



CITY OF NEWBURYPORT
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SEAN R. REARDON, MAYOR

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MAYOR@CITYOFNEWBURYPORT.COM

To: President and Members
of the City Council

From: Sean R. Reardon, Mayor

Date: June 27, 2022

Subject: Appointment

I hereby appoint, subject to your approval, the following named individual as Head Librarian for Newburyport. This term will expire on July 9, 2025.

Sara Kelso
1 Robin Glen Road
Stratham, NH 03885

Sara Kelso

503-481-2293

sara.kelso@gmail.com

MARCH 22, 2022

HEAD LIBRARIAN SEARCH COMMITTEE
CITY OF NEWBURYPORT - NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
94 STATE STREET
NEWBURYPORT, MA. 01950

Dear Colleagues and Community Members:

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the next Head Librarian for the city of Newburyport. For the past four years, I have enjoyed the privilege of serving the city of Newburyport and the Newburyport Public Library in the role of Assistant Head Librarian, a position that also performs all duties of Head Librarian during absences. With twelve years in the field of public service focusing specifically on community libraries, I believe I am ready to lead the Newburyport Public Library into its next chapter.

My experience as an administrator at the Newburyport Public Library has afforded me an opportunity to develop strong, positive connections with local residents, a variety of community organizations, city employees, and a number of service-minded professionals. I am in this field because I love working with people and believe in the mission of public libraries. Neither of my parents completed high school, so education and access for people of all backgrounds is of personal interest. I know firsthand the difference libraries can make as welcoming, safe places for learning without barriers. I married a Newburyport native who also spent many formative years in his hometown library. Libraries are not just about books, but about building community through inclusive and thoughtful spaces, programming, resources, and relationships. I am proud to support these goals every day.

My focus as a public servant includes practical and academic knowledge of local government, budgeting, grant writing, long-range strategic planning, statistical analysis, and policy development. I bring several years of experience with personnel selection, training and management, and a proven history of collaboration through outreach, diverse programming, and thoughtful community-based partnerships. As a professional librarian, I also possess strong research, writing, and technology skills.

I have completed several statewide and regional leadership programs and presented on current topics affecting Massachusetts library users. I am active in several industry associations and consistently seek out professional development for both myself and staff. I represent the Newburyport Public Library at various boards, committees, and meetings, including the Merrimack

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2 of 2

Valley Library Consortium, and as an executive board member and budget committee member with the Massachusetts Library System. In previous roles, I served on technology advisory committees for large consortiums, volunteered as a librarian for a statewide reference service, and acted as editor for a statewide library association quarterly publication for four years.

Recently, I completed a large-scale project which involved a comprehensive overhaul of the Newburyport Public Library website. In my tenure at the Newburyport Public Library, I have introduced several new technologies and initiatives focused on improved efficiency and access to resources for both staff and patrons, many at little or no cost. In 2020, I assisted the Friends of the Newburyport Public Library in writing a grant with a local organization that resulted in implementation of low-vision resources and equipment for public use.

I believe in preserving the rich history of Newburyport while pursuing innovation as the needs and interests of the community grow. COVID-19 has taught us all a great deal about adapting to new landscapes through creative problem-solving. In July 2021, I unexpectedly found myself shoveling water down a flooded hallway in the basement near our Archival Center during a building emergency. It was definitely a challenge that required me to be quick on my feet! I am familiar with all aspects of our historic building and its ongoing demands, along with the many vendors and DPS staff who help us keep it in top condition.

I have worked in busy urban libraries serving over 65,000, with expansive facilities and budgets to match, and in tiny places taped together, surviving on willpower and ingenuity. I want to support the library and the city in delivering new and existing services, expanding access, and providing an inclusive, welcoming environment for lifelong learning. I believe in communication, collaboration, and consistent, accurate customer service. I adapt quickly, and know a sense of humor is invaluable in public library work. I have also been fortunate to have the guidance of strong leaders and mentors, including current Head Librarian Giselle Stevens and former Head Librarian Dottie LaFrance. I have a broad knowledge of library services and sincere interest in helping others grow. I believe I can offer the dedication and experience you need in a Head Librarian. Your time and consideration are sincerely appreciated. I look forward to discussing the position with you further.

