**Peabody Institute Library**

**Board of Trustees**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**March 26, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by President Kate O’Brien at 6:40pm, with quorum having been reached by 6:30pm.

The roll call was taken:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Present** | **Absent** |
| Jennifer Smith  Stephanie Najjar  Peter Bakula  Stacie Dolin  Frances Gallugi  Stephanie Dallaire  Kate O’Brien  Katrina Vassallo  Ruth Titelbaum | Richard Shruhan  Anne Quinn |

**Public Comments**

None.

**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 Gallugi.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

**Receipt of Communications**

No new communications.

**Acting Director’s Report**

**Staffing**

Emily Cooper has resigned her position as Library Aide effective last week. She resigned to focus on new and exciting family developments. While she worked at the Library briefly, Emily has been a longtime Library supporter and I look forward to encountering her in other capacities on behalf of the Library.

I would like to thank the Trustees for their willingness to close the Library for Christine Spinale’s wake and funeral. Both were well attended by Library staff and I believe it meant a great deal to everyone, including me.

**Budget**

The Bookkeeper was unable to provide me with the current budget due to the shorter timeline of the meeting. I will get it from him ASAP and forward it to the Board as soon as I have it.

The preliminary budget requests were due to the City today. I submitted requests for the Library to Mike Ginras in Finance today. I am requesting a total increase of 6.8% from the City. For Personnel, the increase I am requesting is 4.94%. This is mostly for COLA and only a slight increase to combine 2 Aide positions into a 36 hour Library Assistant position for the South Branch Library. One Aide position is currently open and I expect another to become open when Chris Spinale’s position gets posted, as I believe it will be filled internally. We are not at this point ready to post the open Full Time Library Assistant position as that is the 2nd part of the minor staffing budget increase. I will be working with the Union to have this position bumped up to Librarian and adjusting the hours to ensure staff have appropriate guidance and supervision regardless of what shift they work.

The Operations increase is 12.97%. This is largely due to the extensive increase in utility operations - electric, gas and water have been rising in cost and we are on track to overspend our budget on those line items. I am also requesting an increase in Software/IT services as our patrons are still using our equipment extensively and technology needs are increasing. This portion of the budget also includes the wifi hotspots which are consistently popular as they provide a momentary stopgap in the digital divide for most of our patrons.

I additionally requested an increase on the Trustee Line item. In addition to the $1000 for miscellaneous expenses that occur during the normal course of business, I have included an additional $1,500 to cover paying the Recording Secretary.

Lastly, I am asking for a 6.98% increase in our Books and Subscriptions. With the overall increase of our budget, which has been largely bolstered by COLA, it will be necessary to increase this line item in order for the percentage of our budget spent on materials and collections to be consistent with the requirement for State Certification.

Within the next week or so, we will be receiving the second part of our State Aid award of $63,658.

**Programs & Initiatives**

**Northeast Legislative Breakfast:**

Many thanks to the Trustees who attended the Legislative Breakfast the NOBLE Advocacy Committee hosted on Friday. Peabody was well represented, including 2 Peabody representatives, Rep. Thomas Walsh and Rep. Sally Kerans, on the program as speakers. The Breakfast received extremely positive feedback and was well attended. The Committee will work on one hopefully a little sooner next year at one of the NOBLE libraries who will be finishing up a construction project. I will be sure to let the Trustees know and send along invitations when the time comes.

**Solar Eclipse Party**

The Main Library will be hosting an all-ages Solar Eclipse party on April 8th. We have a stock of eclipse glasses that we will be distributing beginning April 4th to any members of the public who would like them at all of our public service desks and will have a stock read to hand out to those attending the party. There will be snacks, music and activities with the viewing of the total eclipse as the “star” of the show. Please spread the word. The party will be in the courtyard and we would love to see the grounds full of community members witnessing this historic event together.

