

**Newburyport Public  
Library Board of Directors  
Virtual Meeting Minutes  
April 20, 2022**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:19 pm by Ms. Valeriani. Roll call was taken.

**Present:** Kathy Carey, Marcia Edson, Gary Gorski, Christian Hansen, Sarah Holden, Steve Moore, Susan Shefte, Sarah Spalding, and Elizabeth Valeriani.

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

**Absent:** James Connolly, Mayor Sean Reardon, and Councilor Heather Shand.

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

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the March 16, 2022, virtual meeting were approved. Ms. Spalding abstained from voting.

**Next Meeting**

The next board meeting will take place virtually on May 18, 2022. The June 2022 meeting format will be determined at the May 18, 2022 meeting.

**Head Librarian Report**

**Library Story**

Ms. Stevens had a positive interaction with a visitor at the circulation desk on April 19, 2022. The patron stated that he had not previously been a reader, but his daughter helped him increase his interest during COVID, and he is now a regular visitor to the Newburyport Public Library (NPL), even though he lives in Ipswich.

**Budget**

The draft Library municipal budget review by the City Council Budget and Finance Committee is scheduled for June 2, 2022.

Ms. Stevens plans to request a transfer of funds from the municipal Personnel budget to the municipal Purchase of Services budget. The extra funds in Personnel stem from staff retirements and turnover during fiscal year 2022 (FY22). These funds will be used to pay for unexpected increases in gas and electric bills, as well as other building expenses, which may include new carpet in the Reading Room and media hallway areas.

## **Building and Grounds**

Repair and painting of the Teen Loft and Catalog Office ceilings have been completed.

The Josiah Little portrait has been hung in the second-floor Reference area near the elevator alongside other portraits.

Basic landscape maintenance will be completed and irrigation will be turned on by the end of the month.

During December 2021, the magazine collection was reorganized by topic. Patron feedback prompted a decision to revert to alphabetical organization as of April 2022.

Media materials have been shifted. DVD items are now located in the hallway near the Program Room on the first floor. Audio books on CD have been temporarily relocated to the hallway adjacent to the Reading Room and administrative offices. A display for the Library of Things has also been moved to this hallway. Audio books on CD will soon move to the book shelves where large print materials are currently located in the Reading Room. Large print materials will move to the hallway adjacent to the Reading Room and administrative offices to provide room for growth in the collection. An additional \$1,500 in collection monies has been allocated for the purchase of large print materials during April and May 2022. Increases have been made to the large print collection budget for FY23 to support ongoing growth of this collection.

## **Personnel**

The Library is currently fully staffed. One or two additional on-call substitutes may be hired. On-call substitutes generally fill in on Saturdays and evenings as needed.

## **Policy**

Updates to the Volunteer Policy were presented for review. Brief discussion regarding volunteer opportunities at the library for various age groups followed. The policy will be revisited at the May 2022 meeting for further review and approval.

## **Staff Training**

The March 30, 2022, all-staff professional development meeting was very successful. The staff reviewed updated library procedures, and the workshop presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) on the Americans with Disabilities Act and general disability etiquette was particularly informative.

## **Friends of the Library**

The Friends of the Newburyport Public Library spring Great Old Book Sale was held March 23 through 26, 2022, and raised \$9,627.00. The dates for the fall 2022 sale are October 19 through 22, 2022, with donations accepted on October 15, 17, and 18.

The Friends funded the latest phase for microfilm digitization project totaling \$27,180. The Newburyport Daily News issues from between 1986 and 2000 are now digitized. Mr. Hansen inquired about the curation and access of current digital files. Ms. Stevens explained procedures associated with current content, which includes a quarterly digital upload and indexing, as well as microfilm backup.

The Friends Landscape Project Committee met on April 4, 2022. The next steps are identifying landscape design vendors, obtaining quotes, and coordinating with the City on the project. Some improvements to the front steps, retaining wall, and drainage must be completed by the City as part of the Library Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in tandem with this project. The Library Board will review landscaping plans prior to presenting the proposal to the City Council. The City Council will approve the project due to cost and location involving City property. The Friends will donate funds to the City Council to coordinate funding. Low-maintenance native plants and designs will be selected with sustainability in mind. This project will likely take place beginning summer 2022 through spring 2023. The project will also include fence repairs, potential new seating, and other external grounds improvements.

## **Old Business**

### **Archival Center CPA Grant HVAC Project**

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) grant-funded project to replace the Archival Center HVAC units continues to be delayed due to an issue with delivery of the exterior units. The latest estimate for delivery is mid- to late May. Ms. Stevens and the City Department of Public Services (DPS) building supervisor are working with the contracted vendor to resolve delays with necessary components. The Library is currently monitoring humidity and temperature conditions closely using new technology-based sensors provided through a grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).

### **Other Old Business**

The most recent request for a Green Communities Grant for HVAC components and lighting improvements was not awarded due to increased local competition, but these projects were recently resubmitted for upcoming fall grant awards.

## **New Business**

## **Calendar**

The Library was closed on Monday, April 18, 2022, in recognition of Patriots' Day.

Ms. Stevens will be on vacation from April 28 to May 2, 2022. Ms. Kelso will be in charge.

An in-person program series on fishing is partially funded by a Cultural Council grant. The Library submits an annual proposal to the Cultural Council to fund a program series.

In-person story times have been popular, as well as the Open Play programs.

The Next Chapter Book group attempted hybrid meetings in March and April and the Library may try again with other equipment.

Many patrons are still enjoying virtual programming and the Library will continue to offer a variety of offerings and formats.

## **March Statistics**

Library attendance increased dramatically in March. A large portion of this traffic took place during the spring Great Old Book Sale.

The Library issued 74 new library cards in March.

Archival Center traffic increased significantly in March. Meeting room use increased significantly in March, and print and digital circulation also increased in March.

In-person programs increased in March, along with public computer use.

The Library is currently averaging 60 items checked out per hour.

## **Newburyport Literary Festival**

The Newburyport Literary Festival events will be virtual again this year. Ms. Kelso serves on the Planning Committee and Ms. Stevens is on the Literary Festival Board. This year's festival will take place between April 29 and May 1.

## **New Services/Collaborations**

A new Spanish-language book group met for the first time. This book group is for fluent Spanish speakers. The Library has also created a small Spanish language fiction collection. Other Merrimack Valley Library Consortium libraries also offer collections in Spanish.

The Library is collaborating with area churches and volunteers to provide a variety of services to the Afghan families who have recently moved to the area. The Library has a small collection of titles in Farsi and Dari and has a resources brochure

available in Farsi and Dari.

In collaboration with the Friends of Newburyport Trees and in honor of Arbor Day, the Library is presenting a program on private versus public trees on April 28, 2022.

### **Other New Business**

No other new business was discussed.

### **Head Librarian Search**

Ms. Stevens inquired about board member availability for a special meeting in May to conduct Head Librarian finalist interviews. A tentative date of May 10 or May 11 was selected pending availability of the Mayor and Councilor Shand. Ms. Stevens will reserve space in the Library for the final interviews and will post the special Library Board meeting as this will be an open meeting.

Mr. Hansen gave an update on the Head Librarian search. Nine applications have been received and reviewed, and three candidates have been selected for screening interviews to take place on May 4 and 5 at City Hall. The search committee will meet again on April 26 to finalize questions and discuss the interview process for the candidates.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm.