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Clayton Cheever, Library Director

**Library Board of Trustees**  
Sarah Begg, Chair  
Marguerite Cummings, Vice-Chair  
John Hall  
George Michalec  
Donna Montgomery  
Sheri McLeish

## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES Minutes of September 14, 2021 Meeting

**Trustees:** Sarah Begg, Chair; Marguerite Cummings, Vice-Chair (absent); John Hall; George Michalec; Donna Montgomery; Sheri McLeish

**Staff in Attendance:** Director Clayton Cheever, Assistant Director Lydia Sampson, Page Supervisor Joanne Rabbitt, Administrative Assistant (and recording secretary) Casey Argyrou

Ms. Begg called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. This meeting was recorded for future broadcast by NCM. This was the first time the Board met in person since March, 2020. The Board and staff introduced themselves.

### Consent Agenda

This month's packet included minutes from the last Trustee meeting on June 8, 2021 for the Board's approval. ***A motion was made/seconded (Montgomery/ McLeish) to approve the Consent Agenda items. All voted by a show of hands. Mr. Hall abstained from voting as he was absent from the June meeting. Everyone else voted in favor of approving the Consent Agenda.***

### Financial report

FY22 Budget 2021-09-01, FY22 Revolving Fund 2021-09-01, FY22 Special Funds Report 2021-09-01, Total Incidentals FY22 2021-09-01.

### Director's Report

Director's Advocacy/Marketing Report; Assistant Director Activities; Facilities Update; Departmental Reports; Publicity and News Releases

### Welcome and invitation to speak

The Board welcomed Joanne Rabbitt, the Library's Page Supervisor. Ms. Rabbit manages a staff of 7 Pages, and she is in the process of hiring one more. When Pages start at the Library they are trained over three to four one-on-one sessions and then they shadow a more senior Page for a few additional shifts until they can work independently. Pages are responsible for shelf reading, pulling books that have been requested, and putting returned material back where it belongs. Two pages have recently left the Library to attend college. Mr. Cheever expressed that both he and Ms. Rabbit are extremely appreciative and proud of the Page staff both for the work they do in the Library and as they move on to the next chapters in their lives. Employment applications for Page positions are accepted all year, but they are not typically reviewed until a member of the staff is leaving. Ms. Rabbit shared that the Library's longest working employee (Circulation Chief Michele DeGrazio) started as a Page just over 50 years ago!

## Correspondence

Mr. Cheever included two emails and a written letter from patrons in the packet this month. One patron wrote to thank Hilary Umbreit for exceptional customer service when processing a music request for him. Another patron offered praise for the Library's efforts to adapt and maintain programming throughout the pandemic. Lastly, a patron wrote to Patty Bailey to thank her for the Turn the Page Book Group, which her mother participated in for years before she passed away. Ms. Begg shared that Ms. Cummings had been contacted by Leah O'Leary's family. The memorial service they had planned for this Fall has been postponed until a date to be determined. Ms. Cummings and Ms. Begg will be sure to forward those details as soon as they are known so that the Board may attend and pay their respects.

## Old Business

### (a) Overdue Fines

Mr. Cheever included in the packet a proposal for eliminating overdue fines on Library materials. Ms. McLeish asked if Mr. Cheever's plan was ready to implement immediately. Mr. Cheever said that yes, as fines have already been waived throughout the pandemic, it will only require some back-end changes to the loan rules. Patrons will not be fined late fees, but their account will be shut off if they fail to return \$100 or more worth of materials within a reasonable timeframe. These charges will be waived if and when the item(s) is/are returned. Mr. Hall requested clarification on what portion of the 4 page proposal the Board will be voting on. He suggested that the motion should include the first line of the proposal **"The Trustees of the Morrill Memorial Library hereby endorse the elimination of overdue fees for most lent materials."** after which the following should be added **"Replacement costs may still be incurred by patrons who do not return materials after the loan terms have been exceeded. The Trustees defer to the Director to write the policy, which will be voted on by the Board in a subsequent meeting." This motion was made/seconded (McLeish/Michalec), and all voted by a show of hand. Mr. Cheever also added that Ms. Cummings, who was absent for the meeting, had communicated to him that she is supportive of this policy change.**

### (b) Strategic Plan 2022-2026

The first meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee was held in the library on September 2. Mr. Cheever will share [the slides that he](#) and [Mr. Lynch](#) presented during that meeting which offered an current overview of the library and the greater Norwood community. Mr. Lynch asked the participants what they want us to know about the Town and how they use the Library. The group was composed of a few staff members and representatives from a diverse cross-section of town. The aim is to have Norwood as a whole be represented in this process. The next step in the process will be a series of focus groups / community listening sessions and a community survey. Ms. Begg will be providing the Board with the same questions that will be discussed at the community listening sessions, so that the perspectives of each board member can be fully included in the process. Mr. Cheever reached out to Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development at the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and received written communication extending the Library's filing deadline by 1 year. Mr. Cheever will be meeting with Bernie Lynch next week to determine next steps in the planning process.

