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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 February 08, 2022 Meeting**

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

Staff: Clayton Cheever, Director; Lydia Sampson, Assistant Director; Liz Reed, Head of Adult Services and Staff representative; Casey Argyrou, Library Administrative Assistant and BoLT Recording Secretary.

Ms. Begg called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

This month's packet included minutes of the January 11, 2022 minutes for the Board's approval. A motion was made/seconded (Hall/Montgomery) to approve the Consent Agenda items. All voted by roll call, and they were unanimously approved. Ms. Begg asked if anyone had questions or concerns about what was included in the packet. There were none.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Current FY22 Budget Status Expanded; Current FY22 Special Funds Report, Current FY22 Revolving Fund Status; Current Incidentals FY22

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

WELCOME AND INVITATION TO SPEAK

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

The Board welcomed Liz Read, Head of Adult Services. Ms. Reed highlighted some changes to the floor plan of the second floor. The microfilm reader and microfiche cabinet have been relocated to make the space more accessible to patrons, and to make it easier for the Reference librarians to assist patrons. They've also added a library catalog computer just to the right of the Reference desk. Thanks to some targeted weeding on the mezzanine, they've been able to add a new cozy seating area where patrons can relax and read. They've purchased a stock of Chromebooks which are available to patrons to the left of the Reference desk or patrons can carry them to elsewhere in the library. The Chromebooks do not

are focusing their program advertisements to the digital displays, social media posts, press releases, and the emailed newsletter. Some paper copies of the event calendar are available for patrons who request it. Ms. Reed further outlined the changes to staffing over the past year. April Cushing, the former Head of Adult Services has retired, and Ms. Reed was promoted to the role. Soon after, Health Umbreit was added to the staff in Ms. Reed's previous role. Over the next few months they'll also be welcoming an Outreach Specialist and a Generalist Librarian/Media Marketing Specialist to the Adult Services team. Ms. Reed was very proud of the information studies coursework they've been able to offer this year, namely a racial literacy discussion series last spring which was grant funded. They'll also be offering a new 8 week Disinformation Studies Course which will be starting at the end of March. With the focus largely on virtual format programming, they've been able to partner with other libraries to welcome exciting speakers like Sabrina Fulton and Alafair Burke. They've also found many opportunities to partner with local organizations like the Norwood 150th Committee, the Norwood Historical Society and Norwood Community Media to strengthen the library's bonds with the community and offer the residents of Norwood programs of interest. As such, they are finally beginning to see foot traffic similar to that of pre-pandemic days!

Ms. Reed compiled some data comparing recent patron interactions to the year prior to the pandemic. Circulation and patron interaction numbers are very close to what they were in 2019/early 2020. Her stats showed that currently the most frequent interactions are item requests, technology and printing help, reference help, and programming questions. Most people are asking their questions in person at the Reference desk rather than online via Refchat. This year they've seen an increase in patron account changes, most likely because so many people pulled out their library cards to access electronic material from home and found that their card had expired. They've also seen an increase in requests for study rooms/quiet space as many people are still working outside of the office or taking meetings virtually. Ms. Montgomery suggested that Mr. Cheever make a report out of Mr. Reed's data to let the Town know how much more patrons have got out of the library during this emergency time. Mr. Hall noted that Ms. Reed is one of the most important members of the Norwood 150th Steering Committee, and he asked that she share some of the Norwood 150th programming coming up. Mr. Reed talked about an LSTA Grant that the library has received to create programming based on the Oral History of Norwood. This will coincide nicely with the Norwood 150th Celebrations. She'll also be teaming with the Norwood Historical Society and the Old Parish Preservation Society to coordinate public walking tours focusing on the history of Norwood. There will be a lecture series by genealogy specialists coming in to talk about very Norwood specific history. There will also be a program coming up to celebrate the various cultures of Norwood through food! Mr. Hall asked if Ms. Reed would share her data with other nearby libraries to see if they too were seeing a return to regular interaction. Ms. Reed said that at this time she has not shared her data with surrounding libraries, but there may be some data already generated for State Aid reports and in the MLN Data Studio that could give them an idea of how other libraries are doing. Mr. Cheever shared his immense pride for what the Reference Department has done over the past year, and how they continue to provide exceptional service to library patrons.

