

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting
January 10th, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Pappas at 7:01pm, with quorum having been reached at 6:59pm. The meeting was held simultaneously on Zoom and in-person and broadcast live on PATV's television station. President Pappas cited open meeting laws. Viewers were allowed to pose questions or comments to the chair.

The roll call was taken:

Present

Peter Bakula
Don McAllister
Frances Gallugi
Stephanie Najjar
Kate O'Brien
Thomas Pappas
Anne Quinn
Richard Shruhan
Jennifer Smith
Ruth Titelbaum
Katrina Vassallo

Absent

Stephanie Dallaire

President Pappas introduced the three new Trustees: Jennifer Smith, Ruth Titelbaum, and Katrina Vassallo. The Board is now full with a good cross-functional knowledge. President Pappas noted the dedication of the Board of Trustees creates active involvement in the library and therefore the community. The Board then introduced themselves individually.

There was a **Motion** to suspend the rules of the board in order to elect the Officers of the PIL Board of Trustees for the term of January 2022 to December 2022 made by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

President Pappas stated that while under the suspension of rules, the Board would proceed with the election of officers for 2022. President Pappas stated that Recording Secretary Sarah Boçi would run the elections.

Recording Secretary Boçi called for nominations of the President of the Board of Trustees. A **Motion** to nominate Thomas Pappas as President of the Board was made by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Trustee Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

There were no additional nominations to the office of the President of the Board of Trustees.

Recording Secretary Boçi called for a vote on the nomination. The nomination of Thomas Pappas as President of the Peabody Institute Library Board of Trustees for the January 2022 to December 2022 term was unanimously approved by the Trustees in attendance by a voice vote.

There was a **Motion** to close nominations for President by Trustee McAllister. The motion was seconded by Richard Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

Recording Secretary Boçi called for nominations of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. A **Motion** to nominate Trustee McAllister was made by Trustee Quinn. Trustee McAllister declined the nomination. A Motion to nominate Trustee O'Brien was made by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Richard Shruhan.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

There were no additional nominations to the office of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

Recording Secretary Boçi called for a vote of the nomination. The nomination of Trustee O'Brien as Treasurer of the Peabody Institute Library Board of Trustees for the January 2022 to December 2022 term was unanimously approved by the Trustees in attendance by a voice vote.

There was a **Motion** to close the nominations for Treasurer by President Pappas. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

There was a **Motion** to resume the normal rules of the Board by Trustee Najjar. A vote was taken.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

Voting order was established by means of lottery. Library Director Cate Merlin drew numbers for Trustees Gallugi, Dallaire, and O'Brien.

Voting order established as follows:

1. Ruth Titelbaum
2. Don McAllister
3. Jennifer Smith
4. Kate O'Brien
5. Stephanie Dallaire
6. Richard Shruhan
7. Fran Gallugi
8. Stephanie Najjar
9. Peter Bakula
10. Katrina Vassallo
11. Anne Quinn
12. Thomas Pappas

President Pappas offered background on voting order and noted that voting in order was difficult and time-consuming, especially with Zoom participation.

President Pappas proposed the following changes to alignment of the Board of Trustees with subcommittees:

- Audubon - Kate O'Brien
- Historical Society - Anne Quinn
- Friends of the Peabody Library Foundation - Stephanie Najjar
- Building and Grounds - Richard Shruhan
- Personnel - Don McAllister
- Policies and Procedures - Kate O'Brien

Director Merlin described Policies and Procedures as centering on collection development policy, such as procedures for Requests for Reconsideration and updating library collections in accordance with the airtight policy. Trustee Vassallo volunteered to help.

Trustee Najjar stated that public relations falls to the Library Director. Director Merlin stated that staff conduct their own marketing efforts with publicity and graphics. To have all the Trustees willing to amplify public relations efforts is better than placing the onus on an individual because library staff publicize their efforts themselves. It is unnecessary to have one person dedicated to public relations, as there would not be enough work to justify the appointment.

President Pappas asked if the Board should assign trustees to committees. It was decided to leave the committee chairs as is.

Approval & discussion of the minutes from the previous meeting

Director Merlin noted that Trustee Quinn had suggested edits for the previous minutes. The section about the newspaper article was edited to state that the article was in the Salem News and focused on fine-free policy and new initiatives. Trustee Quinn also edited language about the George Peabody medal discussions.

There was a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of December's meeting by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

This vote was carried out in voting order.

There were no communications received.

Trustee Quinn noted that the Board had conducted individual voting before and asked if it was necessary for the minutes. President Pappas stated that he would entertain other ideas and asked Trustee Quinn for her opinion. Trustee Najjar stated that voting in order is more appropriate for matters of greater import. Trustee McAllister agreed, noting that the board is not contentious.

