



Morrill Memorial Library

www.norwoodLibrary.org

Clayton Cheever, Library Director

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

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Minutes of March 14, 2023 Meeting

Trustees: Marguerite Cummings, Chair; Donna Montgomery, Vice-Chair; Sarah Begg; John Hall; George Michalec; Sheri McLeish
Director: Clayton Cheever
Assistant Director: Lydia Sampson
Staff representative present: Elizabeth Reed
Recording Secretary: Casey Argyrou

Ms. Cummings called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The meeting was held virtually via Google Meet. It was recorded and provided to Norwood Community Media for [rebroadcasting and archiving](#).

CONSENT AGENDA

This month's packet included minutes of the February 14, 2023 meeting for the Board's approval. A motion was made and seconded (Begg/McLeish) to accept the consent agenda. All voted by roll call, and the motion was approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Current FY23 Budget Status Expanded; Current FY23 Special Funds Report, Current FY23 Revolving Fund Status; Current Incidentals FY23

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 Head of Adult Services, Liz Reed. Ms. Reed last met with the Board last year. She has been in her current role for two years, but she's in her ninth year with the Library. The department currently consists of Reference Librarian Heath Umbreit who joined the library two years ago and Adult Services Outreach Specialist Darshana Merchant who joined nearly a year ago. Ms. Reed describes her staff as "the dream team". Members of staff serve on many in-house committees such as Space Force and Web Force. They have also taken the library outside of the building, offering pop-up libraries throughout the year at the farmers market, cultural festivals, and the pride picnic. Inside the building, there has been an effort to create more comfortable seating areas and to rearrange certain collections to make them more accessible to the public. They were recently awarded a second Norwood Cultural Council Artist in Residency Grant which will

start in the spring. This year they are teaming with Haitian storyteller and artist Charlot Lucien.

Each member of staff also has their own initiatives that they oversee. Heath developed a “Pronouns for Library Staff” training and they have been presenting it at various conferences and libraries and town departments over the past two years. They will also be working with Liz to continue and expand upon their popular Disinformation Series, offering a longer form discussion group about how we consume media. Heath was recently accepted onto an ALA national advisory board who will be creating a digital literacy toolkit for libraries across the country.

Darshana focuses much of her time identifying underserved communities in Norwood and finding ways to offer them library services. She has started a little free library at the Riverside housing establishment from which residents can browse and borrow books onsite. She created the hugely popular monthly Sensory Friendly Movie series for adults with sensory and cognitive disabilities. Darshana has also teamed up with the Senior Center to apply for a grant through Reference and User Services Association to help support some dementia friendly collaborations and programs for residents in Norwood. To advertise these new initiatives, Darshana has been distributing “Library at a Glance” pamphlets all around town, and they will soon be translated into a few other languages. She is serving on the town-wide Anti-Scam Force.

Liz has been integral in implementing the Access to Justice (A2J) Initiative which, cooperating with the local trial courts, allows people access to attend court hearings virtually through the library. She also participated on the steering committee for the Norwood 150. Trustee John Hall noted that Liz was very involved in keeping minutes, making records available for people, and assisting in program planning. She was publicly thanked at the Norwood 150th thank you party at the end of the year, and her assistance reflected well on the library. Director Cheever included a letter of correspondence in the packet from Joe Greeley who thanked the library for all of the work they did to assist the 150th Committee, and he specifically mentioned Liz.

Beyond all the amazing work that each of the librarians do individually, the Adult Services department is increasingly busy on a day to day basis. The chromebooks and computers are still very busy, they’re often all being used at once, as are the study rooms. Liz explained that prior to the pandemic, the busiest times often coincided with large programs offered in the evenings, but now they’re seeing a larger number of patrons visiting the library during the day, and spending large amounts of time in the library, working and looking for quiet spaces. The Reference desk receives a lot of technology questions and requests for one-on-one appointments. They have found that patrons like to be shown how to do things in a one-on-one setting, more than ever before. Interactions with the public increased 48% at the Reference Desk between 2021 and 2022. Most of these interactions took place in person. The most frequent requests were room use and appointment requests (passport, notary and technology), which went up 261% and 291% respectively from 2021 to 2022.

Trustee McLeish asked about the A2J service and the level of volume the library is seeing. Liz explained that they’ve tracked nearly 60 interactions about the program since May, but unfortunately they are only able to track patrons who announce themselves as AtoJ users. Many more people may be requesting study room use, and not specifically mentioning that they will be accessing AtoJ services, so the stats may be even higher than they know. The Access to Justice landing page was intentionally designed to be easy to use and helpful for patrons to find the info they need easily. The data that was pulled from the library website traffic data does show that the A2J landing page is heavily trafficked.

Trustee Hall and Cummings and Director Cheever thanked Liz for updating them on the many wonderful

things the Adult Services Department is doing for the library and the community. They are indeed a dream team!

REPORTS

- (a) Personnel Report & Contract Updates- Head of Circulation Michele DeGrazio has announced her decision to retire at the end of May. Staff have been working to plan a celebration in which patrons and staff will be welcomed to say goodbye and offer well wishes to Ms. DeGrazio. Ms. DeGrazio served the library for 52 years, and Director Cheever noted how grateful he is for her many years of service and the many connections she's made with the community. He also shared that negotiations will soon begin regarding the change in work environment that were discussed in the executive session of the Personnel Board last week.
- (b) Programming Report – There is an Arab Mother's Day Celebration at the library this upcoming weekend. The following weekend (3/25-3/26) will be the second annual Art in Bloom showcase, hosted by the Evening Garden Club and Norwood High art students. Adult Services just wrapped up their most recent StayFit Bollywood series to great success. The library continues to offer both virtual and in person programs. The full calendar can be found [here](#).
- (c) Maintenance & Repair- The library had to briefly close on Tuesday, February 21 due to a power outage. Power was restored relatively quickly, and the library was reopened that same day. The yearly building inspection was completed in early March, and Mr. Croak has received the 2023-2024 110 Certificate of Inspection.
- (d) Friends of the Library- Ms. Sampson met with new president Catherine Swanson and Treasurer Mary Anne Paradise to provide them with all of the Friends social media passwords as well as a quick tutorial on all of the resources available to them, such as Mailchimp which is used to send out bulk emails to mailing lists. They also reviewed the many benefits of Google Suite for scheduling meetings, organizing calendar events, and sharing document. President Swanson held her first meeting as president on March 8 in the Library Simoni Room where the Friends planned their upcoming schedule for board meetings, a book sale in May, and general elections in June. Dan Corzilius, former president has been appointed a Member at Large and Joanne Roy was appointed as Secretary. The Book Sale will be held Friday May 5 through Sunday May 7. The Friends are looking for volunteers for May 4-8 as well as book donations leading up to the sale. Trustee Hall asked what type of books are most popular for the book sale. Chair Cummings noted that the guidelines for book donations are offered on [the library website](#).

CORRESPONDENCE

In this month's packet, Director Cheever included a document tracking some patron praise instead of including each individual email. This was done to protect patron privacy, while still sharing some positive feedback. The Fourth of July Invitation Committee sent a letter to each of the Trustees. They are on Assistant Argyrou's desk if you'd like to come by and get one, they can be mailed upon request. In the packet, Director Cheever also included an article from the February ninth issue of the Norwood Record about Susan Clare's latest initiative Solar Punk, which met at the library recently. Chair Cummings noted that the logo for Solar

Punk was designed by Trustee Michalec. Chair Cummings thanked Trustee Michalec for his work helping to identify the group and the many green initiatives Norwood is taking part in. Director Cheever added that Susan Clare is looking for multi format submissions for an online gallery. Submissions can take any form (writing, art, photographs), and everyone is invited to participate. Trustee Montgomery shared that over the Covid pandemic, she began growing many foods from food scraps. She submitted the photos to Susan for the Solar Punk gallery. The deadline for submissions is March 26.

OLD BUSINESS

- (a) Ad Hoc Committee- The ad hoc committee has not met since the last meeting, but this subject will remain on the agenda as a placeholder because there will be some policies up for review in the future.
- (b) Patrons in the Library- Patrons continue to visit the library in increasing numbers. Besides the power outage, there have been no notable incidents in the past month.
- (c) Board Meeting Schedule- Director Cheever asked for clarification that the Board was fully in agreement to move the May BoLT meeting to May 16, to allow for Kate Tigue and him to attend to their responsibilities at the MLA Conference in Falmouth on May 8 and 9. Chair Cummings confirmed that the vote taken at the February meeting will stand, as a quorum was met. The vote had passed, and the meeting will be moved.

NEW BUSINESS

- (a) Personnel Committee - The Personnel Committee met in executive session Thursday March 9 to discuss Michele DeGrazio's retirement and the subsequent changes for the Circulation Department and to the job description for its lead role. Director Cheever will be meeting with HR to draft the job descriptions, which will then be shared with the Board, the Union, and the Town Personnel Committee. Director Cheever also reported that he will be working with HR to post a new opening for a Part Time Generalist Librarian to help out at Adult Services and Children's. He is also looking to hire a new part time Circulation Assistant to fill some open shifts on nights and weekends. The Personnel Committee also reviewed the FY24 proposed budget and discussed the staffing implications and negotiations regarding the change in working conditions. Director Cheever offered to have private conversations with the two trustee members that did not attend this meeting to fill them in on these details, should they have questions.
- (b) Finance committee - The Finance Committee met on Tuesday March 7 to discuss the FY24 budget. Due to the Town's 3.5% cap on yearly increases, the Library was not allocated as much as Director Cheever had requested for FY24 for the operating expenses and capital expenses. The library was allocated enough to cover contract required increases in the salary budget, and there was some additional money allocated for a change in weekend hours.
- (c) 2022 Annual Report- Director Cheever included the Library's portion of the 2022 Annual Report in the packet. Chair Cummings said that it was wonderful to read, and especially great to see the stability the library offered the community as we came out of the pandemic. Director Cheever noted that it is a team effort and he was moved by the accomplishments of the staff. Trustee Hall added that it's hard to notice how cumulatively things have changed over a long period of time, and that is why he loves reading the annual report. Director Cheever added that he will be sharing the annual report with Senator Rush's staff tomorrow

at State Legislative Day.

SEARCH WARRANTS - none.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVISORIES - none.

STAFF AND TRUSTEES REMARKS - none.

ADJOURNMENT- The next meeting will be held on April 11, 2023 at 6:30pm with. A motion was made and seconded (Hall/Montgomery) to adjourn. All approved by roll call vote, and Chair Cummings called the meeting to an end at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey Argyron".

Recording Secretary