REPORTS

- (a) Personnel Report & Contract Updates- Mr. Cheever shared that two new positions (Outreach Specialist and Generalist Librarian) have been approved by the Personnel Board and will be posted

and filled as quickly as possible. Also, Jim Croak, Head Custodian has returned after having been out

on medical leave for all of January. Ms. Begg asked that the conversation regarding impact bargaining be moved to the end of the meeting so that it can be discussed in Executive Session.

- (b) Programming Report- Mr. Cheever thanked Ms. Reed again for her presentation on Adult Services, and he reiterated that the Children's Department has resumed in person programming. Many families are returning to the library, and the reception for the in person programming has been unanimously positive.
- (c) Maintenance & Repair- Mr. Cheever reported that there was a leak in the ceiling over Circulation due to the most recent snow/ice storm last week. The roof is still too icy to be inspected or repaired. Facilities will be addressing the situation as soon as it is safe to do so. No material was damaged due to the leak, and the library did not have to close. Clearing the parking lot of the snow was also a huge undertaking for the Facilities Department and custodial staff. Despite clearing the snow, the lot was still very icy come Monday morning, and a staff member did fall on their way into the building. Fortunately, they appear to be doing well, and the ice was cleared throughout the day.
- (d) Friends of the Library- There was a Friends meeting on January 27. Ms. Cummings attended the meeting, and reported that Dan Corzillius will be stepping down after 10 years of serving as President of the Friends. She described him as a very positive and engaging man who has advocated on behalf of the Library for many years. He will be staying on the Friends, but he will not be acting as President. The Friends raised \$372 last month from the book cart sales, and the membership drive brought in \$2,819 so far. The Friends are also working on bringing in more programs and fundraisers. Ms. Begg wished to thank Mr. Corzillius on record for all the work he's done for the Library over the years. It was decided that a more personal and formal thank you be withheld until it is closer to the date of the elections.

CORRESPONDENCE- The Library will be participating in the Bruins PJ Drive again this year, however this year the event will be virtual. The library will not be accepting pajama donations or monetary donations in person this year. There are posters around the library with a QR code that will take patrons directly to the site where they can make their donations. Some staff may be wearing PJs on Fridays during the month of February to bring awareness to this drive. Mr. Cheever also included an article in the packet entitled "Libraries, Publishers Battle Over Terms for E-Books' Use", which is about MA H4120, the House Bill which Ms. Montgomery brought to the attention of the Board last month.

OLD BUSINESS

- (a) MA H4120: An Act modernizing library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks. – Mr. Cheever reported that he spoke with Phil McNulty, the Executive Director of Minuteman Library Network and learned that the committee that will be reviewing the bill has pushed it back until June. Mr. Cheever will be reaching out to David Leonard, President of the Boston Public Library and an individual involved in the state's public library contributions to this bill to see how the Board can offer their support in any way.
- (b) Trustee Bylaws & Library Policies- Ms. Cummings has updated the wording regarding vacancies to