Receipt of Communications

None.

Director's Report to the Board of Library Trustees

Staffing

A large proportion of full- and part-time staff are out for long periods of time.

Understandably, this is affecting all staff member's schedules and duties, as coverage of all Public Service Desks is paramount. For the record, each Branch requires a minimum of 2 staff members at a time to be open to the public (4 people over the course of a 12-hour Tuesday or Thursday), and the Main Library requires a minimum of 6 people at a time to be open to the public (12 people over the course of a 12-hour Monday-Thursday). The Library has not yet reached this point, but all should all be aware that a reduction of hours may at some point be necessary over the course of the current COVID surge. All staff are being incredibly flexible as staffing needs change.

Programs & Initiatives

Due to the state of the pandemic and the importance of keeping patrons and staff safe, Director Merlin has cancelled, or moved online to Zoom, all in-person programming for all ages through the end of January, and will reassess at the end of the month regarding February in-person programming.

The LSTA grant application process for "Our Garden" begins this month and continues through June.

Senior Adult Services Librarian Gabriela Toth and Senior Local History Librarian have begun their year-long community read program “Roots to Kinship”, centering on New England author Rachael Cerrotti’s memoir, and how family history impacts our personal stories. More information can be found at www.peabodylibrary.org/rootstokinship.

On Friday, February 18th, the Library will host Peabody Veterans Memorial High School’s winter Art Show & Coffee House, showcasing the work of Fall Semester Peabody High art students and music students. The event will be catered by the Peabody High Culinary Department students. This after-house event will feature acoustic music performances in the Sutton Room, and works of multimedia art displayed in the 2nd floor Tech Lab and 1st floor Main Reading Room.

The annual Spring Concert Services, sponsored by the Library Foundation and McCarthy Family Foundation, will begin on Monday, February 14th, with harpist Aine Minogue.

Budget

Director Merlin did not have a copy of the current budget for your review, due to staffing issues.

The Library’s full MBLC State Aid award for FY22 will be approximately \$90,000 (increased around 10% from last year). Before the deposit of the first half of the award in early December, the balance of this account stood at approximately \$114,000, down from a starting FY balance of \$167,00 in July (largely spent on landscaping, Main Library furniture, and technology thus far). Director Merlin proposed the following allocations for this year’s funds, keeping in mind the funds that still remain in many of these categories, and her focus on buildings & grounds projects such as purchasing new furniture, upgrading outside lighting, and season landscaping for all 3 Library buildings:

| Category | Remaining (approx) | Proposed FY22 Allocations | Total Going Forward | % of Total |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Utilities | \$16,000 | \$2,000 | \$18,000 | 9% |
| Operating | \$25,000 | \$3,000 | \$28,000 | 14% |
| Books | \$7,000 | \$10,000 | \$17,000 | 8% |
| Audubons | \$27,000 | \$15,000 | \$42,000 | 21% |
| Programs | \$30,000 | \$5,000 | \$35,000 | 17% |
| Building & Grounds | \$0 | \$45,000 | \$45,000 | 22% |
| Public Technology | \$9,000 | \$10,000 | \$19,000 | 9% |
| TOTAL | \$114,000 | \$90,000 | \$204,000 | 100% |

Audubons

Director Merlin has scheduled the pickup of the next 15 prints (list included) for conservation on Friday, January 28th.

Building & Grounds

Director Merlin is working with the City Facilities department and Bay State Electric to upgrade outside lighting at all 3 locations, including replacing pole lighting at the West Branch, new Courtyard lightpost globes and flag spotlights at the Main, and new spotlights at the Branches.

Senior Local History Catherine Badal hopes to have updates regarding quotes for Sutton Room window coverings at the February meeting.

MBLC Trustee Trainings

The MBLC Trustee Orientations and Deep Dives schedule for Zoom programs will be posted in February, and Director Merlin will keep the Board updated. It is suggested that everyone attend these general sessions at their own convenience, and Director Merlin can then contact MBLC consultants to arrange trainings and sessions based on goals that are specific to the Peabody Institute Library Trustees.

Discussion and Questions for the Director

Trustee Quinn asked about the time of the high school arts event on February 18th, which Director Merlin confirmed was 6 to 8pm. The event was supposed to be this coming Friday, January 14th, but due to ongoing public health concerns it was moved out one month. Food served may need to be grab-and-go treats. Students have historically held this art show at the high school. The goal is to hold this event every semester. Around three hundred students will be displaying art. Trustee Najjar asked who would be giving the acoustic performances and Director Merlin confirmed that it would be music students from the high school. For the performance, an acoustic piano will be moved into the Sutton Room for the day. Trustee Quinn expressed concern about the elevator's functionality and Director Merlin replied that the piano would not fit in the elevator and would need to be moved up the stairs by professionals. Trustee Najjar then stated that acoustic events are popular and attendance would need to be limited. Director Merlin confirmed that capacity would be reduced by half, allowing only twenty five attendants in the Sutton Room at a time. Director Merlin then expressed hope for Peabody TV to devise a way to broadcast the event, or to film it and put a segment together to air later. Trustee Vassallo suggested live-streaming the music, and Director Merlin replied that staffing is a concern because the event is after-hours, so the Library would only have a custodian and there is no budget to bring in additional staff. Trustee Quinn asked if the event was open to the public and Director Merlin confirmed in the affirmative.

