

**Newburyport Public Library
Board of Directors
Minutes Virtual Meeting
January 20, 2021**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:17 pm by Ms. Valeriani. Roll call was taken.

Present: Kathy Carey, James Connolly, Marcia Edson, Councilor Jared Eigerman, 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: Mayor Holaday.

Public Comments: None.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 16, 2020 virtual meeting were unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next board meeting will take place February 17, 2021. Virtual meetings will continue until further notice. Councilor Eigerman will continue as City Council President and as an ex officio member of the NPL Board.

Head Librarian Report

Library Story

A patron at the patio pick up window who was picking up items for his wife said, "After 25 years of marriage, I still can't believe how many books she reads! We can't even consider moving now that I'm retired – not because of the beach, the downtown, the walkability of Newburyport – no, it's because of the Newburyport Public Library! She won't leave this library."

Budget

The FY22 municipal budget process has begun, with capital requests due February 19, 2021. Budget narratives and requests are due February 26, 2021.

FY21 Library Trust Fund monies will be requested in April 2021, after receiving final 2020 fund balances. These monies are generally used to support the materials budget, and are allocated to the following areas: general use, purchase of books, and Reading Room support.

Building and Grounds

Wall repair and painting has begun in the third-floor stacks and landing areas.

The teen area is being reimagined by the new Teen Librarian. Placement of furniture is being reviewed to define and determine the best use of the space. She is creating a tween fiction collection for patrons in grades 5-7 who are transitioning from the Children's Room to the teen space.

A new fence with artwork painted by Alan Bull is being installed in the Harris Street municipal parking lot.

The HVAC system has had minor repairs this year and is working well.

A \$68,700 grant-funded lighting project will begin in January or early February. This initiative will replace small round recessed fixtures with LED fixtures throughout the building. A similar project replaced the large, round can fixtures two years ago.

The roofing vendor visited on January 20, 2021 for a final inspection to close out the roofing project. Drone photography was taken as part of the documentation and inspection process.

Personnel

The Teen Librarian position has been moved to the Library's Department of Youth Services, under the direction of the Head of Youth Services. This position was previously aligned with the Reference and Information Department. This shift to Youth Services is expected to foster collaboration between staff to improve support of young patrons transitioning from children's services into tween and teen services.

The posting for the vacant Staff Librarian position drew 33 applicants. This position is in the Reference Department with some hours in the Archival Center. Seven applicants have been interviewed and three finalists will have a second interview on Friday, January 22, 2021. The position should be filled in February and will be supervised by the Head of the Reference Department. Modified training planning is in progress to ensure safe onboarding for the new staff person in compliance with current COVID protocols.

Policy

There were no policies to review this month.

Staff Training

Ms. Stevens will attend the virtual Massachusetts Municipal Association annual conference this week.

Ms. Kelso is completing online training toward CompTIA Certification. CompTIA is a leading worldwide IT association.

Friends of the Library

The Friends have added two new members to their board, bringing board membership to 15, plus the Head Librarian as an ex officio member. New board members will be assisting with marketing efforts for the Friends.

The Friends Board and Newburyport Horticultural Society have decided to postpone the annual Books in Bloom event until April 2022.

The Friends received several book memorial donations in December 2020 and January 2021.

Old Business

Josiah Little Portrait

The donated Josiah Little portrait has been appraised at \$2,500. This is similar in value to the other Lawson paintings owned by the Library including portraits of Caleb Cushing, William Lloyd Garrison, and Daniel Webster.

New Website Project

The new website project launched in December with development of a site map and the overall design phase through a partnership with Bartlett Interactive of Concord, MA.

Ms. Shefte inquired about the focus of the website project and the driving motivation for the redesign. Ms. Stevens shared goals which include responsiveness to a variety of devices, ADA accessibility, improved layout and navigation, and internal autonomy for immediate and ongoing site management.

Mr. Hansen inquired about the complexity of the new site and management of various features. Ms. Stevens indicated that new internal procedures for the site will be in place, with dedicated staff managing ongoing site maintenance.

Library Phased Reopening Plan

The Library rolled back services as of December 28, 2020 and is currently offering Patio Pick up, but no indoor services. This decision was based on statewide and local COVID statistics and in coordination with the Mayor and the City Health Department. This is a temporary rollback with indoor services expected to resume as early as February.

Board Bios

Ms. Stevens suggested the following information for the template: name, term of service, other civic engagement, educational/professional background, and a quote: "What I love about the Library." Ms. Stevens will present a draft template at the February meeting.

New Business **Calendar**

The Library was closed in recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday, January 18, 2021. The Library will also be closed Monday, February 15, 2021 for Presidents Day.

December Statistics

Closing the library for indoor services as of December 28, 2020 has impacted circulation numbers for December 2020. Adult and family craft kits added to the total craft kit numbers, as did one virtual adult program with significant attendance causing a large increase in program attendance.

In the first six months of FY21, 88 patrons checked out 255 items at the Patio on average daily, and 40 patrons received indoor services on average daily. Library cards were obtained by 133 residents, and a total of over 900 people were served in person each month.

Municipal Conflict of Interest Law

Municipal board members must sign an acknowledgement of summary of the law, complete the online training, and print out a certificate of completion for retention by the City Clerk. Ms. Stevens will email information, forms, and links.

Other Business

Mr. Hansen inquired about planning for COVID protocols after vaccine rollouts as it relates to delivery of in-person services or events. Ms. Stevens anticipates general library mandates including mask requirements and limited indoor capacity for social distancing through the end of the calendar year. Some spaces and programming may also be unavailable through the end of the calendar year. Virtual programming and possible outdoor programming will likely continue. Physical spaces, furniture and equipment will be modified and/or restricted to better accommodate public health needs. These modifications and restrictions will be revisited as the fall and winter months approach for 2021 and early 2022.

Ms. Spalding inquired about the success rate of newly implemented *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* digital subscriptions for Newburyport card holders introduced in early January 2021. Over 14 library cards have been registered already as a direct result of this offering. Usage statistics will be available in February for the first full month of service. Ms. Stevens cited an ongoing shift toward additional digital resources for library users.

Adjournment

Ms. Valeriani introduced a motion to adjourn. The motion was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 pm.