

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting
June 1, 2020**

The June 1, 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.

President Najjar introduced herself and welcomed everyone back, as the April 6, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting was canceled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. President Najjar expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Board to Library Director Cate Merlin, Assistant Director Al Hayden, and to the entire Library staff for their exceptional work during these difficult and challenging times.

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 approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 2, 2019. The motion was seconded by Don McAllister. 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.

Library Director's Report

Library Director Cate Merlin presented the following report; digital versions were shared with board members prior to the webinar via email.

Staffing

All staff remain healthy, and working from home to the best of their abilities and to the extent that their positions allow. Professional development, from articles to webinars, has been assigned to all staff based on their interests and duties. Weekly virtual staff meetings ensure that lines of communication are open, and allow all staff to have large group conversations and ask questions.

The position of Assistant Director is currently vacant, and Director Merlin discussed the posting of this position with President Najjar and Head of Human Resources Beth O'Donnell, and will update the board once a decision has been made to go ahead with posting the position.

Due to anticipated City budget shortcomings due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic, part-time layoffs in multiple City departments have included all eight Library Pages (effective 5/15) and all 13 Library Aides (effective 5/29). The loss of these Pages is unfortunate, as these teenagers have been very dedicated to the Library during their employment. The 13 Aides are a devastating loss to the Library, as they made up the vast majority of our front-facing Public Services and Circulation staff, and have always impressed with their passion, flexibility, and skill at working with the public. As of now, none of these positions are included in the FY21 budget.

Various staff are working in the buildings on a very part-time basis based on the necessary functions of their positions (custodians, bookkeeping, materials processing, invoice payment, etc.). There are no more than two staff in the building at a time, and staff follow social distancing guidelines, wear masks, use sanitizer, and frequently wash their hands.

Building & Grounds

Custodians continue to work in all three buildings on a part-time basis. No problems have been reported in any buildings.

Limbach has performed our annual spring checkup at all three buildings. They finished the repairs of the Main Library HVAC system due to the leak in November, so the Main Library Air Conditioning system is ready for the summer.

The City Facilities Department is constructing movable plexiglass barriers to place between staff and patrons at Public Services desks. Interim Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin have begun discussing the physical changes that will be necessary in order to begin allowing the public back into each building. Many physical changes will have to be made beyond and policies created beyond erecting shields, including the moving of furniture, placement of computers, one-way entrances and exits, how to monitor the number of people

inside the building, how to ensure that everyone is wearing a mask, etc. The Library will follow the workplace safety guidelines issued by the State, in conjunction with the Board of Health. As we continue to work with the Board of Health to determine the changes and supplies that are necessary for the future, and they will keep the Board updated.

Budget

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

The FY21 Budget is still in flux. The City is anticipating large shortcomings for FY21, beginning July 1, which have already begun to affect the library in the form of the aforementioned part-time staff layoffs. Director Merlin will be meeting with the City this coming Thursday to continue the process and discussions.

As of now, the MBLC has waived two of the three requirements for next year's State Aid Certification. All funds spent on materials, and all hours open, as of the Governor's State of Emergency Declaration on March 10, 2020, are eligible for FY21 State Certification. However, the MBLC has decided to keep in place the Total Appropriated Municipal Income requirement, which required that the Library's FY21 budget equal the average of the past three year's budgets plus 2.5%.

The MBLC has stated that they expect that many libraries will apply for waivers. As they understand that city and town budgets are being adversely affected. In order to receive a waiver, the MBLC states:

“The Board cautions against cuts to library budgets by municipalities that are disproportionate in nature; i.e., the library is singled out for steeper cuts than other municipal departments. A budget cut is considered disproportionate when the library budget reduction exceeds the overall municipal budget cut by 5% or more.”

Programs and Activities

Library staff have proven creative and flexible, as they have pivoted their talents and passion to developing online and virtual programming for patrons, including:

- Virtual story times
- Virtual presenters (yoga, ballet, meditation)
- Virtual technology classes
- Virtual readers advisory
- Issuing almost 100 temporary library cards to new patrons
- Adding multiple new databases for patron use, and offering trainings and information to patrons through social media and our website
- Beginning soon- virtual reference help, virtual technology Q&A

The usage of our online databases such as Overdrive/Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy, has increased from 50% to 200%, based on the database. We anticipate that virtual and online programming will be the main way that we offer programming during FY21, and are working

with staff to establish best practices and policies. Patrons have been supportive of this type of programming, and staff are excited to continue to learn new skills that they can use in this new normal.

With the support of the Mayor, Creativity Lab librarian Mike Ahearn has been using library 3D printers at home to create reusable face shields for DPS staff, and Atrius Health and Lahey Health workers. The Salem News recently published a story about his work, using an NIH-approved 3D printer design, elastic, and plastic sheeting. He has mailed out almost 100 masks thus far.

