Director Merlin stated that the buckets were in place to test work that had been done on the roof previously.

Personnel:

Nothing to report.

Policy and Procedures:

Trustee Vassallo contributed to the updated meeting room policy.

Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:

Reports of poinsettia sale forthcoming. Meeting will be held on January 11th at 5:30pm.

Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:

Nothing to report.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Trustee Shruhan asked to review the meeting room policies. Director Merlin had distributed a handout with the policies prior to the start of the meeting. Trustee Shruhan praised the work done on the policies and Director Merlin recognized the ongoing efforts of Assistant Director Hayden. Director Merlin noted a language change necessary on the third bullet point of page 6, which states that groups may only book rooms twelve times a year. Groups often gather such bookings into the span of two months, and now they will only be allowed to book rooms once per month for twelve times a year.

Trustee Quinn asked how often groups use Library rooms and if so, what sort of groups. Director Merlin replied that a variety of groups use the rooms, including, but not limited to, Girl Scouts, art classes, knitting groups, condo associations, study sessions, and social events. We want to ensure that rooms are being used fairly and appropriately and patrons do not have to pay to attend meetings. In short, Library spaces are booked three or four times a week by a variety of groups, with the West Branch being used the most often due to the size of its community space. With outside groups using Library space, it is crucial to regulate their use and policy

There was a **MOTION** to approve the new meeting room policy with edits to page 6 by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gallugi.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously

There was a **MOTION** to approve the new allocation for the state aid grant by Trustee Najjar.
The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution

The next meeting will be held on February 13th at 6:30pm

There was a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Shruhan. The motion was seconded by Trustee Titelbaum.
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
No discussion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28pm.

Submitted by,
Sarah Boçi
Recording Secretary