

**Newburyport Public Library
Board of Directors
Virtual Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2022**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:16 pm by Ms. Valeriani. Roll call was taken.

Present: Kathy Carey, James Connolly, Marcia Edson, Gary Gorski, Christian Hansen, Sarah Holden, Steve Moore, Mayor Sean Reardon, Susan Shefte, Sarah Spalding, and Elizabeth Valeriani.

Giselle Stevens, Head Librarian and Sara Kelso, Assistant Head Librarian and Acting Recording Secretary.

Absent: Councilor Heather Shand.

Public Comments: There were no additional participants in the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 15, 2021 virtual meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

Board meetings will continue virtually in 2022 until further notice. The next board meeting will take place virtually on February 16, 2022.

Head Librarian Report

Library Story

Ms. Stevens shared some notes and letters praising the Library and staff.

Budget

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has posted the FY23 Legislative Agenda. Mr. Moore inquired about the definition of regional libraries. Ms. Stevens shared a definition of “regional libraries,” which includes the Massachusetts Library System, an organization formed in 2010 that coordinates delivery services, strategic planning assistance, professional development, and other services to libraries throughout the Commonwealth. The Library for the Commonwealth (Boston Public Library) provides electronic library cards to all Massachusetts residents allowing access to a wide variety of online materials.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners voted at their December 2021 meeting to suspend a requirement for minimum open hours at libraries throughout the Commonwealth between mid-December 2021 and the first week of March, 2022. Some smaller libraries are having difficulty staying open due to staffing issues associated with the latest COVID surge.

Building and Grounds

The fire suppression control panel in the Archival Center has been replaced. The new equipment replaced a panel that was installed 21 years ago.

The elevator inspection issue has been resolved. Repairs were made to meet the new state inspection requirement and the state re-inspection was completed January 19, 2022.

LED light replacement of Study Room lighting fixtures is complete.

Personnel

Hiring for the vacant Staff Librarian position in Children's and Teen Services and a part-time Library Technician position is in process. Positions have been posted, applications have been received and reviewed, and interviews are currently being scheduled.

Library Technician A. McGrath is the President of the Para-Librarian section of the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and she serves on the Executive Board of the MLA.

Policy

Present board members were asked to review the Internet and Computer Use policy for updates. The Volunteer policy will be the next policy for review.

Mr. Moore inquired about the provision in the Internet and Computer Use policy covering the use of laptops and other mobile devices and the possible obstruction of "walkways," suggesting a modification to the verbiage in language for clarification purposes. Ms. Stevens indicated that this statement is currently included to provide for safety standards. Ms. Holden suggested replacing "walkways" with "aisles," and Mr. Gorski suggested using "interfere with access of library for other patrons." Mr. Shefte asked that language about interference with the library network be separated into another sentence.

Mr. Moore also noted a duplication of language in the policy in two different sections. Use of another patron's library card will be retained under 'Unacceptable Use.'

Ms. Spalding inquired about the elimination of language pertaining to “failure to return headphones to the library.” Ms. Stevens indicated that the library has ceased loan of headphones due to COVID health concerns, and has instead purchased earbud headphones available for purchase by patrons at the cost of \$1.00. If the library resumes lending of headphones, this section can be added back to the policy at a later date.

Ms. Shefte inquired about clarification for language under the “governing use” section. Behavior guidelines were also discussed. Ms. Stevens shared some examples of behavior issues that have occurred in the past at public computers, necessitating detailed language in the policy addressing these potential circumstances.

Ms. Shefte inquired about time limits and how these are utilized by patrons, including providing fair access in the event that all computers are occupied. Ms. Stevens shared the parameters of a daily time limit as it pertains to current computer utilization and capacity. Ms. Shefte inquired about whether this time limit might change in the future. Ms. Stevens clarified that language has been modified to allow for flexibility in changing specific time limits based on demand.

Ms. Spalding inquired about mobile device checkouts for needs such as online job interviews. Ms. Stevens shared the current plan to implement in-house use of technology devices, which should be made available within the next fiscal year.

Ms. Stevens will modify the policy according to noted suggestions and questions from the January 19, 2022 meeting, and will present the revised policy for review and approval at the February 16, 2022 Library Board meeting.

Staff Training

The Library plans to participate in a statewide Cybersecurity Awareness grant project. Once approved, staff will complete a series of online training modules over the next 12 months.

Friends of the Library

Ms. Stevens met with Ms. Brandon, President of the Friends of the Library, to discuss the Head Librarian search. Ms. Stevens and Ms. Brandon also discussed Newburyport Area Industrial Development Foundation (NAID) funded projects. Ms. Kelso will attend all Friends of the Library Board meetings to smooth the transition to a new Head Librarian in FY23 goes smoothly.

