

Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes for Tuesday, October 18, 2016
7:00PM • Conference Room

The Trustees gathered and reviewed and signed the bills. Chair Robert Batt called the meeting to order at 7:08PM.

Present

Trustees: Robert Batt, Chair; Elizabeth Hacala; Emily Mitchell; Rachel Field; Abby Hafer; Mike Pulizzi; and Lynne O'Connor (arriving at 7:54).

Administration: Richard Callaghan, Library Director; Noreen O'Gara, Assistant Director. Dorothy Bergin from the Bedford Citizen also attended.

The Chair asked if there were any public comments. None were forthcoming.

Secretary's Report

The Trustees reviewed the Secretary's Report, with minor corrections. A motion to approve the report was made by Rachel and seconded by Abby. The motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report

The Director's Report was moved by Elizabeth, second by Emily, and passed unanimously.

- Ray was working on lighting in the Flag Room. The room features LED lights that are projected onto the flag case to avoid damaging the flag, and the projector has not been working properly. Replacing the projector would cost \$2000–\$3000. The company that made the projector can replace the circuit board, which they suspect is the problem. Ray sent the board down to them and is expecting it to be returned next week. The Flag is still accessible; the room is just dark.
- Seed catalog: Richard met with the Garden Club to discuss this project. The Friends would fund the money and BFPL would find a space; the Garden Club is discerning whether they have interest/availability to manage the program.
- Printing funds: Charging for printing has been saving tons of paper. We don't have a specific budget line, however, for the money collected from printing (~\$1500/year). Richard talked with the Town, and they agreed we should allocate those funds to the supplies budget. The Trustees discussed the possibility of increasing the free page count, as well as logistics for collecting and depositing the coins.
- Wifi: Richard has been working with Comcast for an upgrade to a wider bandwidth (which would cost more). The wifi has been stable for the past couple weeks.
- Bob and Richard went to the Fiscal Planning Coordinating Committee meeting a few weeks ago about the FY18 budget. The Town seems to be in good fiscal shape for the year; no library-specific items were discussed. Richard will be meeting with FinComm in January.
- Circulation is up by around 7% for the year so far.

Unfinished Business

- Website redesign update

The new website had a soft launch a couple weeks ago. The staff is making occasional

tweaks; Richard and Noreen confirmed that the WordPress platform is much easier to update. Noreen informed the survey respondents who had expressed interest in the website that the new design was up, and she's gotten several suggestions that they've been able to implement. The library contracted with Stirling for support for the next year, which is renewable if needed. Richard is pleased with the working relationship with Stirling and the flexibility of the WordPress platform. The mobile version is particularly helpful. Richard and Noreen encouraged continued feedback from the trustees, so minor issues can be fixed quickly. Bob asked if people could be trained to navigate the new website; Richard suggested that Rand would be happy to offer tours of the new site.

- Strategic Plan review

Richard would like to have the Plan approved in November if possible, but there's no strict deadline. We are not applying for LSTA grants or doing building projects, so we can go as late as next year's 10/1 deadline to submit the Plan; the trustees agreed that we don't want to go that far.

Our consultant, Deb Hoadley, has completed her work. The Plan was circulated among the department heads, who updated their sections from the previous plan, particularly for those items that had been completed since the last plan or were no longer relevant to current needs. The mission and purpose was shortened from the prior version; Richard is open to comments and suggestions from the trustees.

Bob commented that the Plan is quite comprehensive; Richard and Noreen confirmed that they sought to be as comprehensive as possible. Richard noted that the state does not have guidelines for what should and shouldn't be included.

Emily noted that space usage and reconfiguration was prominent in our discussions, but not called out separately in the Plan. It's mentioned in several places within the Plan under different topics, but is not its own section. We noted that space and collection needs may change dramatically over the five-year term of the Plan. The trustees recommended making space usage a designated section within the Plan.

