

Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes for Tuesday, November 10, 2020
7:00 pm • Online Meeting via Zoom

Chair Elizabeth Hacala called the meeting to order, 7:07 pm.

Present:

Dennis Ahern, Rachel Field, Abby Hafer, Mike Pulizzi, Robin Grace Silbert. Absent: Alma Hart. Administration: Richard Callaghan, Library Director. Noreen O’Gara, Assistant Director. Other attendees: Emily Mitchell, Select Board. Dot Bergin, Bedford Citizen. Bedford TV was present and recorded the meeting.

Secretary’s report:

Rachel moved to accept minutes; Dennis seconded. Vote: 6-0-0. Ayes: Dennis, Rachel, Abby, Mike, Robin, Elizabeth.

Director’s Report:

Despite a drop in physical circulation the Hoopla and Overdrive digital services continue to be very popular with patrons.

Scholastic’s Teachables database for at-home student learning is working out well.

The library will be closed over the Thanksgiving weekend starting from 5 pm on Wednesday the 25th.

The budget is on track if somewhat unusual because the library hasn’t spent as much on salaries due to the pandemic. Also, in-state travel has been curtailed due to COVID, and unlikely to resume this fiscal year.

The Minuteman network bill of \$42,710 has been paid despite the paperwork delays at Town Hall. The October statistical report is delayed as we have not received all the numbers from MLN and will be presented at December meeting.

Rachel moved to accept the Director’s Report; Abby seconded. Vote: 6-0-0. Ayes: Elizabeth, Rachel, Mike, Robin, Dennis, Abby.

Unfinished Business:

- Curbside materials pickup moved indoors on November 2, 2020. Richard noted that it is working out well, particularly in light of the recent snowstorm. Patrons follow a one-way path, entering the large meeting room through one door and exiting through another. A staff member remains on duty. Only one patron arrived mask-less. The library will likely resume outside pickup to coincide with baseball’s opening day.
- Though the high school is closed and parking is not currently an issue, Richard will speak to Police Chief Bongiorno about temporarily reserving a parking spot by the meeting room for the use of patrons picking up books.
- After the spike in COVID cases and Bedford High’s recent closure, the student library pages were asked to stay home out of an abundance of caution. We have adult pages that can pick up the slack until the quarantine ends on November 13th.

- **Library Reopening:** With the spike in COVID cases, the aspirational plans to reopen the library for computer and study room usage have been put on hold. This will be revisited in January.
- **Carpet Replacement:** Capital project funds to replace carpeting were approved in 2019. Richard received two quotes and will go with Atkinson Carpet who were the lowest bid and have previously worked in the library. Richard noted that replacing carpet while the building is closed to patrons will cause less disruption.
- **Tech Services:** The library received 20 applicants for the head of Technical Services position. Four applicants, three of whom are in-state, are particularly strong. The out-of-state applicant has worked with the same consortium and software that the library currently uses. The application period to fill the position ends November 20th.
- **Public Restrooms:** Rachel asked for an update on the water fountains and suggested installing touch-free faucets and towel dispenser in the rest facilities. Abby suggested holding off on retrofitting until we have a clearer understanding of what the science dictates. Elizabeth recommended we list and prioritize based upon the Health Department guidelines. Richard will see what the schools are doing.

New Business:

- **FY22 Budget Review:** The Finance Committee will hold a zoom meeting on November 19th to discuss what FY22 will look like. Trustees are invited to attend. Richard reported that he is working on the numbers but doesn't have a budget guideline. The Selectboard is aware, Richard said, that three capital projects, including the replacement of the library's outdated HVAC system, are indispensable. In reference to the HVAC system, Mike noted that "we're not looking to put on an addition – just trying to protect what we have." Richard will update board.
- **School Committee letter:** In response to a suggestion by a school committee member that the library might have unused space suitable for the schools to temporarily use for student learning, Elizabeth wrote a letter to the committee explaining that the library does not have any unused space available.

Other business:

- **Town Caucus:** The town is legally obligated to hold a town caucus in January. In light of the pandemic, Bedford might have to hold the January caucus outdoors. According to Select Board member Emily Mitchell, "the town by-laws state that Bedford shall have a caucus not may" which presents a legal conundrum for the town. The town manager will consult with the state on this matter. In an aside, it was suggested that a recommendation should be made to the by-law committee that the language of the by-law be changed.
- **Friends of the Library update:** The FOL online bookstore is up and doing well.
- **Retirement:** Lyndal Blodgett, who has been on the circulation staff for six years, will be retiring effective November 20th. Elizabeth will write letters on the board's behalf to Lyndal and to Kathy Ruggieri, head of tech services, who is also retiring in November.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 pm. Dennis motioned; Abby seconded. Vote 6-0-0. Ayes: Dennis, Rachel, Abby, Mike, Robin, and Elizabeth.

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 8th, 2020

Meeting minutes are respectfully submitted by Robin Grace Silbert, substitute Secretary.