

Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes for Tuesday, June 13, 2017
7:00 PM • Meeting Room

The Trustees gathered and reviewed and signed the bills.

Present

Trustees: Robert Batt; Rachel Field; Emily Mitchell; Robin Grace Silbert; Elizabeth Hacala arrived at 7:15 pm.

Michael Pulizzi and Abby Hafer were absent.

Administration: Richard Callaghan, Library Director; Noreen O’Gara, Assistant Director.

Guests: Dot Bergin, *The Bedford Citizen* and Meredith McCulloch, *former Bedford Library Director*.

The Chair asked if there were any public comments. None were forthcoming.
Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.

Secretary’s Report

May minutes were moved by Rachel and seconded by Robin. The minutes were approved.

Director’s Report

The Trustees reviewed the Director’s Report.

Richard reported that the Italian bees have taken to their new home on the mezzanine though they were initially very quiet. Since the onset of warmer weather, they have been more active. The bee keeper visited today and the hive has already been expanded. Any honey that is extracted in the future may be used as gifts or possibly handed off to the Friends of the library to use as a raffle item or a giveaway.

Children's Librarians Bethany and Elaine visited Bedford schools to promote *Build a Better World*, the summer reading program for kids and teens. The *1000 Books Before Kindergarten* challenge begins on June 15th.

The onsite voter registration drive, organized by Representative Seth Moulton and scheduled for June 10th, was cancelled due to a staffing shortage at the representative's office. The drive will be rescheduled.

Hanscom Field 8th graders, who will be entering Bedford High School in the fall, toured the library after their visit to Bedford High School.

The sidewalk paving in front of the library is a work in progress. One section has been paved and may require an additional coat. The work will recommence after the July 4th holiday.

The window trim on the front face of the old library building will be repainted, the storm windows removed and the windows prepped before the replacement windows are installed in September.

The custodians are currently painting the areas inside the building on Sundays when we are closed

Noreen will attend the ALA conference in Chicago from the 22nd to the 27th of June. Emily will also be attending.

MLN has contracted a new vendor for its messaging app. The vendor is slightly less expensive and more user friendly than our current vendor. Once the changeover is made, app users will get a phone message that will allow them to opt in.

Richard and Noreen attended the Massachusetts Library Conference in Hyannis. Conference topics included ALICE training, staff development, small business outreach, Maker's Space and meeting the needs of disabled patrons and older adults. Richard and Noreen agreed that it was an excellent conference. Rachel asked about the Alice training. Richard said that the Medfield Police Chief led a comprehensive active shooter training which outlined how staff should react in such an event. The training covered scenarios outlining whether staffers should run or hide, designating a safe room and erecting barricades.

Budget Review: Richard confirmed that by the end of the FY 17 - June 30th, we will be over budget on library materials but this overage will be offset by other line items.

The Statistical Report showed that circulation FY17 was up 0.64% from FY16.

The new art exhibit is *New England Simplified*: paintings by Bill Kelsey which runs from May 11th to July 12th.

Pam staffed the library's table at the Bedford Multicultural Festival on May 21st. She handed out book lists of diverse reading material geared to children, teens and adults.

Emily moved and Rachel seconded approval of the Director's Report. The report was approved unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Director's Review

Bob is compiling the review segments from the members of the Board. Robin, as a new trustee, is not reviewing Richard. When the review is complete Bob will send it to the director for his signature.

Library Trustee Annual Board Reorganization

The board further discussed the date when new officers should assume office. Currently the chair and secretary assume office as of July 1. Most other town boards reorganize after the March election. Currently, only the newly-elected officers of the school committee and library boards turn over at the end of the fiscal year. Emily asked if the town cared and commented that the months between the March election and the July meeting give new board members a chance to acclimate to the board. In addition, changing our current schedule could be an issue if several new members were elected to the board during a single election cycle. No board member felt strongly in favor of or

strongly against changing the current schedule. Rachel moved to table the discussion until Abby and Mike could weigh in.