### (c) Patrons in the Library

Mr. Cheever reported that more and more patrons are returning to the Library every day. An incident report was filed a few weeks ago when a patron unfortunately fell outside of the Library. The

Children's Department will continue to offer outdoor storytimes at the Bond Street playground through September and October, but there are currently no plans to return to in person indoor programming for youth patrons until the vaccination rates of Norwood residents go up (especially among young people).

## **Reports**

### **(a) Personnel Report & Contract Negotiations**

Mr. Cheever alerted the Board that there is currently one staff member out on Workers Comp due to a fall during work hours. The Board wishes that employee a speedy recovery. Mr. Cheever also shared that Reference Librarian, Hilary Umbreit gave a talk today during the NELA virtual conference entitled "Intro to Pronouns: A Guide for Library Staff". A motion was made/seconded (Begg/Hall) to move to executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss the final personnel issue, collective bargaining agreement negotiations. Unanimous consent was determined by a show of hands.

### **(b) Programming Report**

The Library will be hosting a virtual chat with author James Patterson and Hank Phillippi Ryan on Thursday, September 23 and there will be a mix of in person and virtual programs regarding climate change through the end of the month. Adult services is taking a hybrid approach to programming to appeal to those that prefer to stay home and those that prefer to attend in person. Ms. Begg asked if there was a plan for Musical Sundays to return to the programming schedule. Mr. Cheever has been talking with Liz Reed and many musicians have been in touch, but there is no formal plan to resume Musical Sundays yet. Mr. Hall shared that he has written 9 parody songs for the Norwood 150<sup>th</sup> celebration and he welcomes any local musicians to collaborate with him and perform these pieces.

### **(c) Maintenance & Repair**

Since the Board met last, the Town Facilities Department has taken over the Library's facilities budget. They have been very responsive to our repair requests despite their extensive list of responsibilities over the entire municipality.

### **(d) Friends of the Library**

In Ms. Cummings absence, Ms. Sampson reported that the Friends will be holding their annual Fall book sale in the Simoni Room from October 22 to 24, and they are very excited to be able to offer this event again. Any parties interested in volunteering to help out with this sale should reach out to Ms. Sampson or Mr. Cheever. The Friend's cart sales continue to generate steady income, and we have recently added a bin next to the cart with free magazines that have been donated or withdrawn. The Friends will have a table at Norwood Day. They will have a coloring activity for children, and they will be encouraging people to get involved. It is the Friends that provide a fair amount of money to cover library programming, so we are very appreciative of their enthusiasm and support. Anyone who uses Amazon Smile can also opt to donate to the Friends of the Morrill Memorial Library as their default charity.

## **New Business**

### **(a) Trustee Bylaws**

Ms. Begg hoped that everyone had read through the Trustee bylaws, as was discussed in the June meeting. Mr. Hall suggested that in addition to Board members, Mr. Cheever and Ms. Sampson be

included in the review process to provide suggestions. Mr. Hall volunteered to be the collector of staff and trustee responses regarding updates to the bylaws, but suggested the conversation be postponed until Ms. Cummings can be a part of it, as the leader of the Ad Hoc Committee and the board member who recommended the current review. Ms. McLeish asked what the motivation is for reviewing the bylaws. Ms. Begg clarified that the catalyst was that they haven't been reviewed for some time. She does not expect the Board will do a major overhaul, but rather they hope to modernize them and make them more simple and functional, allowing the Board the flexibility to interpret them as needed depending on the context. Ms. Begg suggested this item be moved to Old Business in the October meeting so that Ms. Cummings can participate and weigh in. All agreed to wait for the next meeting.

(b) **Library Policies**

The policy review will not occur until the bylaws are reviewed and updated. After that, Mr. Cheever and Ms. Sampson will work with the appropriate departments to review and suggest revisions to each policy. The Board will then review the recommended changes and vote on their approval.

**Search Warrants**

none

**Miscellaneous Advisories**

none

**Staff & Trustee Remarks**

Ms. Begg proposed that Trustee book suggestions be emailed to Mr. Cheever so he can include them in the next packet as part of the Staff Picks flyer. These will then be posted to the Library website and circulated throughout the Library. Ms. Montgomery asked that a reminder be sent via email when Mr. Cheever begins to collect the departmental reports for each month's packet. Mr. Cheever agreed to make sure that is done. At 7:11 p.m. ***a motion was made/seconded (Montgomery/McLeish) to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing Contract Negotiations.*** They will return to Open Session only for the purpose of adjournment. ***The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion by a show of hands.***

The next scheduled meeting of the Trustees will be October 12, 2021, though the time and location of the meeting is TBA.

**Adjournment**

The Board returned to Open Session for the purpose of adjournment at 8:00pm, at which time the meeting was immediately called to end.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary