



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

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Clayton Cheever, Library Director

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Minutes of October 10, 2023 Meeting

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

Donna Montgomery called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Morrill Memorial Library.

CONSENT AGENDA

This month's packet included minutes of the September 12, 2023 meeting for the Board's approval. A motion was made and seconded (McLeish/Begg) to accept the consent agenda. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Current FY24 Budget Status, Special Funds Report, Incidentals Report, and Revolving Fund Status

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

Joanne Rabbitt joined the meeting to provide an update on the Circulation Department. Joanne has been serving as interim Department Head since Michele DeGrazio retired at the end of May. Joanne has been working closely with Susan Bunker, acting Paging Supervisor. Susan and Joanne interviewed and hired Jocelyn Lumley and Sarah Widberg as part time Circulation Assistants, both of whom have been very helpful in filling staffing gaps. Joanne shared that her staff was affected by the increase in open hours throughout the summer, but they came together and managed to keep the department well supported throughout. Saturdays were consistently busier than Sundays, but she found the amount of people utilizing the library often correlated with how nice or bad the weather was that weekend. A benefit of the library remaining open during the weekends has been that there are far less books to check in and shelve on Monday mornings, as they can be addressed over the weekend. Joanne thanked her staff for their dedication and hard work. A recent hire, Raceja Velavan was promoted from Page to Circulation Assistant, and she was awarded the Board of Morrill Memorial Library October 10, 2023

Sastavickas scholarship this year. Angelo Gentile resigned from his role as Page in June, and Bella Dana, a Norwood High student, was hired as a Page. All full time and all but two part time staff members have completed this year's mandatory ethics training. Joanne and Clayton will be reviewing staff needs to see if hiring a new adult Page would ease the scheduling needs during the day when most student workers are in school. Clayton thanked Joanne for stepping up in the challenging time without a department head. Her team is proceeding with good spirit, though he acknowledges that the process of finding a new Head of Borrower Services is taking longer than everyone would like. Donna Montgomery thanked Joanne for sharing Angelo's resignation letter, as he spoke highly of the library and his time on staff. Marguerite Cummings thanked Joanne and noted how well Joanne and Susan work as a team, adding that Michele had expressed her happiness that the department would be left in such good hands when she left.

REPORTS

- (a) Personnel Report & Contract Updates- The job opening for Head of Borrower Services is up, and applications have begun arriving. Priority review was given to applicants that applied before today, but Clayton expects to extend the deadline in order to get a deeper applicant pool. Susan Bunker celebrated her one year anniversary as a full time staff member this month. Lisa Uglialoro will be beginning contract negotiations for various unions across Town this fall. We don't know yet where the library will fall in her schedule, but we hope to know more by the November Board meeting.
- (b) Programming Report – Adult and Youth Services have teamed with a number of businesses across the community as part of a month long Halloween Scavenger Hunt. The prizes include tickets to the Norwood Theater, restaurant gift cards, and so much more. Everyone who participates will also receive small participation prizes, though the grand prizes will be reserved for those that complete the challenges. Staff will not be eligible to receive grand prizes. Submissions are due before the end of the month either through BeanStack or a hard copy sheet delivered to any of the public desks. The library participated in a statewide initiative called Freedom to Read this month in honor of banned books month. Clayton expressed that it appears that those people actively challenging books are usually a small number of very vocal critics. He added that librarians need to be active in combating these challenges to protect people's access to books. The full events calendar can be found on [the library website](#).
- (c) Maintenance & Repair- The Request For Proposals (RFP) for the library building study is still in process. The library HVAC has not yet been switched over to heat, but Clayton expects it should be done by the end of the month.
- (d) Friends of the Library- The Friends Book Sale is slated for October 13-15. George Michalec said that the Friends have a large list of volunteers ready to help. He urged anyone interested in joining the Friends to sign up on their website or come by the book sale to pick up a membership form. Donna said it's wonderful how the Friends have rebuilt themselves. "They're coming together revitalized and it's wonderful to see."

CORRESPONDENCE

Clayton shared a New York Times article on book banning as well as Heath Umbreit's article on gender inclusive libraries. Heath has also been invited to speak at this year's NELA Conference, which is a great honor. We are lucky to have them on staff.

OLD BUSINESS

(a) Trustees Committees (Ad Hoc, Finance, Personnel)

George has been in touch with Lisa, and he plans to work with her further to create a hybrid evaluation model with a multistep process in order for the Personnel Committee to review Clayton this winter. George suggested quarterly check-ins in the future that can be documented and referenced in future annual reviews, rather than doing a single evaluation only at the end of the contract term. Donna agreed that in the future she'd like to see more frequent informal reviews so if there is constructive criticism, the director would have time to work on it before their evaluation. George asked Sarah Begg how past committees created the questions for the evaluation process. Sarah said the Personnel Committee would list the Director's job responsibilities and the committee would then rate the Director's achievement on each. Comments and scores would be compiled anonymously and shared with the Board and the Director for review and conversation during the open meeting. John Hall asked if the Board has access to the previous director's evaluation. Donna affirmed that they do, and she also has examples of Director evaluations from other libraries. John asked if the Board could write a Trustee manual which would include written processes for Director evaluations. Sheri agreed that a check list of the important things to know as a new Trustee would have been helpful to her. Donna said that she has asked that everyone be given a full copy of the Massachusetts Trustee Manual and the Bylaws. This subject was tabled and conversation returned to the evaluation process. John agreed that he would be in favor of more frequent informal evaluation check ins. Donna said that Lisa suggested a 10-15 minute informal chat every two to three months, discussing how things are going, what could be done better, and any future plans/challenges. Sarah expressed that many members of the board already have recurring one-on-one meetings with Clayton, and she asked how what Lisa is proposing would differ. Donna said it would be a conversation with the full subcommittee, not just a one-on-one meeting. George suggested adding it to the Board of Trustees meeting agendas on a quarterly basis, so it could be scheduled and not forgotten. Marguerite agreed with Sarah in that with their regular one-on-one meetings, she feels that she is well aware already of how things are going at the library. An additional conversation in open meeting would be redundant. She asked if the Personnel Committee could meet soon to discuss things further. George agreed that he would schedule and post an open meeting of the subcommittee soon.

(b) Support for the Norwood Cultural District

Joe Collins (economic development and Friends of Norwood Center) will be leading a planning meeting on Thursday. Clayton asked that the Ad Hoc Committee schedule a meeting between Thursday and November's meeting to discuss how they can offer their support. John asked for clarification on what a cultural district is. Clayton said it's an initiative across the state by the Mass Cultural Council. A town can have a defined area designated as a cultural district. More information will be available after the meeting on Thursday.

(c) Collecting donations

Donna has brought in donation boxes for the Food Bank and Animal Shelter. There is one for human food and one for pet food. They are currently located to the right of the parking lot doors as you enter the building. Donna has a volunteer that has agreed to pick up and deliver the boxes to the food bank as needed. The food pantry can't divide up big bags of dog food, so they ask for smaller bags. Clayton said a

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press release and social media publicity will go out soon.

(d) Patrons in the Library- Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS - none

SEARCH WARRANTS- none.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVISORIES- none.

STAFF AND TRUSTEES REMARKS- Sheri will be attending the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association meeting on October 21. She looks forward to sharing what she learns.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on November 14, 2023 at 6:30pm with Administrative Assistant Casey Argyrou. A motion was made and seconded (Hall/Michalec) to adjourn. All approved by show of hands and Donna called the meeting to an end at 7:22pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Recording Secretary

