

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

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, 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: There were no additional participants in the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

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

Next Meeting

The next board meeting will take place virtually on November 17, 2021. The December 2021 NPL Board meeting will also take place virtually. Ms. Stevens will review City Board of Health guidelines in the interim and discuss future meeting format options (virtual versus in-person) with board members at the November meeting. Ms. Stevens asked board members to prepare and share any updates to their contact information for the November 2021 meeting.

Head Librarian Report

A Reading, Massachusetts resident reported that their child loves the Newburyport Public Library Children's Room so much that they come to Newburyport for their adventures, and will visit the Friends of the NPL book sale on Saturday, October 23, 2021.

Ms. Stevens was stopped in a local store by a former patron to share how much teen services affected her positively in the past, and how much she continues to love the library and its virtual offerings.

Budget

Ms. Stevens met with the City Budget and Finance Committee on October 19, 2021, to discuss the library's FY21 Annual Report.

Building and Grounds

The lower level concrete floors have been polished and sealed. Ms. Stevens is awaiting a quote for replacement of carpeting in the lobby area and Archival Center Reading Room. Archival staff are using this interim time to evaluate the collection thoughtfully and return items to the Archival Center, with hopes of reopening the Archival Center Reading Room in November or December for public access. Mr. Moore inquired about the preventive steps the City's Department of Public Services (DPS) is taking to ensure no future incidents will occur to cause this kind of damage. Ms. Stevens explained the unusual circumstances that led to the water event in July, and has been assured by Mr. Funari at DPS that a similar incident is extremely unlikely, and that Ms. Stevens will be notified of any DPS water-related work occurring in the immediate area surrounding the Library. Ms. Stevens will discuss with DPS the succession plans for communicating this process as needed.

COVID funds will be used to replace the first-floor drinking fountain with a combination bottle-filler unit. The bottle-filler drinking fountain unit on the second-floor near the Reference area has been popular with patrons and staff.

DPS has hired and is training three new custodians to clean facilities. Ms. Stevens is hopeful that with added DPS staffing, several building projects will be completed this fall and winter.

Green Communities grants have been submitted by the City that includes lighting replacements and an upgrade of the HVAC equipment at the Library.

Personnel

F. Gutierrez is the new Library Technician in Borrower Services. Ms. Gutierrez is currently enrolled in a Master's degree program in Library Studies and started work at the NPL on September 27, 2021.

Policy

The Circulation Policy was reviewed after updates were made in September to include the Library of Things collection. Ms. Edson inquired about adding subheadings for sections in the Circulation Policy to add clarity. Mr. Connolly inquired about limitations to the volume of item checkouts. Ms. Stevens clarified that this is no longer in place for

library users unless there are extenuating circumstances, which are discussed on a patron-by-patron basis. Final review of the Circulation Policy will occur at the November 17, 2021 Board meeting.

Staff Training

All staff will participate in a staff meeting and training from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on November 1, 2021. The library will be closed in the morning and will open at 1:00 pm to the public that day.

Assistant Head Librarian Ms. Kelso is being considered for a position on the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) Executive Committee.

Library staff are participating in Beacon Coalition meetings.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the NPL are currently holding their October book sale in the Program Room. This year, the Friends extended hours for the Member Preview day to assist with social distancing efforts. Capacity limits have been imposed for all days of the sale.

Old Business

Lower Level Repairs

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 while the vendor awaits delivery of all necessary parts and equipment.

Board Bios

A number of NPL Board member bios are completed. Ms. Stevens is still gathering the initial appointment dates for some board members. Ms. Kelso will enter the information into uniform templates for preservation in the Archival Center collection.

Building Fund

Mr. Connolly will provide a current statement of funds for Ms. Stevens to report the 2021 Building Fund account balances to the City. The funds are currently invested in a Certificate of Deposit that will mature at the end of September, 2022.

Vandalism

The student who painted graffiti on the Prince Place portico steps has been identified by police and charges will be brought against the juvenile offender, with support of Mayor Holaday. After a judgement is issued in court, a "no trespass" order will be issued by Ms. Stevens prohibiting the individual from entering library grounds. "No trespass" orders are generally informed by a City of Newburyport Police Department recommendation. Mr. Moore inquired about the offender possibly completing potential community service at the Library. Ms. Stevens indicated that this is the decision of a

judge. Ms. Stevens may suggest this option to the police detective involved with the case.

