

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting
September 13th, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Pappas at 7:04pm.

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

Present

Peter Bakula
Fran Gallugi
Anne Quinn
Don McAllister
Stephanie Najjar
Kate O'Brien
Thomas Pappas
Morgan Yeo

Absent

Rick Shruhan
Stephanie Dallaire

Approval of the agenda

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee McAllister to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

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

Approval of minutes

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Najjar to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister. Trustee Quinn questioned an error on page 10 that was discussed and explained.

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

Receipt of Communications

President Pappas reported there were no communications received.

Director's Report to the Board of Library Trustees

The Director's Report was read by Assistant Director Al Hayden.

Staffing

Since the Trustees last met, the Library has hired 10 Aides, for a total of 15 who now work between all 3 locations. Both new and returning Aides have embraced this new model, and all are thankful to have returned to full staffing, which allowed a return to full hours this past week.

Former Teen/Children's Assistant Librarian Amy Titus accepted the position of Senior South Branch Librarian earlier this summer, and is doing a fantastic job in her new position. Former Aide Amory Thomas accepted the vacated position of Teen/Children's Assistant Librarian, and is also doing a wonderful job of working between the two departments.

Senior Custodian Sean Meagher is out on medical leave. The position left vacant by the retirement of the other Senior Custodian this past May is being posted this week, but in the meantime, all are thankful to part-time Custodian Dave Farley for going above and beyond to keep all 3 buildings functioning, and to all staff for jumping in to help while staff wait for a new custodian to begin.

Reopening

All 3 Library locations are now fully open to their pre-pandemic hours! This summer was particularly hard for staff, given vacations, leaves, and training of new staff, but the light at the end of the tunnel (full staffing) helped all soldier through. There is a definite sense of relief among existing staff, as the past year and a half has been both emotionally and physically exhausting, but all can take a deep breath now, and hope for better days ahead.

The City put into place a municipal building mask requirement this past week, which is a relief to all staff and most patrons. The Library does provide accommodations for those who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask while in the buildings, and provide masks to anyone who needs or wants one. The return of masking means that the Library is now able to resume limited indoor programming, which is exciting to all. All plastic barriers, hand sanitizer dispensers, and wipes dispensers remain in place.

Budget

Director Merlin provided the current budget; nothing is of concern. She is completing the annual MBLC Financial Reporting that is due in October, and there will be no need to apply for a Waiver this year.

Programs & Initiatives

Outdoor summer programming was a huge success, especially for Children's Programming. Senior Children's Librarian Allison Bridgewater and other Children's staff held outdoor storytimes and yoga classes nearly every day of the week all summer, and patrons were happy to return to a semblance of normal. Staff plan on introducing limited indoor programming in October, following the Health Department's guidance which requires masking, distancing of 3' between all staff and patrons, and keeping a list of attendees and contact information for 3 weeks, to use only if contact tracing is necessary.

Audubons

As Director Merlin mentioned at the last meeting, the FY22 budget has been finalized at a level that guarantees MBLC certification. The Foundation approved her request to restart Audubon preservation (albeit at a reduced level for this year). Director Merlin proposes that the Board approve the restarting of this process, using the funds from State Aid that were allocated for this purpose.

Building & Grounds

The Main Library's elevator is broken, and has been for around 2 weeks now. City Facilities Director Jim Hafey, Trustee Pappas, and Trustee Shruhan have been discussing the issue, which all comes down to the bio-oil in the system from years ago. City Elevator is currently waiting on a replacement valve that is slow to arrive due to supply chain delays, and then City Elevator will replace the valve, and drain and replace all oil in the system. Jim Hafey provides a summary of the situation below:

“As it turns out the bio oil approved for use during the installation of this elevator was a terrible misstep. Not only did it not perform hydraulically as it should have, but after repeated use under pressure it becomes gelatinous to the point of being like peanut butter, with a corrosive quality.

Yes, the oil was replaced to the greatest extent possible but it is now the small amount of residual bio oil that continues to cause the disruptions. The only solution at this point is to replace the oil again and dilute the problem. Warranties are only valid for use under normal conditions, and the bio oil was outside manufacturers specifications. I've looked into strainers and filters to separate the bio oil but they will not work.”

Director Merlin is in nearly constant contact with Director Hafey, and will update the Board as soon as the repairs are scheduled.

There was a **MOTION** to approve the Director's Report by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gallugi. Trustee Quinn questioned who approved the bio-oil for the elevator, which is still dysfunctional. No substantial answer was given. President Pappas explained possible reasons to the best of his ability and reported that he has started researching the mechanical issue. He expressed the need for more investigation into the root of the problem. The issue will be further discussed and reported.

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

There was a **MOTION** to approve the restarting of Audubon Preservation by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gallugi.

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

Reports of the Committees

Building and Grounds

Nothing to report. Short discussion of photo taken on library roof with President Pappas, Assistant Director Hayden, and Trustee Shruhan.

Friends of the Peabody Library

The Friends of the Library is in the process of being absorbed by the Foundation. This will be discussed at the Foundation's next meeting; more information forthcoming.

Personnel

Praise for maintaining staff. There is healthy continuity of employees; patrons have noticed and expressed appreciation.

Policy and Procedures

Nothing to report.

Historical Society

Trustee Dallaire is absent. President Pappas expressed interest in building bridges between the Library and the Historical Society. Mr. Bonfanti is the current president of the Historical Society.

Public Relations

Trustee Najjar discussed the Library's need for social media presence as well as committed public relations staff skilled in social media and technology. Said individual could be a citizen who needs community service. These efforts would give the Library and its Trustees more visibility in the community. Trustee Najjar added that the Foundation will be selling bags and pens for two days at the Topsfield Fair, with proceeds to go to the Foundation. Assistant Director Hayden discussed ideas for social media; the Teen Librarian is involved with the platform TikTok as it is popular with teen demographic. There is a need to keep positive messages out about the Library and trustees.

A **MOTION** was made to accept community reports by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

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

Unfinished Business

Trustees shared largely positive thoughts on the libraries. Trustee Quinn reported an unpleasant visit in which she was not recognized as a trustee. Trustee Quinn brought up the

point of reinstating a budget line for trustee expenses; Director Merlin is looking into this.

New Business

Positive public relations messages to be discussed at the next meeting.

Trustee McAllister visited the grave of George Peabody and reported the site was well looked-after.

Trustee Bakula likes the new self checkout aspect. Trustee Yeo commented that the Teen Room was in excellent order.

It was noted that the library takes requests for books and will order materials that are not in stock.

The next meeting will be on October 4th, 2021 at 7pm on location at the Main Library. As there was no additional business to come before the board, a Motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Submitted by,

Sarah Boçi, Recording Secretary, based on notes taken by Trustee Gallugi.