

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting  
November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

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The meeting was called to order by President Stephanie Najjar at 7:00pm. President Najjar noted that she would be recording minutes, as Recording Secretary Allison Lytle was absent.

As there was a quorum present, the roll call was taken:

**Present**

Anne Quinn  
Stephanie Najjar  
Dianne Caputo  
Wes Merrill  
Jean Ahearn  
Thomas Pappas  
Don McAllister  
Frances Bisazza-Gallugi  
Kate O'Brien

**Absent**

Sandra Fecteau  
Richard Shruhan

**Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting**

Tom Pappas had the following correction from the October minutes:

On page 8, paragraph 3, change the last sentence "Trustee Tom Pappas stated they asked him to report that issue to the Board." To "Trustee Tom Pappas stated they asked him to let someone know about this at the Library and Tom Pappas said he would bring it up at the next Library Trustee Board meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Don McAllister to approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 4th, 2019 as amended. The motion was seconded by Frances Bisazza-Gallugi. A vote was taken.

All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Receipt of Communications**

President Najjar stated there was no communication on which to report.

## **Director's Report**

Interim Library Director Cate Merlin presented the following report and provided the Trustees in attendance with written copies for their information.

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### **Staffing**

Candidate interviews to fill the vacant Public Services/Teen Department Aide position will begin this week. This position was vacated by Amy Titus, who became the new Children's/Teen Assistant in October. The Main Library has filled two vacant Page positions in the past month. Both the Main Library and West Branch Library still have one vacant Page position each, and we are actively seeking applications.

Interim Director Merlin is currently verifying all retroactive payments due to union staff, based on contract steps and raises, for September of 2018 through June of 2019. Barring any errors, staff should receive these payments in their November 20th paychecks.

The Library's newer Senior Staff have continued to impress as they bring their new ideas and enthusiasm to the Branches and Main Library. Monthly Department Head meetings have helped immensely to build staff morale and camaraderie. Longer term staff, especially Public Services Librarian Sharon Janus, Creativity Lab Librarian Mike Ahearn, and Senior Technology Librarian Yunan Guo, have been extremely helpful in both training new staff and taking on more responsibilities as necessary and reasonable.

As requested at the October meeting, Interim Director Merlin has prepared a current Organizational Chart for your reference, listing each position, staff member, and vacancies as of today.

### **Building & Grounds**

Elevator:

- After over four months of relief, the Main Library's elevator began to malfunction again, stopping below each floor. City Elevator adjusted the elevator's speed and valve settings, and Interim Director Merlin hopes that this will solve this problem for the time being.
- City Elevator has not yet replaced the lighting in the elevator, despite many reminders. Interim Director Merlin will be following up with them again this week.

HVAC:

- The Library renewed its contact with Limbach for HVAC servicing. The Library's prior two-year contract with Limbach expired in September. This contract renewal is valid for one year, at the same price.
- While performing yearly preventative work and looking for the cause of a persistent noise, a glycol (coolant) leak was discovered above the Second Floor Tech lab. The Limbach employee ordered a new valve, and will replace it as soon as it arrives.
- Preventative maintenance at the Branches is being scheduled.

West Branch:

- The City Facilities Department replaced, or disinfected and painted, several stained ceiling tiles at the West Branch.
- The Peabody Institute Library Foundation generously approved funds to purchase new furniture for the West Branch Library's Children's Room, in celebration of the West Branch Library's 30th Anniversary in the Spring. West Branch Children's Librarian Yahaira Cosme has planned a cost-effective refreshing of the Children's Room, including removing the stairs, cupboards, and sink, and repainting the walls to reflect a neutral, classic woodland theme.

Carpets:

- Due to carpet stains in all three buildings, Interim Director Merlin discussed renting a carpet cleaner, and having our custodial staff do some spot-cleaning this winter, with Trustees Shruhan and Merrill.
- Trustee Shruhan suggested looking into purchasing a carpet cleaner in the future, as hiring an outside service to perform a deep-clean is expensive and logistically complicated, due to required closures and drying times, and I will discuss this with City Facilities Director Jim Hafey.

### **Budget**

An updated budget is available for your review and questions if any.

### **Programs and Activities**

During this year's "Book-or-Treat" Halloween event on Main Street, the Library gave out over 450 free books to children and teens, funded by the Friends. Lines wound through the building, and the Library ran out of books well before the end of the event.

