

Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes for Tuesday November 8th, 2022
7:00 PM • Online Meeting via Zoom

Chair Mike Pulizzi called the meeting to order at 7:03.

Present

Trustees: Mike Pulizzi, Elizabeth Hacala, Rachel Field, Padma Choudry, Abby Hafer, Fahad Alden.

Other attendees: Dot Bergin, Bedford Citizen; Emily Mitchell, Selectboard Liaison
Administration: Richard Callaghan, Director; Noreen O’Gara, Assistant Director.

Public Comment

None.

Secretary’s Report

The October minutes were approved: Moved by Rachel, seconded by Abby. Ayes: Michael, Fahad, Abby, Padma, Rachel, Elizabeth: Vote 6-0-0.

Director’s Report

- Phil McNulty, Director of MLN, visited the Library. He has been making library visits to see how members are doing and asking what MLN can do to support its members.
- The Library was happy to welcome the Teen Advisory Group (TAG) back to the Meeting Room for the first time since March 2020.
- The Bedford Minuteman is now fully digitized on our website. (1957-2022)
- In looking at the Statement of Expenditures for FY23 through October, the budget looked pretty much on target.
- Statistical Report:
 - We are still a little bit behind, but the foot traffic has been higher this October compared to last October. Generally, there are a lot more people in the building.
 - The Library has been very busy from 1PM to 3:30PM on Wednesday afternoons.
 - Things seem to be getting back to a more normal pre-COVID routine.
 - New staff has started at the Circulation Desk, which has helped with the Library schedule and hours.

Elizabeth moved to accept the Director’s Report, seconded by Padma. Ayes: Elizabeth, Rachel, Padma, Abby, Fahad, Michael: Vote 6-0-0.

Unfinished Business

- HVAC Project: This is taking longer than expected; there is still not much news. Richard stated he had not heard about whether bids have gone out yet. Hopefully, we will have more news next month.

- Trustee Vacancy: Richard let the Town Clerk know that because of the closeness to the March election, the Board chose not appoint anyone to fill the seat. There seemed to be a conflict with Town Bylaw 5.4 for Elected Boards which says filling a vacancy requires an elected board to work with the Select Board. Richard noted that in November 2009, the Trustees made this same decision without a problem. After consulting with the Town Attorney, it was found that the Special Act from 1973 that organized the Trustees supersedes Bylaw 5.4, so the Trustees can appoint a replacement for a vacancy on the Board.
- FY24 Budget Review: The budget is a 3% increase similar to last year. We have not gotten any guideline from the Town Finance Committee; there has been some illness affecting their meeting schedule, which has delayed the work of the committee. The Library is scheduled to meet with the Finance Committee on January 19th at 7PM. The current bottom line does not include merit increase. The budget may change if we get a different guideline from the Finance Committee. The Trustees will need to vote on the budget at the December meeting. The budget itself does not have much in the way of changes. The Minuteman Library Network (MLN) fees only went up 1%. We've increased the travel budget for meetings, etc., because there will likely be more travel than during the last couple of years. Emily mentioned there is a deadline in the Charter which the budget should be submitted.
- The Board noted that they were happy to see increases for the conferences and dues.
- There was discussion about Marketing and social media, and whether the Library should look into getting a marketing intern. Richard said this does not need to be included in the budget going to the Town. Fahad noted that Bedford TV has marketing interns. Rachel asked whether we should include a line item, even with zero dollars, as an indication of potential items. Richard noted that in addition to the budget, he gives the Finance Committee a list of items and their associated costs that are not coming out of the town budget, but things that were paid for through state aid, the Friends or the Corporation. This list is intended to remind Finance Committee that the Library is paying for a lot of things on its own, outside of the town budget.
 - Elizabeth suggested we could work to get a Goals and Scope together. Bedford TV had something on their website, which Fahad will try to look into. Padma and Fahad agreed to work on drafting something that the Board could talk about – a way of thinking about our goals, and then a way to propose that. Padma and Fahad will work on this to propose something to put on the agenda for a future date.

New Business

- Meeting Room – the new Assabet meeting room software has given us an opportunity to update the Meeting Room Policy. The current policy has procedures like fees that can be removed to make the policy more flexible. The new language will say an appropriate

custodial fee will be charged instead of a specific amount. We generally stay in line with the fees charged at other Town buildings. The new policy condenses the language to what is actually necessary and leaves the procedures to the staff. Rachel and Fahad asked that we put this vote off until December, so the whole Board has had time to review.

- Study Room Policy – This policy previously only covered a couple of the rooms, but now it is a more general policy for all the rooms. We also removed some of the procedural information. The Board decided to review both policies and vote in December.
- Friends of the Library Annual Meeting is on Zoom on Saturday, December 4th. They will have a Holiday Book sale that same day. The sale is December 3rd and 4th, from 1-4 PM. Richard will be meeting with them tomorrow. He anticipates that the Friends will ask about requiring masks. The mask policy worked fine at the September book sale.

Elizabeth moved to reaffirm Board support to allow the Friends to require masks at the book sale, Rachel seconded. Ayes: Elizabeth, Rachel, Padma, Abby, Fahad, Michael: Vote 6-0-0.

Other Business

The Library has hired more part time staff for the Circulation Desk. However, there is still an open search for a Children's Librarian.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, December 13th at 7PM via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50. Abby made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Fahad seconded. Approved - Ayes: Michael, Fahad, Abby, Padma, Rachel, Elizabeth: 6-0-0.

Meeting minutes are respectfully submitted by Padma Choudry.

Documents distributed during the meeting: Agenda, Director's Report, Minutes from October meeting, October 2022 Expenditures, October 2022 Statistics, Meeting Room Policy (both current and draft markup), and the Study Room Policy (both current and draft markup).