Lynne also suggested including the expected changes in technology, and how that might affect parts of the Plan. Like concerns about space, technology issues are included in several parts of the Plan; Noreen wondered if emphasizing technology too specifically was too far removed from the library's core mission of patron service. Lynne suggested reordering the points so that technology (currently #10) was closer to the top; Elizabeth suggested changing the verbs to be more active ("research," "adopt," "incorporate," as opposed to "monitor and evolve").

Lynne suggested that the headline for #5 could be improved to reflect the content more appropriately ("well-trained and engaged staff," e.g.). Rachel concurred, with an emphasis on patron service and engagement.

Rachel also noted that under #1, "research" was not emphasized as a core part of library offerings. The bullet points describe research activities, but don't call them that. Richard noted that public libraries have moved away from describing themselves as research portals—reference librarians don't do research for patrons anymore, but rather help patrons develop information literacy skills to conduct their own research through trusted resources. Elizabeth suggested this function could fit as an activity under 1.C.

Rachel brought up the lobby displays, and how they can or should reflect issues of concern to the community. Richard and Noreen noted that the displays rotate weekly and are handled by many staff members, not just the professional staff. The trustees discussed the difficulties in handling issues of particular sensitivity, especially given the location and the patron populations that travel through the lobby.

Elizabeth noted that the art gallery didn't seem to be mentioned. Richard agreed that it definitely should be a part of the Plan, and may have been inadvertently cut.

Rachel noted that outdoor space should also be mentioned more prominently; Richard agreed.

Bob suggested that 4.C. be amended to say "communication, collegiality, and support."

Lynne suggested 1.E could include a mention of community, in addition to comfort and safety with regard to the building and grounds.

Lynne made a general comment that the ten main points be inclusive and clear enough that people are able to understand the broader vision of the Plan.

The trustees agreed that the scaled-down mission statement was concise yet broad, and reflected the library's purpose and goals.

Rachel asked if the plan should include a mention of privacy and confidentiality; the trustees concurred. Noreen noted that many of these concerns are embedded in Massachusetts law, so they aren't always called out specifically in BFPL policies.

Bob requested a revised draft based on these comments for November. Richard will prepare a revision and present it for trustee approval at the next meeting.

New Business

Requests to the Capital Expenditures Committee

Richard shared the spreadsheet he's submitted to the Town. Exterior window replacement is outstanding and approved for FY17; exterior painting on the old building is also approved but not yet done. Richard is proposing three items for FY18: entryway heater replacement (\$20,910), HVAC repairs (\$61,200), and oil tank and boiler removal (\$15,300). We won't know which items make the CapEx list until Town Meeting in March.

Bedford Citizen Community Project

Meredith McCulloch approached Richard about doing a town-wide read, which the Citizen would help facilitate. The Citizen is applying for a Cultural Council grant for this project. The library can provide books, meeting room and discussion space. The event(s) will probably be in March. The Citizen will coordinate book groups; their suggestion is the graphic novel *March, Book 3* by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, illustrated by Nate Powell. Meredith has also approached the schools to incorporate students in discussions and events. There are some concerns about accessibility for COA members and people who prefer audiobooks. Abby wondered if/how existing local book groups could be involved in the project as well.

- Annual Report

The report has been completed and sent to the Town (deadline was September 30).

Other Business

- Special Town Meeting is Wednesday, November 9. The library has no issues on the agenda.
- The library will be closed for Veterans' Day, Friday, November 11.
- The Massachusetts Library Trustee Association's annual meeting is Saturday, November 19.
- Richard shared the list of appointments and step raises.

Adjournment

Lynne made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Elizabeth seconded; it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2016, at 7:00 PM.

Meeting minutes are respectfully submitted by Emily Mitchell, co-secretary.

Documents distributed during the meeting: Agenda; Director's Report dated October 2016; Secretary's Report September 13, 2016; Statement of Expenditures for September 2016; the monthly Statistical Report for September 2016; BFPL Capital Requests FY2017–FY2022; list of appointments and step raises dated October 18, 2016.