**At the Main Library:**

Senior Children’s Librarian Jenny Usovicz , registered the Peabody Institute Library with the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten early literacy program. Children will register for the reading challenge at the library and after each 100 books read they will receive a free book from the library. When they finish reading 1,000 books they will join our hall of fame (with photo consent from an adult) and receive a t-shirt and certificate of completion. She is using grant funds from the Gateways to Reading Grant to order the books and supplies. She is partnering with Amy Titus from the South Branch to expand the program into South Peabody.

She is currently weeding sections of the Children’s Library to keep the collection relevant and current.

Jenny just hosted a "Reading With Rabbits Program" with Landsake Farm that was very popular, and they are coming back with their Chickens for a "Reading with Chickens Program" on April 6th. April 20th Children’s is having a Children's Boardgame program for families. Veronica is continuing her dance program for Children "Creative Movement" on May 18th. Jenny is organizing a May the 4th program with the 501st Legion Star Wars cosplay group to come to the library on May 4th for a Star Wars Party where people can dress up as Star Wars characters and enjoy themed snacks. School Vacation week they will have the popular "Kids Hand Sewing Class" on Wednesday April 17th. She continues to offer her monthly homeschool hangout that has had a huge turnout with 25-30 people coming each month to do crafts and socialize with other homeschooling families.

CFCE is very successful on Monday mornings with Mary Beth Maes, Little Groove on Feb 12 had 30 families attending. Professor Bugman came February 26th with his Bug Petting Zoo program that was well attended. The department also offered a Soap Making Program with kids in March on the 6th in the afternoon that was well attended.

Senior Teen Librarian Amory Thomas has been hosting her regularly weekly programs, such as the Teen Volunteer Hour (TACO), monthly book club, study sessions and a new LGBTQ meet up for all Teens to join. Additionally, she has been doing programs / activities very frequently, such as slime making, video game tournaments, and cookie tasting, all having full, often overflowing registration and attendance. She has multiple school visits lined up within the next couple of months.

Amory has also been working with Citizens Inn and No Child No Hungry to bring donations of food to the library for Teens, which will culminate in creating a Little Free Pantry within the library as the end goal, so that everyone in the community has access and resources to food. She is also working on setting up Summer Foods and in the planning stages for Summer Reading for Teens, along with other Summer programs.

She has also been working with Jenny Usovicz to do more programming where both kids and teens can participate, such as an Earth Day Station program, a Virtual Reality Gaming program in July, and a "May the 4th Star Wars Day".

**At the South Branch:**

Senior Branch Librarian Amy Titus and Jenny Usovicz attended the South Memorial Elementary school's Literacy Night on Thursday, March 21st. Students in kindergarten through second grade, along with their siblings and caregivers, were able to register for library cards, check books out, or borrow a book to read in the school's Book Nook.

Paul Zambella, a retired forensic scientist from the Massachusetts Crime Lab, will be hosting a Forensic Science Roadshow program at the South Branch Library on April 4th, where patrons can learn about crime scene investigation. Pop Up Art School will be hosting two craft programs at the South Branch Library this spring; registration for both is already full.

**Building & Grounds**

Work is scheduled to begin on the U Channel Filter Rack on the HVAC units at the South Branch this Thursday. I will keep the Trustees update on the progress of this project.

**Long Range Planning**

The Long Range Planning process has stalled. I am hoping to get the Spanish translation of the surveys soon so that portion of the project can begin.

Relatedly, I would like to request that the Trustees consider the hiring of an Interim Director. There are several options that involve hiring experienced, usually retired, Library Directors as consultants or through BiblioTemps which is a division of the Massachusetts Library Systems. Larger, but still important projects, are getting pushed back among the day-to-day activities and unexpected issues that need to be addressed quickly. I believe an Interim Director would allow me to make much better progress with these longer-term projects while they helm the Library for the day-to-day operations. I will happily make sure that the orientation of this temporary person would be smooth and extensive and am willing to work with the City’s Human Resources to determine what this process would require from them. I will include here, the BiblioTemps contact information, should the Trustees like to speak with her to get more information about the process, cost, and options.

Trustee Dallaire noted that a January date is listed on the report. Acting Director Hayden confirmed that it is correct on the version that went out.

Trustee Najjar mentioned that all of the kids’ activities going on are impressive.