Interim Assistant Director Al Hayden will be training 35 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers from North Shore parochial schools at St. John's tomorrow. Interim Assistant Director Hayden is a certified professional development provider through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She will be sharing information about digital literacy, digital citizenship, digital media evaluation rubrics, and the resources that the Library can provide.

Senior Teen Librarian Joanna Corea has been visiting Peabody High School classes over the past month, and has issued or replaced over 600 library cards for Peabody teens. She has also checked out almost 400 books to these teens during her visits, which include book talks, discussing Library programs, and sharing our online services. She will return to the High School in the next few weeks to visit another 12 classes.

Creativity Lab Librarian Mike Ahearn has received positive feedback regarding the new age-based Open Labs, and we will continue to work with Trustee Ahearn to adjust policies regarding age requirements and tool availability.

Public Services Librarian Sharon Janus hosted a meeting for all Conversation Circle volunteer leaders. The volunteers shared best practices, learned how to use the Library's Pronunciator database, and expressed an interest in adding more Circles at the Beginner level.

## **Grants**

The Library was awarded a Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant for art-based English Learning. This grant was applied for by former Senior Community Relations & Public Programming Librarian Kelley Unger. Senior Adult Services & Public Programming Librarian Gabriela Toth has taken over the management of this grant, and will be working with local ELL teachers to create and implement combined art and English classes that encourage learners to express and celebrate their own cultures as they learn more about American culture and the English language. These classes will begin in Spring 2020.

## **Technology**

In the Children's Library at the Main Library, Senior Technology Librarian Yunan Guo replaced five desktop computers with two MacBook laptops, two Google Chromebooks, and two I pads. In addition to replacing outdated technology, these new devices will provide better access to research and homework resources, given the online nature of many Peabody school assignments, as well as more opportunities for educational games and entertainment.

Five laptop computers that had previously been reserved for Tech Lab classes have been permanently moved into the Creativity Lab. When the Senior Public Services Librarian position was eliminated, it was decided the Creativity Lab Librarian Mike Ahearn should take over the teaching of "introductory" computer courses that had previously fallen under the Public Services department. Now that these courses are being taught in the Creativity Lab, it was logical to move the additional laptops out of the Tech Lab, where they are rarely used, and into the Creativity Lab, in order to increase usage and potential class registration from 10 to 15 patrons.

## **Miscellaneous**

At the Peabody Institute Library Foundation's fall meeting, funds were approved for the annual spring concert series, as well as the annual lecture series by Professor Theo Theoharis, featuring American dramas in Spring 2020. In addition to approving funds to purchase the aforementioned new furniture for the West Branch Children's Room, the Foundation also approved funds to pay for the printing of the library's Event Brochure starting in the new year. The brochure will now be printed three times a year, and will be printed on 100% recycled paper by local Minuteman Press.

Interim Director Merlin met with the owner of Home Decor Group to discuss an unpleasant interaction with library staff in the Spring. The staff member in question returned a number of items, and told Home Decor staff that the Library would be purchasing the same materials from Home Depot instead. The owner was disappointed, as Home Decor does offer a City discount, and has never had a price complaint from the Library before. Interim Director Merlin apologized for the employee's bad form, and reiterated our commitment to supporting local businesses. Interim Director Merlin does not believe that the Library's relationship with Home Decor will suffer in the future.

On November 1st, in consultation with the Peabody Police Department, Interim Director Merlin issued a Notice of Trespass to Mr. Michael Judge for making threatening comments towards

library staff and creating an unsafe environment for library staff and patrons. This was reported in the Police Blotter section of Saturday's Salem News.

On a more positive note, Interim Assistant Director Hayden and Interim Director Merlin feel that this transition has gone as smoothly as they could have ever hoped, and are grateful to the staff for staying positive and committed in this uncertain time. Interim Director Merlin and Interim Assistant Director Hayden continue to focus on stability and morale, and to visit the branches at least once a week, to ensure that all staff feel valued and in the loop. Interim Director Merlin would like to thank the Trustees for your letter of support to the staff, and for your offers of help and guidance as Interim Assistant Director Hayden and Interim Director Merlin grow more comfortable and confident in our current roles.

And finally, after months of hard work, attention to detail, and creativity, by Interim Assistant Director Hayden, Library staff, and Interim Director Merlin, the Library's new website was launched just this morning, along with the Library's new events calendar, museum pass, and meeting room booking software, Assabet Interactive. Interim Director Merlin will send out press releases and marketing materials next week, as she believes this first week should be used to troubleshoot any errors and make any changes that are necessary as staff and patrons begin using each new system. Interim Director Merlin would appreciate your feedback and any suggestions or concerns- please feel free to email her your feedback or contact her to set up a time to meet. The website address has not changed: [www.peabodylibrary.org](http://www.peabodylibrary.org).

