

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting  
February 3, 2020**

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The meeting was called to order by President Stephanie Najjar at 7:00pm. President Najjar noted the meeting was being recorded by Madelyn Firth.

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

**Present**

Rick Shruhan  
Peter Bakula  
Kate O'Brien  
Anne Quinn  
Don McAllister  
Wes Merrill  
Stephanie Dallaire  
Morgan Yeo  
Tom Pappas  
Sandra Fecteau  
Stephanie Najjar

**Absent**

Frances Bisazza-Gallugi

**The Group went around the table introducing themselves.**

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

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 13, 2019. The motion was seconded by Thomas Pappas.

A vote was taken.

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

**Receipt of Communications**

President Najjar reported there were no communications received.

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**Report of the Interim Library Director**

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

**Staffing**

This coming Monday, February 10th, all three library locations will be closed for an all-staff

training. The Main Library will open at 11am, and the South and West Branches will open at 12pm. This training will focus on the 2020 Census, new databases and online resources that the Library offers, and ensuring that all staff, old and new, get to know each other. To accommodate West Branch tax preparation appointments, Senior West Branch Librarian Kristi Bryant has volunteered to remain at the West Branch to admit tax preparers and preparees, while keeping the West Branch closed to the public so as to remain consistent with the other locations.

Interim Assistant Director and Senior Children's Librarian Al Hayden participated in St. John the Baptist's Literacy Day, and read stories to 30 preschoolers. Interim Assistant Director Hayden has also been nominated to serve on the Board of Directors of the Peabody Rotary Club beginning in July.

Senior Teen Librarian Joanna Corea has received her Yoga Teacher Training Certification, and an additional certification in teaching yoga to trauma victims of all ages. She is now certified and insured to teach free yoga classes at the library, and will begin classes for teens this spring.

Sunday Reference Librarian Unelia Videira remains out on family leave, and Library administration has had no issues covering her shifts.

### **Building & Grounds**

West Branch Children's Librarian Yahaira Cosme and Custodian Sean Meagher have begun the removal of the "Story Steps" in the West Branch Children's Room. Over the next few weeks, painting of the walls will begin, and new Children's furniture, funded by the Foundation, will begin to arrive, in anticipation of the West Branch's 30th Birthday in March.

The Library's new van is still awaiting license plates and lettering at the City garage.

Interim Director Merlin will be speaking with the Mayor regarding the state of the West Branch Library's roof. As was discussed in last month's meeting, the roof is original, from 1990. Her goal is for the Mayor to deem it necessary to put a capital funding request before the City Council for a full roof replacement.

In the fall of 2018, Former Library Director Robinson received three quotes to replace the two air conditioner condenser units at the South Branch. This project was stalled in the spring of 2019 due to the budget process. Interim Director Merlin am working with Head of City Facilities Jim Hafey to re-start the process and request new quotes for the project.

Interim Director Merlin has reached out to Police Chief Griffin regarding the Main Library's woefully inadequate and outdated security camera system, and will be meeting with him this coming Thursday morning to determine options going forward. Her hope is to upgrade, if not replace, the system here over the next few years, and she is meeting with Chief Griffin to determine short-term fixes and long-term needs, costs, benefits, concerns, and funding

options.

### **Budget**

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

Interim Director Merlin is requesting that the Board vote to release \$2,000 from the Dorothea Osbourne book trust for children and teen summer reading books.

### **Programs and Activities**

The new Winter/Spring Events Brochure has arrived, with a new design, and now printed on 100% recycled paper by Minuteman Press of Peabody, and funded by the Foundation. Interim Director Merlin has provided copies so that you may see what we have in store through April.

The first Music at Eden's Edge Spring concert was well attended, and continues their tradition of popular concerts here. Unfortunately, the group is disbanding after this concert series, so Senior Adult Services Librarian Gabriela Toth is looking for new musical groups to add to this fall's concert series.

The South Branch held a very popular healthy soup cooking demonstration this past week, with a full house of over 30 attendees. Gentle Yoga at the West Branch, Acrylic Painting and Beginning Hand Embroidery at the Main Library are also well attended, and together with frequently requested and well attended teen mental health and relaxation drop-in programs, show a continued interest in adult and teen wellness, creativity, and arts programming.

Creativity Lab project-based classes continue to be popular, with a full house of teens and adults for the recent "Make a Reusable Shopping Bag" 2-part class. Computer-based technology classes, such as Excel and Website Design, which are now taught in the Creativity Lab, are also filled to capacity. Children's STEAM and LEGO programming at all three locations are also incredibly popular, showing a continued interest in technology programming for all ages.

The library is currently participating in the annual pajama drive sponsored by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and the Boston Bruins from February 1-March 15. These pajamas are distributed to babies, children and teens served by the Department of Youth and Families and the non-profit organization Cradles to Crayons.

The annual Food for Fines program to benefit the Haven from Hunger is currently running from February 1 - March 1 this year. Patrons who donate non-perishable food items will have their overdue fines on Peabody-owned items forgiven.

A reminder that PILCON, the library's 4th annual free all-ages comic con event, will be taking place on Saturday, May 2nd.

A reminder that Birds & Bubbly, the new annual Foundation fundraiser centered on our Audubon prints, is scheduled for Friday, May 8th, followed by the free family open house event Birds & Books that Saturday, May 9th. The ticket price for Birds & Bubbly will be \$40 per person, and the Foundation will begin to advertise in earnest, focusing both on committed library supporters and attracting interest from people who may not be aware of our treasures.

