

**Bedford Free Public Library**  
**Library Trustees Minutes for Tuesday December 13th, 2022**  
**7:00 PM • Online Meeting via Zoom**

Vice-Chair Abby Hafer called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

**Present**

Trustees: 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.

Not in Attendance: Mike Pulizzi

**Public Comment**

None.

**Secretary’s Report**

The November minutes were approved: Moved by Rachel, seconded by Elizabeth. Ayes: Elizabeth, Fahad, Padma, Rachel, Abby: Vote 5-0-0.

**Director’s Report**

- The MLN line through Verizon has been down due to a planned upgrade that interrupted service. MLN will transfer service to the old Verizon line which will restore the connection.
- Last week, 3 staff members were out with COVID. We have been doing okay with scheduling, but we shuffling staff around to keep the library open.
- Abby asked about the protocols for deciding whether or not to open. There needs to be enough people on staff in the building, for safety’s sake. Four people is the minimum. For example, this Thursday night might be a challenge. When there’s not enough staff, the library closes. If it closes, there is a social media blast, and Richard also puts a banner up on the library website and a message on the phone. One of the good things is that December is the slowest month of the year. Rachel noted that we should revisit the mask policy during the new business discussion, as this is a major flu season, and RSV and COVID are all going around.

*Padma moved to accept the Director’s Report, seconded by Rachel. Ayes: Rachel, Elizabeth, Padma, Fahad, Abby: Vote 5-0-0.*

**Unfinished Business**

- HVAC Project: Richard has been talking to Facilities. We are looking for a vendor who can start in April, with a construction season of April to October. In October, we will need heat in the building for the colder months.
- Trustee Vacancy: Has there been any interest? Richard is not aware of anyone who has expressed interest.
- Social Media Review: The Library staff does a lot of social media, but has not previously specifically examined responsibilities. There are a number of staff members for whom part of their job includes doing social media. We also have used some external sources – Sterling Brand Works did our website, logo and style guide, with a style that reflects the library, and posts automatically go to Facebook and Twitter. Minuteman

Library Network system and Massachusetts Library System help with social media education. We use Canva (paid subscription, as the professional version is better than the free one). We also use some of what Overdrive and Hoopla provide, as well. Internally, we don't have a single person dedicated to social media, but it's included as part of several people's jobs and they all enjoy doing it. Janel is responsible for the internal newsletter, signage, calendar on the webpage – she has a graphics background and won an award from the state for her work. Julie (Assistant Head of Circulation) does displays, and also has a graphics background. Nicole does most of the social media for the Children's Department. Heidi (Technical Services Department) does Facebook and Twitter posts. Richard is responsible for some postings on the website, like the winter lecture series, networking meetings (e.g., the Over 50 Job Seekers). We have two YouTube channels (one is archived). The staff divides this all up and the style guide makes us all be on the same page. We don't want to take things away from the people that are doing this, as they are enjoying this work. The Board asks that this information be written up and shared. It is good to take a look at how we're structured in doing this.

- Richard noted that we do keep statistics on social media posts, live posts, etc. Website analytics tells us where people come from (mobile Facebook page). Webpage does give SEO analytics, but maybe we should look at these analytics more.
- One suggestion was to maybe send reminder posts a day or week ahead of an event. Another suggestion was to add an Outlook or Apple calendar widget to each event – add it to the calendar options.
- Padma reported on outreach to UMass Lowell regarding the possibility of getting a social media or digital marketing intern. The UML representative noted that most college students are unlikely to be interested because they can get similar experience while getting paid for this work. He recommended looking for a high school intern, as most high schools now have internship program offices. Noreen said she was worried about supervision for a high school intern, and we must think about how this would work in a way that we are not disadvantaging the student or burdening the staff.
- FY24 Budget: The Library prepared a budget based on different guidelines; a 3% increase and a 2.5% increase, but the Finance Committee decided on 3.5%. We will make State Aid requirements without any problem. Given the 3.5%, Richard did adjust a few things (e.g., COLA was changed from 2.5% to 3%). Rachel asked how we know what has been subsumed under which line items – e.g., where do we see the cost of updating and maintaining the website (Richard noted that this particular item would be under computer software and hardware). There's typically nothing included under advertising, as we only do that for open positions, but perhaps we should include for outreach and development. It could establish a baseline moving forward that these line items could be a useful thing. Richard noted that the monthly budget has more detail, but the Board noted that it might be helpful to include an annual budget/record in that more detailed format. After some discussion, Elizabeth suggested that we continue to put forward the budget for Finance Committee in the format they request as a tactical matter, but perhaps the additional summaries of other work that we do and funds that we have that are included for Finance Committee can also be sent to the Trustees.