President Pappas opened the floor to questions. Trustee Shruhan asked Trustee Najjar if she had found an old copy of the George Peabody medal as discussed in the previous meeting. Trustee Najjar replied that, yes, Rick Walsh had brought one and she took a photo of it. Trustee Najjar is trying to find a place to smith the medals as they were previously. Director Merlin stated that the one she had found in the vault was not the one she had expected to find; it was a bicentennial medal from 1995. Trustee Najjar stated that Mr. Walsh's medal, while acceptable, is smaller than she thought it should be. She will call the company in Rhode Island to see if they remain open for business; if not, medals will be made at Harrington's Trophies and Awards or Crown Trophy. Trustee McAllister noted that at one time, the medal presented to female recipients was smaller and asked if the small medal mentioned by Trustee Najjar could have been intended for a female recipient. Trustee Najjar went on to say that clarification of cost is necessary. The Rappaport family has offered to cover the cost of the medals.

There was a **MOTION** to receive the report by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes

Any Opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

Reports of the Committees and Sub-committees

Executive Committee:

Nothing to report.

Audubon:

Nothing to report.

Trustee Quinn expressed surprise at the number of Audubon prints that were in extensively bad condition; she had thought restoration was complete. Director Merlin stated that the prints are being restored in numerical order. Trustee McAllister remembered that prints with extreme condition were addressed first. Director Merlin stated that TKM Studios determined condition; she would look into it. When Trustee Shruhan noted a particular print being missing, Director Merlin shared the story of the theft of the Audubon prints from the Library.

Building and Grounds:

Nothing to report.

Personnel:

Nothing to report.

Policy and Procedures:

Nothing to report.

Trustee Vassallo will report on Policy and Procedures henceforward.

Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:

Trustee Quinn reported a new exhibition at the Foster House and the Salada House presenting Peabody's participation in various wars from the American Revolution to the Korean War. The exhibit displays military gear. President Pappas asked Trustee Quinn to share the historical society newsletter with the Board.

Liaison to the Peabody Institute Foundation:

Nothing to report.

There was a **Motion** to accept the subcommittee reports by Trustee Quinn. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes

Any opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

Trustee Quinn noted the striking number of absences among Library staff; Director Merlin explained they were due to the pandemic, the holidays, and potential exposures.

Unfinished Business

After it was noted that February 18th is George Peabody's birthday, Trustee Najjar stated she would discuss its incorporation in the February Arts event at Wednesday's meeting. Director Merlin stated that she could not change the date of the event, so it may become more about celebrating the arts in Peabody education. Local lawmakers may be interested in the event. Director Merlin then expressed hope that public health status in February would be less dire than the present. Trustee McAllister stated that public health status makes conflicting event dates dangerous. He went on to suggest purchasing a wreath to mark George Peabody's birthday and display it in the lobby during the event, and then bring it to his grave. President Pappas stated that we would know more at the next meeting.

New Business

Existing business: President Pappas had asked for a copy of the bylaws, which Director Merlin provided and distributed.

State Aid Allocations and Budget: Director Merlin explained allocations and budget to the new trustees; particularly, how the library's MBLC State Aid award increases every year by hitting certain benchmarks, such as City budget, director's credentials, library opening hours based on population, etc. The Library receives one of the highest State Aid awards in the state. Libraries vary in their use of aid. The Peabody Library is fortunate in that it does not have to use State Aid for salaries. Currently, we have an abundance of grant money which Director Merlin is allocating toward improving Library spaces.

There was a **Motion** to accept the Director's proposed budget by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in Favor: Yes

Any opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

Resolution

Trustee Quinn asked for a definition of “resolution” which prompted a brief discussion of bylaws.

President Pappas called for matters:

Trustees - no

Suggested by anyone prior to notice of agenda - no

Trustee Najjar called to make the meeting agenda more efficient and President Pappas called for ideas.

President Pappas welcomed the new Trustees and expressed gratitude for the nomination.

There was a **Motion** to adjourn the meeting by President Pappas.. The motion was seconded by Trustee McAllister.

All in favor: Yes Any opposed: No

The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Submitted by,

Sarah Boçi

Recording Secretary