Acting Director Hayden stated that she wants to step back down to assistant director and would like an interim director while the hiring process for a director continues.

There was a MOTION to accept the Acting Director’s report by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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

**Audubon:** Nothing to report.

**Building and Grounds:** Trustee Shruhan is not present.

**Personnel:** Nothing to report.

**Policy and Procedures:** Nothing to report.

**Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation**: Trustee Najjar advised that they are getting ready for Birds and Bubbly on April 26, and that a flyer has been finalized. Trustee Najjar requested that President O’Brien share the flyer with the trustees. Najjar stated that we need folks to reach out and to promote ticket sales. Please also reach out if you have interested sponsors. Trustee Dallaire added that the letter for sponsors also needs to be shared. Acting Director Hayden advised that if folks want to purchase tickets and don’t have Venmo they can bring cash or a check to the library. Trustee Najjar stated that the committee will be meeting tomorrow night, and continues to meet every other week.

**Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:** Trustee Quinn is not present.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

**Unfinished Business**

George Peabody Medal

The ceremony will take place on Thursday, May 30, at 6pm in the Sutton Room. Trustee Gallugi will be there to present at the ceremony, Trustee Dallaire to present at graduation. Trustee Najjar stated that there is often confusion about who invites the families of the medal recipients. The President of the Library Trustees sends invitations to the families of recipients.

West Branch Library Roof

Trustee Gallugi was in the West Branch Library and noted new leaks in the ceiling right by the circulation desk. The leaks are being remedied using large plastic construction buckets. She has been bringing this to everybody’s attention for at least five years. The roof has been re-tarred, but this has not fixed the issue. Trustee Gallugi worries about mold and folks having to navigate around buckets to check out books.

Acting Director Hayden mentioned that this was something that former director Merlin had also brought up consistently before they left. The west branch needs a new roof.

A discussion took place about sending a letter to the mayor about addressing the roof in this year’s budget. This letter should come from the trustees, and it was noted that Trustee Shruhan may have input on this subject. Acting Director Hayden added that she has been told repeatedly by custodial staff that whenever there are strong winds the roof tiles blow upward, allowing leaks. Re-tarring and roof patches have note worked in repairing this issue.

There was a MOTION to send a letter to the mayor to address the West Branch roof in this year’s budget by Trustee Dolin. The motion was seconded by Trustee Vassallo.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

**New**

The Peabody Lions Club reached out to Acting Director Hayden and President O’Brien to ask if an eyeglass recycling box could be housed outside of the West Branch. The box had previously been housed outside of Walgreens. President O’Brien noted that we would need a formal agreement about who was responsible for maintaining the bin. Trustee Gallugi mentioned that the Planet Aid bins seem popular, and that the foundation gets money for housing them. She added that when the bins get full folks put all sorts of junk and donations in front of the bins. Trustee Vassallo stated that the way that the eyeglass bin is set up it can only fit eyeglasses. Trustee Najjar added that she used to be a member of the Lions and that this program is great for the community. There was discussion around which types of glasses are accepted, and President O’Brien will confirm. Trustee Najjar mentioned that a vendor who used to work for Planet Aid reached out to the foundation, which will be discussed at the foundation meeting. Trustee Titlebaum brought up that the Council on Aging also collects glasses and that the trustees may be able to work with them.

There was discussion about the flag collection bin in the entryway that is often overflowing. Acting Director Hayden recalled that this was an old Eagle Scout project from about 20 years ago, and that if there is an agreement it may have been lost to time. The Eagle Scouts contact information is on the box, and it was suggested that the trustees may want to contact the troop regarding maintenance.

There was a MOTION to allow the Peabody Lions Club to put in an eyeglass collection bin by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously. It was noted by Trustee Najjar that this should be after due diligence is done to establish the maintenance responsibility of the Lions Club.

There was a MOTION to contact the Eagle Scout Troop regarding flag collection bin maintenance by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dallaire.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on May 7, 2024, at 6:30pm in the Trustees Room.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by,

Dorothy Louisos

Recording Secretary