

Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes
Tuesday November 14th, 2023, 7:00 PM
Hybrid meeting: Meeting Room & Online

In attendance: Fahad Alden, Padma Choudry, Elizabeth Hacala, Abby Hafer, Mike Pulizzi, Renae Nichols, Rachel Field

Other attendees: Emily Mitchell, Select Board; Dot Bergin, *The Bedford Citizen*
Administration: Richard Callaghan, Director; Noreen O’Gara, Assistant Director

Vice-Chair Alden called to Order at 7:03pm from the Meeting Room.

Public Comments

The Vice-Chair asked if there were any comments. None were forthcoming.

Secretary’s Report

Rachel pointed out a verb tense issue on page 3.

Mike raised a concern about there not being a person from Facilities/Town Manager’s office available at the meeting due to the School Committee conflict.

After some discussion the issue was postponed until later in the agenda.

Rachel moved and Mike seconded. Ayes: Abby, Padma, Elizabeth, Fahad, Rachel, Mike
Abstain – Renae

Vote 6-0-1

Director’s Report

- Janel Ranney is retiring after 20 years and a reception will be held on Nov 21 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the meeting room.
- Kathy Ruggeri who had retired from the library in 2020 passed away over the past weekend.
- Kathy’s family asked for memorial donations be made to the Bedford Free Public Library.
- Noreen will send out the visitation and funeral mass details to the board.
- Budget generally on track, a bit behind on salaries due to some positions being vacant.
- Still waiting for the state to approve the work on the 2nd elevator so we can legally use it.
- Foot traffic in the library is up about 8% over last year.
- Rachel pointed out a grammatical error in the Director’s Report.
- Rachel shared her experience of the printing system in Concord and suggested we consider that in the future if we replace a printer.

Padma moved as amended and Abby seconded.

Ayes: Abby, Padma, Elizabeth, Fahad, Rachel, Mike, Renae

Vote 7-0-0

Unfinished Business

- HVAC Project update
 - Facilities is preparing the bid documents.
 - Several Trustees expressed frustration that there was not representative from Facilities department due to the conflict with School Committee. The Facilities Department reports directly to the School Committee.
 - There was also concern about how to have strong relationship with Facilities while also advocating for the Library.
 - Richard pointed out the request for the Facilities representative at the meeting really should have gone from the chair of the Library Trustees to the chair of Select Board.
 - Elizabeth expressed frustration that we did not even have an opportunity to celebrate the unanimous passage of funding for the project before we got bogged down into process concerns.
 - Abby offered to write a chair-to-chair board to the Select Board.
 - Have a HVAC only meeting via Zoom or on another night. To avoid the conflict with School Committee.
 - Emily shared with the board the town protocols on communicating with employees. She also suggested sending the questions in advance for a meeting so the staff member can come in fully prepared for the meetings.
 - Emily clarified the police station project was shovel ready when we had to reshuffle the capital expenditures due to the pandemic.
 - Padma made a motion that the board empower Abby to write the Selectman Chair on how to best facilitate updates from Ron at a mutually agreed time. Seconded by Rachel
Ayes: Mike, Abby, Elizabeth, Rachel, Padma, Renae, Fahad -7-0-0

- FY25 Budget review
 - The Finance Committee guideline is 3.5% increase.
 - Includes a COLA increase of 3.5%.
 - It is a good amount for us that covers our State Aid requirements and the needs of the library. We will vote on the budget in December.
 - Richard included in the personnel line capacity for the Children's Librarian.
 - The books and material budget is increased a bit more to reflect the cost of materials. eBooks are part of the book budget. Noreen pointed out a book that is \$23 in print can be \$75-\$90 as an eBook.
 - We are scheduled for 7:00 pm on December 14 for Finance Committee.

New Business

- Appointment of a temporary chair/vice chair
Due to health reasons Abby needs to attend the meetings via Zoom. Fahad has been chairing the meeting and the question was raised if we should temporarily appoint a new chair. The Trustees decided to hold off on this for now. Fahad felt comfortable he could attend and lead the December meeting. Abby will lead the meetings starting in January when they are online.

- Safety/Emergency Guidelines
 - Richard let the Board know there is an emergency protocol handbook.

- We have defibrillators maintained by the Board of Health.
- Trauma kits are in the library also maintained by the Board of Health.
- We have had some active shooter and other trainings as well.

Other Business

- Winter Trustee meetings
The Trustees will hold a December Meeting in person
Rachel moved and Padma seconded.
Ayes: Elizabeth, Abby, Mike, Rachel, Padma, Fahad (Renaee had left the meeting)
Vote – 6-0-0

- Friends of the Library Annual Meeting: Saturday, December 2nd 10 a.m.

- Rachel asked about the Children’s Librarian. Noreen said the position will be filled by the end of the fiscal year. We have good coverage with the staff we have now filling in and the department is working well.

- Appointments: None

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 12th, 2023, in person.

Elizabeth moved for adjournment at 8:29 p.m. and Padma seconded.
Ayes: Elizabeth, Abby, Mike, Rachel, Padma, Fahad
Vote – 6-0-0