NEW BUSINESS

The Revolving Fund and Fines

Former Library Director Meredith McCulloch briefly outlined the history of the Revolving Fund. In the nineties, Massachusetts allowed municipalities to set up revolving funds for libraries. At the time, towns were financially strapped and this source of new revenue was welcomed. In 1993, based on the fines collected at that time (overdue materials, lost materials and fees), the library and finance committee negotiated that the first \$17,000 collected would go to the town. Any monies over that would be retained by the library. At the same time, library fees that had been in effect since the fifties were increased.

Meredith said that patrons were unaware that a portion of the fines went to the town. They thought that all the money collected went to the library. She also noted that people were always pleased to pay their fines. A report on Revolving Funds from 2007 through 2017 shows that fine collection has steadily decreased since 2013.

In recent years, fines have gone down dramatically due to email and text reminders sent two days before an item is due and patrons can renew online. Moreover, there are no fines on electronic media which has become increasingly popular.

Emily said there could be a risk that we can't meet our financial obligation to the town and what would happen then?

Rachel asked if there are towns where all fines collected go to the library or to the town.

Meredith McCulloch reflected that revolving fund have allowed the library to buy books and pay for things at the end of the fiscal year.

Rachel question whether we should consider becoming a "no-fine" community or having all money collected retained by the library.

Noreen noted that revolving funds serves to protect organizations and boards so they don't appear to be raising funds, a form of checks and balances at a micro level in small towns, she added.

Robin asked why a library would eliminate fines.

Emily said that the argument against fines is that libraries should be freely open to all. Also the collection of fines requires bookkeeping and staff time.

Elizabeth felt that paying fines assuaged guilt for keeping books beyond their due date. Noreen said that the fines give a sense of value in what you're getting from the library.

Bob said that when the fund was first established, the town was insisting on \$17,000 because of a tough economy and they were scrambling to put together a budget. He went on to say that this is something the board might want to address now while the economy is still good.

Rachel concluded that we need to gather more information. How many communities set limits on the revolving funds? How many libraries don't assess fines?

Meredith added, how many libraries gave up fines and went back.

Elizabeth suggested we may want to consider returning 50% of revenue collected.

Richard will look into how other libraries are handling fines and revolving funds. He will report back to the Trustees.

Capital Expenditures

Richard met with the Capital Expenditures Committee on June 7th. He reviewed several possible future capital projects including transitioning from the current barcode check-out system to RFID. Fifteen MLN libraries are currently using RFID system.

He also outlined plans to review our current use of space and how it might be reconfigured to accommodate more study and small group meeting rooms.

OTHER BUSINESS

Step Raises and Appointment

There were no step raises or appointments this month.

Board Member Contact List

Richard has completed the board-member contact list and it will be emailed in the coming days. Corrections will be made if necessary.

Emily asked Noreen how the Veterans Stories Project is faring. Noreen reported that it is a slow process. Those that have been completed are excellent. Currently, three people are working with Leslie. Noreen hopes to get the stories that have been completed on the website this summer.

Emily gave an update on plans for One Book, One Bedford. The event calendar has been published in the Bedford Citizen. The kickoff will be October 14 with a graphic novel workshop. Professor Dan Breen will give an overview of the Civil Right's Movement on October 15. A screening of *Selma* is also scheduled. Organizers are also looking into hosting a children's' event. The committee is still working to secure an appropriate Keynote speaker. Emily noted that as the dates get closer, more copies of John Lewis' trilogy will be needed. Richard said that shouldn't be an issue.

The next Trustees' meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11.

Adjournment

Elizabeth made a motion to adjourn, second by Emily. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Meeting minutes are respectfully submitted by Robin Grace, co-secretary.

Documents distributed during the meeting: Agenda; Director's Report dated June 13, 2017; Secretary's Report May 9, 2017; Statement of Expenditures for May 2017; the monthly Statistical Report for May 2017; the Revolving Funds Report - 2007-2017;