We have mailed out over 800 free packets to seeds to patrons, to continue last year's successful PeaPod seed library. We are also developing a local history project, in order to help people preserve their memories and experiences curing the pandemic, in conjunction with the Peabody Historical Society, and more details will be available soon.

Interim Assistant Director Hayden has designed a low-pressure and virtual Summer Reading program for this coming summer, encouraging reading together with families. The packet, along with book suggestions that are accessible through our online databases, will be emailed to patrons and available on our website.

Our free Summer Lunch program will take a different form this year. We will not be serving lunch at the Main Library, as Haven from Hunger has been a very popular site this spring thus far. However, it has been determined that the South and West Branches are near to many young people who will need lunch provided this summer. In talks with Citizens Inn and City Hall, we would like to allow the Summer Lunch program to serve children on a grab-and-go basis in the parking lots of the Branches. The Library will allow Citizens Inn to deliver and hand out lunches to children in each parking lot, with no eating on the premises allowed, and no Library staff will be involved unless they volunteer on their own time. Citizens Inn will use grant funding to print and distribute the aforementioned Summer Reading packets, to be included with all lunches. Director Merlin would appreciate the Board's approval of this use of the Branch parking lots, beginning June 29. Citizens Inn has been providing this service in partnership with the School Department since March, and we are confident in their ability to serve lunches in the safest and most efficient way possible.

Policy

In the March meeting, Director Merlin outlined policy proposals for the Creativity Lab Maker Policy and Creativity Lab Guidelines for Tool Usage, the adoption of a new Mobile Hotspot Checkout Agreement, and the adoption of NOBLE's AutoRenewal Policy. Director Merlin sent copies of the policy proposals for review, and request that they are voted upon during this meeting, as it was previously decided that they would be voted upon at the cancelled April meeting. Even though these are not all relevant to library operations at the moment, they are still policies that will be important to adopt as the reopening process continues.

As you may know, Governor Baker's reopening plan for Massachusetts allowed libraries to begin curbside pickup as early as this past Monday 5/25. As of today, no NOBLE libraries have

begun to offer this service yet, and I have been in weekly communication with other NOBLE directors regarding their plans and target dates. We are not in a position to offer this service at this moment, because much coordination is needed between City Hall, the Library, the Board of Health, and other City departments.

Interim Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin believe that, when the time is right, offering curbside pickup of library materials to our patrons is a safe way of beginning to re-establish our in-person services. You have received our proposed Curbside Pickup plan, and Director Merlin requests that the Board discuss this tonight and set a date to vote on its adoption.

Director Merlin discussed this plan and its implementation with the City, HR, and Board of Health. Once this plan is approved by the Trustees and then by City administration, there is a minimum two week time period required to determine a weekly schedule for staff and patrons, train staff in best practices, and publicize this to patrons. There is no date proposed for the beginning of Curbside Pickup as of yet, but Director Merlin thinks that it is important to get Board input as we begin to move forward. The safety of our staff and patrons is the most important thing, and we believe that this plan offers a reasonable means by which to offer materials to patrons without putting anyone in danger, if protocols are carefully followed.

The book drops at all three locations have remained unlocked since we closed on March 16th, and custodians regularly empty the materials inside. These materials are not being checked in, and won't be checked in until we begin to get ready for Curbside Pickup as staff are not regularly working in the buildings. NOBLE has extended all due dates for items that were checked out on March 15th through June 23rd, and no overdue fines are accruing.

Interim Assistant Director Hayden and Director Merlin are also working on a larger-scale, multi-phase reopening plan, which will be presented to the board at a later date.

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

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all non-essential projects have been cancelled or are on hold until the buildings reopen.

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 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 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.

A **MOTION** was made by Don McAllister to accept the Committee reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Kate O'Brien. A vote was taken.

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

Unfinished Business

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to approve the use of the Library parking lot this summer for the lunch program. The Motion was approved by Don McAllister and was seconded by Kate Obrien. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to approve the Creativity Lab Maker policy. The Motion was approved by Fran Gallugi and was seconded Tom Pappas. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to approve the Creativity Lab Guidelines for Tool Usage. The Motion was approved by Fran Gallugi and was seconded Tom Pappas. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to approve the new Mobile Hotspot Checkout Agreement. The Motion was approved by Don McAllister and was seconded Kate Obrien. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to approve the adoption of NOBLE's AutoRenewal Policy. The Motion was approved by Wes Merrill and was seconded Morgan Yeo. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Business

The “new normal” of the Library’s functions and operations were discussed by the board, including curbside pickup and kid’s story time.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to accept the draft Curbside plan. The Motion was approved by Stephanie Dallaire and was seconded by Fran Gallugi. A vote was taken. All in Favor: Yes. Any Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Najjar to suspend July and August recess and to schedule July and August meetings. The Motion was approved by Wes Merrill and was seconded Morgan Yeo. A vote was taken. 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 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 8:00pm.

Submitted by,

Madelyn Firth
Secretary