*Elizabeth moved to accept the budget as presented, Fahad seconded. Ayes: Padma, Elizabeth, Fahad, Rachel, Abby: Vote 5-0-0.*

- Meeting Room Policy: Proposed changes to the meeting room policy include eliminating procedural guidelines that are not policy. For instance, the language was changed to say we will charge an appropriate amount for the meeting room, without specifying the amount, so give us more flexibility for future changes. Only non-profits and town and government committees can use the meeting room. Library programs are the priority.
  - Food is only allowed in the first floor meeting room only.
  - The Board discussed whether there is discretion on allowing use of the space.
  - Rachel proposed breaking the policy into sections for ease of reading. She also noted it would be helpful to include a statement that all groups must adhere to any health and safety protocols adopted by Trustees. The Board agreed to divide the policy into sections and include language that say groups will be required to abide by all library policies while using the room.
  - The Board also discussed whether to include the policy revision dates in the policy. Elizabeth suggested using the word “Revised” and moving the policy revisions information down a few lines to give some separation and making the font a lighter gray.

*Elizabeth moved to accept the Meeting Room Policy with 3 revisions: to the policy revisions language, to formatting changes for easier reading, and to the language requiring groups to follow policies, Padma seconded. Ayes: Rachel, Fahad, Elizabeth, Padma, Abby: Vote 5-0-0.*

- Study Room Policy: People have been very happy with the set-up of the new study rooms. The study room policy also has some proposed updates, being more flexible about the times that can be reserved, which has been more popular with patrons.

*Padma moved to accept the Meeting Room Policy as presented, seconded by Fahad. Ayes: Rachel, Fahad, Elizabeth, Padma, Abby: Vote 5-0-0.*

### **New Business**

- Trustee Minutes: The Library has Trustee minutes going back to the 1800s, which are currently housed in the Library. Perhaps it would be better to house the minutes in the Town Hall archive because it will be a safer spot. Ashley Large, the town archivist is working to digitize documents, so she can work to digitize these, as well. We have minutes from 1888 on, though the library was founded in 1876. We want to send the print copies into the Town archive, so maybe up to the year 2000. The Board asked what the archive policies are and who sets them. Richard noted that they are public documents, but we should clarify what their retention policy is, so that they won't get rid of them. Richard will look into this. The archive is in a climate controlled, locked safe.
- Storytime Policy: There are some proposed changes to be reviewed.
- Town Caucus is on January 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. Michael and Richard discussed moving the Library Board of Trustees meeting to the 17<sup>th</sup>. Emily noted that the 17<sup>th</sup> is also the date of the Select Board Meeting.

*Rachel moved to move the next Library Board of Trustees meeting to January 17<sup>th</sup>, Elizabeth seconded. Ayes: Rachel, Fahad, Elizabeth, Padma, Abby: Vote 5-0-0.*

- There is no new information on the open Children's Librarian requisition. Richard said the position will be reposted next month after as there will be more graduate students completing their degrees in the spring.

- Rachel asked if there was any additional information following the MLN Director (Phil McNulty) visit. Richard stated it was good to have some interaction to see how different libraries handle various procedures (i.e. Library of Things). The Director was interested in our information technology setup and the software that we use. It is also good for our staff to meet members of the MLN staff. Perhaps, next year the Trustees can be made aware of the visit ahead of time.
- The Friends Book Sale was very successful, and there were no problems with requests to wear masks.
- Rachel wanted to consider, not as a policy, but some kind of sign, noting that we appreciate public health concerns (given that we are in a “tridemic”) and encourage everyone to mask. Perhaps we should look at policy next month. Perhaps check with the health department for any handouts about what to do – highlight books, magazine articles in the library. Maybe have links on the website to the CDC on RSV and Flu. People ask about the latest guidance all the time, so it might be a great service to the patrons. Richard noted that we want to be in sync with what the health department is doing. Elizabeth asked whether there’s some general messaging, such as: “its winter, practice all the good hygiene tips.”

### **Other Business**

- Town Caucus is on January 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM.
- There have been no new appointments.
- Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7PM via Zoom. Abby noted she may not be available to attend on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53. Rachel made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Fahad seconded. Approved - Ayes: Rachel, Elizabeth, Fahad, Padma, Abby: 5-0-0.

*Meeting minutes are respectfully submitted by Padma Choudry.*

*Documents distributed during the meeting: Agenda, Director's Report, FY24 Operating Budget 3.5% increase, Minutes from November meeting, November 2022 Expenditures, November 2022 Statistics, Meeting Room Policy (both current and draft markup), the Study Room Policy (both current and draft markup), and the Storytime Policy (both current and draft markup).*