members of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Hall and Ms. Begg expressed their contentment with the new wording. This was followed by much discussion over the wording in Article I, item 4, reading “The mission of the Morrill Memorial Library is for all patrons of the library to have access to library services enabling them to locate and evaluate information, appreciate the diversity and history of our community, and enhance their lives with current cultural, educational and recreational materials in all formats”. There was concern that “all formats” implies that every item added to the catalog would need to be made available in every format (print, digital, streaming, cd/dvd etc). The Board discussed replacing the word “all” with accessible”, “diverse”, “multiple” and “variety of”. Most members were in favor of using “variety of”. A motion was made/seconded (Hall/McLeish) to approve Ms. Cummings correction of the Vacancies portion as well as using the phrase “variety of formats” in Article I, item 4. All voted by roll call and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Cheever presented a new Gift Policy for the Board’s review. This policy was rewritten in its entirety and included some significant changes to the current policy. Mr. Hall expressed that he was concerned with the tone of the new policy. He was against limiting acceptable donations to items the library would normally already purchase. Mr. Hall has long expressed his wish that the catalog selectors grant more attention and space to genre fiction. In the past, he had been told that this was not done because the library lacked the resources to do so (financially or the physical space). As a result, Mr. Hall purchased and donated various items over the years that he found important that the Library make available to its patrons. Mr. Hall felt strongly that if someone were to want to donate a collection the library had not planned to purchase, they should be able to do so. Ms. Begg shared a different interpretation. She felt as though the aim of the new policy was to make clear that the library should not be bound to keep any donations or gifts forever. It would provide Library Administration or the Board with an outlet to remove an item from the collection once it no longer served a purpose. Mr. Hall felt as though that point was also made clear in the old policy. Ms. Montgomery agreed with Mr. Hall in that it seemed as though the policy would limit what might be donated. She also disagreed with requiring donors to fill out a “gift agreement”. She brought up a story in *The New York Times* recently where a small boy wrote a book and slipped it into the shelves of his local library. Once it was found, the wait list for his book grew to over a year. She would like to see less limits on what we will accept and less barriers for those wishing to make a donation. Ms. McLeish was in support of the “gift agreement” sharing her belief that the Library should require some information from its donors. She also agreed that there should be limits on what the library must accept. She does not want to see the Library become a place to dispose of any objects someone may no longer want in their home. Mr. Cheever clarified that the intent of the new policy was to manage expectations around donated items/money. He wants all parties to understand how their gifts will be handled. Ms. Cummings reminded everyone that donations that are not added to the catalog can be given to the Friends to sell to support the Library. Ms. Begg proposed that Mr. Cheever send out the policy as a google doc and the Trustees provide him with some edit suggestions which he can compile for the next meeting. Mr. Michalec asked how often people just bring in material for donation. Ms. Reed replied that people come daily. Mr. Hall asked that feedback could also be sent to Mr. Cheever by email rather than using the google doc. Mr. Cheever said that any format is acceptable. Ms. Begg asked that all edits be provided no later than February 22.

(c) Strategic Plan 2022-2026- Mr. Lynch was able to meet with 40 Advanced Placement high school students remotely last week. He and his colleagues will be compiling all of the data they have received so far, and will present it to the Community Strategic Planning Committee at their next meeting on Wednesday March 2.

(d) Patrons in the Library- Patrons are continuing to return to the library. The most notable negative interaction that occurred in January involved a patron's bathroom use and cleaning of the public bathrooms, but the majority of the feedback from people returning to the Library has been overwhelmingly positive. Patrons are loving the new quiet cozy space on the mezzanine. Everyone is encouraged to come to the library to check it out.

NEW BUSINESS- none

SEARCH WARRANTS- none

MISCELLANEOUS ADVISORIES- Mr. Cheever advised everyone present and watching a recording of the meeting to get boosted and vaccinated if they haven't yet, and to watch out on the ice.

STAFF AND TRUSTEES REMARKS- Trustee book suggestions will again be included in the Staff Picks list. A motion was made/seconded (Hall/Michalec) to move into executive session to discuss impact bargaining. The Board will then return to open meeting with the sole intention of adjourning. All voted by roll call and the motion was approved unanimously.

The next scheduled meeting of the Trustees will be Tuesday March 8, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. Whether the meeting will be in person or remote is to be determined. At this point the recording was ended, and those not involved in the executive session were thanked and asked to leave.

ADJOURNMENT- A motion was made and seconded (Montgomery/Hall) to adjourn. The Board voted in roll call to adjourn, and it was unanimously approved. The meeting was called to an end at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey Argyron". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Recording Secretary