Preparation and planning for the upcoming Summer Reading program has begun. This summer, all children, teens, and, for the first time in years, adults, are invited to participate in our "Reading is for Everyone: Imagine Your Story!" 2020 Summer Reading Program. All participants will receive a new free book for signing up, generously funded by the Friends, and will have the chance to earn more incentives (from Topsfield Fair tickets to gift cards to raffle entries) by participating in library activities and programs throughout the summer. Summer Reading will run from June 29th through August 10th.

### **2020 Census**

After meeting with the Mayor's 2020 Complete Census Count Committee, Interim Director Merlin has volunteered the Main Library as an Enumeration Station beginning in mid-March. During the all-staff training on February 10th, all staff will learn how to assist patrons in filling out the census online, including what library staff can and cannot do for a patron, and where to direct them for further assistance. The neighborhood south of Main Street is a federally designated "Hard to Count" district (historically less than a 60% response rate), and many of the Main Library's patrons live in this area.

Interim Director Merlin hopes that, as trusted public employees, explaining the program and encouraging patrons to fill out the census will help to overcome any suspicion or distrust that certain patrons may have of this federal program. Well trained staff will help to explain the basics of the process to patrons who may not be comfortable using a computer or phone for this process. Library staff will also be going out in the community with tablets and Wi-Fi hotspots to encourage online census participation at Haven From Hunger and other community locations. Census statistics also determine federal and state representation and funding, and it is staff responsibility to explain how filling out the census is in everyone's best interest and is not a threatening or overwhelming task.

### **Archives**

Trustee Quinn and Archivist Erik Bauer have begun researching the provenance and history of the library's Chickering piano, in order to determine its worth, historical importance, and playability after restoration, before moving forward. Repairs will be made on site here at the

Library, and we are awaiting confirmation that wood will be added to the piano where it has fallen off, instead of painting over damaged spots.

### **Audubon Prints**

Studio TKM Prints has not yet begun the conservation of the library's prints, so Interim Director Merlin has not yet received possible tour dates. She will keep the Board updated.

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A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to accept the Interim Director's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Rick Shruhan.

A vote was taken.

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

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### **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 reported we have a new Peabody Institute Library secretary.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES:** Committee Chair Kate O'Brien stated there was nothing to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director.

**LIAISON TO THE FRIENDS OF THE PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY:** Committee Chair Morgan Yeo stated to report in addition to the report provided by the Library Director. She noted she would be meeting with Friends of the Peabody Institute Library on Wednesday.

**LIAISON TO THE PEABODY HISTORICAL SOCIETY:** Liaison Thomas Pappas reminded the committee about the "Skeletons in the Closet a Memorialization of George Jacobs Sr. and Rebecca Nurse after the 1692 Witch Trials" event that will be held on February 9 at 2:00pm at the Felton-Smith Barn located at 38 Felton Street, Peabody.

**LIAISON TO THE PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY FOUNDATION:** Liaison Anne Quinn commented on the promotional flyer for Birds & Bubbly event and stated raffle tickets will be \$10 each. Trustee Quinn is working to identify the serial number of the Chickering piano. She read aloud parts of a letter she discovered in archived boxes at the Phillips Library in Rowley written by George Peabody to the Trustees that referenced the original grand piano that was gifted to the library by George (not the Chickering piano that will be restored). Trustee Quinn stated it would cost \$85 for a piano technician to evaluate the piano for playability and provide expert advice on how the Board of Trustees should proceed.

A **MOTION** was made by Anne Quinn for the Board to approve this expenditure of \$85 to cover the piano technician fee. The motion was seconded Richard Shruhan.

A vote was taken.

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

On March 27<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm the Windows event will take place at the Main Library. Sponsors of \$500 receive a plaque, the Foundation is sponsoring a plaque in memory of Superintendent Cara Murtagh.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to accept the Committee reports as presented. The motion was seconded Don McAllister.

A vote was taken.

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

### **Unfinished Business**

President Najjar inquired about who reached out to the Peabody Essex Museum Conservator regarding the piano conservation and restoration, as she has two contacts with expertise in music and pianos and she will share their contact information.

President Najjar reported the Hiring Committee will meet on Monday to discuss the Library Director search to have the first round of interviews. There will be a special Trustee meeting held when a final candidate is identified and a date and time will be coordinated.

### **New Business**

A **MOTION** was made by Tom Pappas to release \$2000 to cover fees for children and teen summer reading books. The motion was seconded Richard Shruhan.

A vote was taken.

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

President Najjar noted George Peabody's 225<sup>th</sup> birthday is on February 18<sup>th</sup> and a cake and coffee celebration of his birthday event will be sponsored by the Board. The Board decided the event will be held at 9:30 am on Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at the Main Library. The event will be posted on the website and PAT. Trustee McAllister volunteered to order the wreath from Evans and he will pick it up. President Najjar will order and pick up the cake and coffee.

President Najjar reminded the Board that the next Trustees meeting would be held on Monday, March 2, 2020.

As there was no additional business to come before the Board, a **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Stephanie Najjar. The motion was seconded by Don McAllister.

A vote was taken.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

Submitted by,

Madelyn Firth  
Secretary