Sincerely,



SARA KELSO

sara.kelso@gmail.com ◆ 503-481-2293

Q U A L I F I C A T I O N S

- Over ten years experience building community and promoting public library services through support and administrative management roles in local government
- Extensive professional experience in personnel management, training, outreach, reference services and programming
- Current policy development, budgeting, long-range planning, and grant writing experience
- Strong technology background with experience managing library infrastructure including networks, hardware, and software
- Planning and project management, vendor procurement, and facilities support experience

E X P E R I E N C E

- City of Newburyport
Newburyport, MA. **Assistant Head Librarian (Assistant Director)** 8/2018 - Present
- Manage all aspects of library administration in absence of Head Librarian for 38,000-square foot facility with 21 staff
 - Current experience managing municipal budgets and payroll, executing policy development, long-range planning, grant writing, data collection and analysis, and statewide statistics reporting
 - Facilitate relationships with library boards, committees, and community stakeholders
 - Manage selection, training, scheduling, and ongoing support of all library personnel and volunteers
 - Manage and implement all technology including networking, hardware and software for a public library serving over 18,000 residents
 - Implemented rapidly changing protocols throughout COVID-19, launched Library of Things, online chat, automated PTO tracking, managed 2021 website redesign project
- City of Peabody
Peabody, MA. **Head of Reference/Senior Librarian** 8/2016 - 8/2018
- Managed Public Services operations and staff in busy urban library serving 50,000
 - Managed over \$85,000 annual electronic and print resource budget
 - Oversaw public technology programming, planning, and instruction
 - Produced social media and marketing content
 - Trained library staff and assisted in personnel selection
 - Managed and reported statistical data
- City of Amesbury
Amesbury, MA. **Reference Librarian** 11/2015 - 8/2016; on-call 8/2016 - 11/2018
- Handled library resource and technology inquiries
 - Managed adult nonfiction print/e-book materials and budget
 - Facilitated recurring adult programs
 - Managed social media, website, and event calendar content

E X P E R I E N C E

- City of Tigard
Tigard, OR. **Adult Services Librarian** 8/2014 - 10/2015
Senior Reference Assistant 7/2013 - 8/2014
- Managed adult print collection and annual budget
 - Scheduled, supervised, and trained technology assistants
 - Developed digital education program for a library serving 64,000
 - Planned and coordinated monthly cultural, literary, technology, educational, and community-focused programs
 - Handled reference inquiries and coordinated public space usage
- City of Sherwood
Sherwood, OR. **Library Assistant** 1/2011 - 10/2015
- Provided reference, readers' advisory, and account services
 - Routed items, managed holds, resolved materials issues
- St. Jude Medical
(Abbott Labs),
Neuromodulation
Division
Portland, OR. **Technical Writer** 6/2007-12/2010
- Authored and edited product and process assembly documentation for specialized medical components in conformance with ISO and ASTM quality control standards
 - Maintained engineering documentation library
 - Worked closely with engineering team in product design and lean manufacturing protocols, including SolidWorks CAD 3-D modeling software

E D U C A T I O N

- Suffolk University &
Mass. Municipal Association
Boston, MA. **Local Government Leadership & Management
Graduate Certificate, 2018**
- San Jose State University
San Jose, CA. **Master of Library & Information Science, 2014**
- Portland State University
Portland, OR. **Bachelor of Science, Sociology, 2012**
Summa Cum Laude

P R O F E S S I O N A L E N G A G E M E N T

Massachusetts Library System

- Member, Board of Directors 2021 - Present
- Budget Committee, Board of Directors 2021 - Present
- Member, Institute for Database Engagement & Leadership 2018
- Member/Presenter, Project SET: Skills, Empowerment & Talent Cohort 2017

New England Library Association

- Participant, Emerging Leaders Virtual Cohort 2021

Merrimack Valley Library Consortium

- Co-Chair, Technology User Group 2019 - 2020

North of Boston Library Exchange

- Electronic Resources and Database Working Group 2016 - 2018

Oregon Library Association

- Editor/Coordinator, Oregon Library Association Quarterly Journal 2012 - 2015
- Co-Chair, Communications Committee 2012 - 2014

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PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Name: Giselle Stevens

Title: Head Librarian, Newburyport Public Library, 2018-Present

Relationship: Current supervisor

Email: gstevens@newburyportpl.org

Phone: 978-465-4428 x222 (work) / 978-270-7718

Name: Dorothy "Dottie" LaFrance

Title: Head Librarian, Newburyport Public Library, 1978-2008 (retired)

Relationship: Professional mentor

Email: r.lafrance@comcast.net

Phone: 978-255-7124

Name: Paula Biscardi

Title: Library Technician, Newburyport Public Library (retired)

Relationship: Former colleague/direct report

Email: paula.h.biscardi@gmail.com

Phone: 978-462-7277 (best reached by phone)

Additional contacts

Name: Margie Walker

Title: Local History/Teen Services Librarian, Amesbury Public Library (retired)

Relationship: Former colleague

Email: margiewalker10@comcast.net

Phone: 603-775-7081

Name: Nancy Peace

Title: Past President, Friends of the Newburyport Public Library, current member, Board of Directors

Relationship: Professional colleague

Email: nancypeace@comcast.net

Phone: 617-501-9511