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A **MOTION** was made by Frances Bisazza-Gallugi to accept the Director's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Anne Quinn. A vote was taken.

All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Reports of the Committees**

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:** Trustee Wes Merrill stated that there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Interim Library Director. Trustee Anne Quinn asked about the roof with regards to winter weather approaching. Interim Director Merlin stated that funds for roof repairs and replacement are in the capital improvements plan with the city, and Director of City Facilities Jim Hafey is actively working on it, although it will not be addressed for this winter.

**AUDUBON PRINTS:** Committee Chair Richard Shruhan was absent.

**PERSONNEL:** Committee Chair Don McAllister stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Interim Library Director.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES:** Committee Chair Jean Ahearn stated that she will meet with Interim Director Merlin in the near future regarding Creativity Lab policies.

**LIAISON TO THE FRIENDS OF THE PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY:** Liaison Dianne Caputo reported that the next Friends meeting would be the coming Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**LIAISON TO THE PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY FOUNDATION:** Liaison Anne Quinn reported that the PIL Foundation held its annual meeting on October 23, 2019. At this meeting Officers and Directors for the year 2020 were elected with no changes. The Board discussed the recent Starry, Starry Night fundraiser. Foundation Treasurer, AnneMarie Burns, presented a preliminary financial report showing a net of \$4,785 which is less than last year. The Board discussed the possible reasons for this result, including an obviously lower turnout/ticket sales than expected. The Board acknowledged the contribution of Trustee Tom Pappas's performance on the trumpet which added to the sophistication of the music at the event.

President Martha Holden asked for Committee reports. There was no report from the Donor Cultivation/Development Committee given Melissa Robinson's recent resignation from the Library. Director Quinn reported on the activity of the Nominating Committee. The Committee met in July and developed a series of thoughts about recruiting new members to the Board. Notes were circulated, but there was no response. Thinking to use a "want-ad" approach to identify potential new Board members, text was drafted and distributed again, to no response. The request to the Friends to use their database/ mailing list was denied. Committee member Deb Holden resigned as being unable to commit the expected time. At the moment, this Committee is in "limbo." All agreed that the Foundation's major limitation is the lack of human resources to envision, plan, and execute fundraising events.

Director Quinn will work with Interim Library Director Merlin to get something on the Library's new website's Foundation page to elicit interested Library users who might be interested in joining the Foundation Board and/or being involved in planning and executing events. The Board did not decide on a next fund-raising event.

President Martha Holden raised the question of the Library's maintaining both a Foundation and a Friends group. Each has a different mission and different approach to fund-raising, but this can cause confusion among the limited donor base each is soliciting. President Holden will investigate what other libraries are doing having one – or more – fundraising groups.

The next Foundation meeting will be on January 8, 2020 at 6 pm.

**LIAISON TO THE PEABODY HISTORICAL SOCIETY:** Committee Chair Tom Pappas

A **MOTION** was made by Don McAllister to accept the Committee reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Frances Bisazza-Gallugi. A vote was taken.

All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **Unfinished Business**

President Najjar brought up the Library Director search. Beth O'Donnell said the posting closes on Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>. Beth will reach out to President Najjar to forward any resumes received for the position.

Need to purchase a gift for Melissa Robinson –Cate getting dates of service. Will present Melissa's gift at December meeting.

December meeting will be at Su Chang's 12/2/19. Cate Merlin to invite Mayor, Interim Asst Library Director, President of the Friends, President of the Foundation.

## **New Business**

Rosemary O'Brien was a former Trustee and is celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Daughter sent a note to past Trustees she worked with. Asked if individual board members want to write something on card that Don brought to meeting. Rosemary was the one who is credited with naming the Foundation event "Starry Starry Night."

Motion to change December 2nd meeting to 6:00 pm and be held at Su Changs Restaurant in Peabody.

All in favor: Yes      Any opposed: No      The motion was unanimously approved.

As there was no additional business to come before the Board, a **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Don McAllister and seconded by Tom Pappas. A vote was taken.

All in Favor: Yes.      Any Opposed: No.      The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Submitted by,

Stephanie Najjar  
Trustee President