A patron's bicycle was stolen in early October. The bicycle was located at the front area fence and not secured with a lock.

Website Project

The website vendor and NPL staff have almost completed the Library's new website. The new site will be beta tested and should be ready to launch in November. The new website has accessibility features and is mobile-responsive. Library staff will have more control over content and the timeliness of necessary changes. Ms. Stevens solicited present NPL Board members who may be interested in offering feedback during this beta testing stage, asking those individuals to contact her after the meeting as appropriate.

Other Old Business

None.

New Business

Calendar

The library will be closed Thursday, November 11, 2021 for the Veteran's Day holiday.

Book groups and other scheduled adult programs continue to be offered as a mix of virtual and in-person formats. There are weekly drop-in programs for children and teens. The weekly movie matinee is popular, as are other adult programs, with an average of 25 attendees at in-person programs. The Children's and Teen Services librarians will participate in the City "Touch-a-Truck" program on October 23, 2021. The Children's librarian has also been offering outdoor story times in collaboration with the National Wildlife Refuge in the Visitor Center garden.

September Statistics

Ms. Stevens shared September statistics. Statistics tend to drop annually in September as school resumes, with usage, attendance, and circulation increasing again starting in October each year. Circulation is higher now than in pre-COVID years. Attendance in the building and at programs is lower due to COVID, and due to fewer in-person program offerings. This pattern has been consistent across many libraries in the Commonwealth in recent years, including throughout COVID.

FY23 Action Plan

The FY23 Action Plan was submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) by Ms. Stevens at the end of September. This plan is used by Ms. Stevens during the municipal budgeting process. The FY22 Action Plan was shared.

New Museum Passes

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends, the Library will offer two new museum passes this fall: the Trustees of the Reservations, and the Children's Museum of New Hampshire.

Travels with George

Best-selling author Nathaniel Philbrick visited the NPL Archival Center in June 2019 to conduct research on his book about George Washington's travels through New England, which included Newburyport. Documents located in the Archival Center helped inform Mr. Philbrick's research. When the book was published in September 2021, Mr. Philbrick acknowledged the Newburyport Public Library in its pages and discussed his visit. He also made note of his experience at the NPL during a recent National Public Radio interview on WBUR.

Other New Business

Mr. Hansen inquired about library funding as it pertains to attendance and circulation. Ms. Stevens shared the process of statistical reporting at the state and federal levels as it is tied to funding. Ms. Stevens clarified how the number of hours open to the public and the amount of money spent on materials can impact State Aid funding. The mayor and city councilors also determine the municipal funding in the annual budgeting process. Ms. Stevens meets with these individuals annually to share the state Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR) parameters in place for certification, spending, and funding to assist in informing the city budgeting process. Ongoing patron feedback and behavior patterns surrounding attendance, use, and circulation will help the library determine necessary changes to service over the next year.

Ms. Shefte inquired about the number of patrons who may currently be using the Library as a workspace. Ms. Stevens indicated that this number is lower than in the past, but that it is increasing in several locations throughout the library. Ms. Stevens theorized that current indoor mask mandates may be affecting attendance, as people utilizing the Library for workspace may be deterred from staying for long periods due to the discomfort of wearing a mask all day. Ms. Shefte commented that families are also taking precautions and spending less time in the Library because many young children are not yet vaccinated.

Mr. Hansen inquired about the current relocation of Newburyport Youth Services (NYS) and whether the Library would accommodate some of its programs in light of this. Newburyport Youth Services is leaving the Brown School and is seeking a temporary home for the remainder of the fiscal year. Ms. Stevens indicated that the Library is currently utilizing its space primarily for library programming, and that she has extended an offer of library space to Youth Services as needed. Some of their programs will be limited as a result of this transition but Youth Services, the City Council, and Mayor Holaday are coordinating to manage this transition smoothly until a permanent location is secured. Ms. Holden indicated that local maker spaces may be also an option for NYS.

Adjournment

Ms. Valeriani introduced a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 pm. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 pm.