Old Business

Archival Center CPA Grant HVAC Project

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) grant-funded project to replace the Archival Center HVAC units is in process, although completion has been delayed due to an issue with the delivery of the exterior units. The vendor hopes to complete the installation and testing of the equipment in February 2022.

Head Librarian Search

Ms. Stevens discussed the process and timeline of a new Head Librarian search with the Board. The search committee will coordinate a process timeline, create a list of questions, write a job description, and select and suggest finalists to the NPL Board for interviews. A search committee needs to be formed and board co-chairs selected. This committee has previously included two NPL Board Members, a member of the Friends of the Library, NPL staff, and community members. Mr. Hansen suggested including someone from the School Committee. Ms. Stevens suggested the board begin with volunteers for co-chair positions.

Ms. Shefte inquired about the number of people from the Board involved in the search committee. Ms. Stevens confirmed that typically two Board members participate. She also suggested involving City Human Resources personnel. Ms. Stevens reminded the Board that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has a handbook for hiring new library directors.

Mr. Hansen inquired about the timeline for hiring a new Head Librarian. Ms. Stevens suggested completing the hiring process by the end of May 2022 to ease the transition, with interviews taking place in April 2022. Initial interviews are conducted by the search committee. Finalist interviews are conducted by the NPL Board at a special meeting. Ms. Stevens suggested posting the position for a period of two weeks in mid- to late-March 2022. She suggested the committee meet in February to discuss the position and desired qualities of an applicant in creating the job description and interview questions. Mr. Hansen inquired how outside members are included in the committee from among the community and other local stakeholders. Ms. Stevens indicated that she can offer suggestions for potential members, who will then be contacted by the search committee. Ms. Carey inquired about involvement from the Friends of the Library. Ms. Stevens noted that she met with Ms. Brandon, Friends of the Library President, to discuss her potential involvement in the search process, to which she has agreed.

Mr. Gorski inquired if the process would be virtual or in-person. Ms. Stevens felt this might take place virtually given current public health conditions, but would be done in person for final interviews, depending on the preference of the search committee members.

Ms. Edson inquired about current open Head Librarian positions. Ms. Stevens cited that she is the eleventh MVLC library director departing the position in the past 18 months,

nine of which are due to retirements, and two are due to a change in employment. Ms. Stevens offered positive feedback about the current pool of possible applicants.

The Board discussed the virtual format of Board meetings and how Ms. Kelso might be excused during discussion of the Search Committee should she choose to apply for the Head Librarian position, while continuing to act as recording secretary for Board meetings as appropriate.

Mr. Gorski, Ms. Spalding, and Mr. Hansen offered to assist in the Head Librarian search process. Ms. Edson assured Mr. Hansen that MBLC documentation and City Human Resources staff can provide helpful support in the process.

Other Old Business

None.

New Business

Calendar

The Library was closed on Monday, January 17, 2022 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The Library was also closed due to snow on Friday, January 7, 2022, and re-opened for regular hours on Saturday, January 8, 2022.

The Library has rolled back to virtual programming for the month of January, with the exception of the weekly Movie Matinee.

December and July-December Statistics

Circulation continues to be strong. Museum passes have been popular, including newly added passes. Virtual programming draws larger numbers than in-person programs. Foot traffic is increasing and January 2022 numbers also look good. The Library has had 3,575 visits in the first 12 days of this month.

Other FY22 Statistics

Ms. Stevens reviewed statistics for the first six months of FY22.

Library volunteers are slowly returning to the Library shelving positions, and they are also returning to greet patrons and work on special projects in the Archival Center. In November 2021, there were 25 volunteer hours donated to the Library; in December 2021, this doubled to 51 hours donated.

The Newburyport Public Library Kids' Instagram has over 1,000 followers, the Newburyport Public Library Instagram account has over 800 followers, and the Newburyport Public Library Facebook page has 2300 followers. The Newburyport Public Library sends out approximately 900 e-newsletters weekly and over 400 people regularly open the email.

In December 2021, the NPL Historical Newspapers received over 800 online site visits.

Archival Center Environmental Monitoring Project

The Library is participating in a yearlong MBLC grant project that provides hardware, software, training and support for environmental monitoring of spaces in the Archival Center. Equipment will be received this month and installed in early February.

Temperature and humidity will be measured and monitored for optimal conditions for the Archival collections. This will be especially helpful in analyzing the effectiveness of the new HVAC and humidity control equipment.

Other New Business

Ms. Stevens met with Mayor Reardon and looks forward to working the new Administration and City Council. Ms. Stevens will invite City Councilors to visit and tour the Library and to get a library card.

Mr. Gorski inquired about Conflict of Interest documents that were shared with Board members ahead of the January 2022 meeting. Ms. Stevens requested Board members sign the annual acknowledgement of receipt of the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law, which can be returned to the library. All City employees and boards must complete this annual acknowledgement of the Conflict of Interest Law summary.

Adjournment

Ms. Edson introduced a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 pm. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm.