

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting
August 3, 2020**

The August 3, 2020 Trustees Meeting was called to order by President Najjar at 7:00pm. This meeting was held via Zoom virtual webinar and was broadcasted live on PATV's television station and on Facebook. Meeting minutes taken by Madelyn Firth.

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

Stephanie Najjar, present
Richard Shruhan, present
Peter Bakula, present
Kate O'Brien, present
Anne Quinn, present
Don McAllister, present
Wes Merrill, present
Stephanie Dallaire, present
Morgan Yeo, present
Frances Gallugi, present
Tom Pappas, present

Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to accept the minutes of the meeting held on June 22, 2020. The motion was accepted by Wes Merrill, and seconded by Tom Pappas. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

Receipt of Communications

Director Merlin reported there were no communications received.

Library Director's Report

Staffing

Staff is currently working in the Main Library two full days per week, and one morning per month at the Branches. On their days not in the Library, they are working from home. Branch Staff continues to work in the Branches on their days not scheduled in the Main Library. We have found that since Curbside Services are so labor-intensive, that staff want to accomplish

more while in the buildings than they have time for. Therefore, we will be asking staff to return to working in the building full-time beginning the week after Labor Day.

Director Merlin is awaiting guidance from the MBLC regarding required numbers of hours open to maintain State Certification. Director Merlin hopes to meet all other requirements, other than the City budget, for FY21.

Under old MBLC rules, the Main Library would need to return to its full 63 hours, or 90% of that (57), over 6 days a week, for the public, beginning after Labor Day. It is unclear how this number factors in when not open to the public, and Director Merlin is hoping that the MBLC provides more clarification on this issue soon. Due to staffing cuts, we will not be able to open on Sundays, so the remaining Main Library hours of Mondays-Thursdays 9am-9pm, Fridays 9am-1pm, and Saturdays 9am-5pm, bring us to 60 hours per week over 6 days.

Staff continue to diligently follow social distancing and safety protocols. Staff remain healthy, and adhering to City guidelines regarding filling out daily health logs and staying home when not feeling well.

The position of Assistant Director is currently vacant, and has yet to be posted by HR. President Najjar and Director Merlin have discussed the posting of this position with the Head of Human Resources multiple times, and will update the board once a decision has been made to go ahead with posting the position. It should be noted that Interim Assistant Director Hayden has served in this position, in addition to fulfilling her role as Senior Head of Children's Services, since October 3, 2019- exactly 10 months ago today- and for exactly 5 months since she became permanent Director.

Services

Curbside Pickup of library materials has proven to be incredibly popular, and an average of 40-50 patrons pick up materials every Monday through Thursday, and Saturday mornings. Two weeks ago, we introduced Curbside Printing, by which patrons email us documents, we print them, and patrons pick them up during normal Curbside Pickup hours.

Director Merlin will be reaching out to the Director of the Peabody Council on Aging to begin mail-a-book deliveries for their homebound patrons, in addition to our current homebound delivery system.

Over the next week, we will be re-introducing the Museum Pass reservation system, now that many museums have reopened with new rules and regulations. We will also be introducing Book Grab Bags, which will allow us to help patrons find new materials through Reader's Advisory. Patrons may choose to receive up to five brand new books, DVDs, or audiobooks from the genre of their choice (i.e. Adult Nonfiction, Teen Graphic Novels, etc), or may ask for books on a certain subject (i.e. turtles for a 3 year old). In this way, patrons will stay in tune with our new arrivals, and keep utilizing our Curbside Services in a different way.

Senior West Branch Librarian Kristi Bryant has partnered with Peabody TV and the Peabody Historical Society to launch the local history project "COVID Chronicles", inviting Peabody

residents to chronicle and preserve their experiences during the pandemic. More information can be found here: <https://www.peabodylibrary.org/covidchronicles/>

Senior Adult Services & Public Programming Librarian Gabriela Toth is also adding more resources to our Library of Things, for which many items were purchased last year that were never circulated (ukuleles, yoga mats, turntable, etc). We feel that many of these items, plus new items such as a projector, games, and other activities will be helpful and interesting to patrons during these times. Director Merlin has included the proposed Lending Policy for all Library of Things items and would appreciate the Board's approval this evening.

Also being added to the Library of Things will be Chromebooks and additional Wi-Fi hotspots for patron use, using State Aid funds that have already been allocated for materials (considered to be anything that circulates). We believe that offering this technology will help our patrons who may be missing access to our in-building computers, and we also feel that adding Wi-Fi hotspots will help students when school begins, assuming there is a virtual aspect to the school year. We will create a specific lending policy for Chromebooks and present it to the Board when it's available.

All three libraries remain closed to the public, with services being offered out of the Main Library. At this time, Director Merlin strongly believes that is in the best interest of our staff and patrons to continue offering virtual and curbside services and programs to patrons for the rest of this summer. Opening to the public at this point would likely mean an end to our curbside and virtual services, as the monitoring, clearing, and safety protocols that would be necessary would need to be the focus of staff time in the building.

In addition, there are capacity limits to the spaces that are nearly filled right now due to staff presence, and the full-time presence that is expected in early September. Staff are busy working on every way we can help patrons from home, from their cars in the parking lot, over the phone, over email, and through our website and virtual programming. Director Merlin believes that the most prudent action to take right now is to have more staff in the building in order to enhance our current offerings, to add new services, and to be present in the building to best serve those who can be helped without setting foot in the library.

Building & Grounds

The Main Library elevator failed its annual inspection, due to the problems with leveling and speed that we've been having for years. We have until October 15th to pass a new inspection; the Head of City Facilities and Director Merlin plans on asking City Elevator to come fix the problem at the beginning of September. Of course, we're always searching for a long-term fix for these issues, which has eluded us thus far.

The Cold Water pump was replaced at the beginning of July, as it had failed. Limbach will be in the Main Library tomorrow morning to perform our annual HVAC checkup, and will install upgraded filters.

The lock to the Vault was stuck last week, due to an issue of heat and humidity inside the vault itself (given the lack of HVAC in the vault), in combination with the controlled climate on the

outside of the door. The locksmith cleaned the lock/pin mechanisms, and found much built-up dust in the grease, which also led to this temporary sticking.

Custodians will begin coming in a 3rd day every week to work on the grounds and outsides of all locations this week. They are also beginning a monthly spraying of all locations with the germ-eliminating spray that is used in the schools and lasts 4-6 weeks on surfaces.

Peabody School Department Proposal

The Assistant Superintendent approached me regarding using library spaces as hosts for daycare if the City adopts a hybrid in person/virtual learning model for the fall. This model will be made public and voted on at tomorrow evening's School Board meeting. The current proposal states that the outside organization that currently provides before- and after-care (For Kids Only, or FKO) will use spaces around the city to provide daycare for students on their days when they are not scheduled for in-classroom learning. Our Branch program rooms were suggested as a possible location for these daycares, and Director Merlin was approached regarding this on Friday.

The details are still far from final, but it has been proposed that small groups of students would be put in a daycare class together with 2 FKO staff during normal school day hours, and would use our South Branch and West Branch program rooms as their "classroom" on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Library staff would play no role in this daycare-we would only provide the physical space. Based on current state mandates for capacity in libraries and schools, the West Branch Library's program room could accommodate 9.4 people, and the South Branch Library's program room would accommodate 5.92 people, including both students and staff.

Some considerations:

- Library staff currently work in both branches Monday-Thursdays. With these children in the building, this will mean that library staff are no longer able to work in the Branches, as capacity numbers will quickly be reached, and shared restrooms and facilities will cause a problem.
- Branch staff will now only have access to their collections one day a week if they are comfortable coming on Wednesdays (if properly cleaned), and Curbside services will be affected.
- Library custodial staff do not have the time or resources to be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing the program rooms after school use.
- If Library staff isn't in the building, daycare providers will need to adhere to rules stating that children are not allowed into the rest of the library. If masks come off and children enter the library space, not to mention touching books and materials, this puts staff at risk.
- The current before- and after-care programs are not free to students, although there are vouchers and scholarships available. If this is not a free program, it may conflict with the library's policy that, "Commercial use of meeting rooms is strictly prohibited."

Overall, while the education of Peabody students is of course paramount to our City, the safety of Library staff and functioning of Library services is my first priority and responsibility. Director Merlin feels that there are many details and logistics that need to be worked out before agreeing to participate in this way, and would appreciate the Board's feedback.

Budget

Due to various vacations, an updated budget for FY21 is not available yet. Staff have begun ordering new materials, and all budgets have been adjusted to reflect our overall 17.21% cuts for FY21. There will be additional budget meetings coming up, as we were told in June, reflecting the current state of the City's finances, so this budget still may be in flux.

As we are unlikely to receive MBLC State Certification for FY21, Interim Assistant Director Hayden and myself have begun planning adjustments to the spending of current State Aid funds to both fill in for lost City funds this year, and to save funds for what will likely be lean times ahead. We have approximately \$110,000 in saved State Aid funds from previous years (these funds may be spent at any time, for any purpose the library deems necessary).

Policy

As was mentioned before, we are in the midst of adding new items to our Library of Things collection, and Director Merlin attached the Lending Policy to be agreed to by all patrons. Director Merlin would appreciate the Board's approval this evening.

Archives & Audubons

When we last spoke of this, it was decided to continue to evaluate the value and history of the library's Chickering piano. However, due to the City's discouragement of inviting unnecessary people into the buildings, we are not able to invite anyone from the outside into the buildings to continue the evaluation. Director Merlin believes that we should discuss this evening the state of this project.

The 20 Audubon prints that were sent out for conservation last Spring have come home to roost! This batch will be paid for, as always, by splitting the cost between State Aid, the Sawitsky Trust, and the Foundation. Director Merlin would appreciate a conversation this evening regarding the next step for this project. Director Merlin knows that we are legally bound to continue conservation, but have been unable to locate the specific language and stipulations. Her fear is that, without State Aid for FY21, and assuming that the Foundation faces the financial difficulties that many nonprofit organizations are facing these days, the funds will not be available for a full batch of 20 (this current batch's final cost is \$21,000). Deborah LaCamera at Studio TKM is amenable to working on a smaller batch this year, if we choose to do so.

Below is the link to the Dropbox folder that includes before and after images of all 20 prints:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pt34xp5lklwwxf8/AADJMw4H1xQGgT2MHFBijC3Wa?dl=0>

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to accept the Library Director's Report as presented. The Motion was approved by Don McAllister and was seconded by Tom Pappas. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

Reports of the Committees

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS: Committee Chair Wes Merrill stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director.

AUDUBON PRINTS: Committee Chair Richard Shruhan stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director.

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

POLICY AND PROCEDURES: Committee Chair Kate O'Brien would like to further discuss the Library of Things Circulation policy proposed by Director Merlin.

LIAISON TO THE FRIENDS OF THE PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY: Committee Chair Morgan Yeo stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director.

LIAISON TO THE PEABODY HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Liaison Thomas Pappas stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director.

LIAISON TO THE PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY FOUNDATION: Liaison Anne Quinn stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director.

Unfinished Business

President Najjar discussed the status of the Assistant Director position.

A **MOTION** was made by Richard Shruhan to direct the City of Peabody's Human Resource Department to internally post the Assistant Library Director position as a permanent position. The Motion was seconded by Stephanie Dallaire. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

President Najjar and Director Merlin will draft a letter to Peabody City Hall requesting the Assistant Library Director position be formally posted.

New Business

Director Cate Merlin will allow staff to safely return to work at the Library, in compliance with the State's reopening guidance.

A **MOTION** was made by Cate Merlin to accept the Library of Things Circulation policy. The Motion was approved by Tom Pappas and was seconded by Morgan Yeo. A vote was taken. All in Favor: No. Any Opposed: Yes, Anne Quinn opposed. The motion was approved.

The Board of Trustees discussed allowing Library space to be utilized for childcare services, and this topic requires further review due to the risk of COVID-19 and the potential impact childcare would have on regular daily Library operations. Director Merlin will update the Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be September 14, 2020, as the first Monday of the month is a holiday.

As there was no additional business to come before the Board, a **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Stephanie Najjar. The motion was approved by Anne Quinn and unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19pm.

Submitted by,

Madelyn Firth
Secretary