

**Newburyport Public
Library Board of Directors**
February 21, 2024
In-Person Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Call to order at 5:17pm.

- I. Roll call:
 - a. Present: Councilor Ed Cameron, James Connolly, Gary Gorski, Sarah Holden, Sarah Spalding, Mayor Sean Reardon, and Madeleine Whitten
 - b. Absent: Christian Hansen, Steve Moore, Elizabeth Valeriani
 - c. Video recording
 - i. Mr. Bourque, Head Librarian, submitted a motion, "I move to approve the audio and video recording of the February 21, 2024 Library Board of Directors meeting, have the recording be available for viewing in the library, and be no longer available in a month." Ms. Holden motioned to approve, Ms. Spalding seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Recording began after the vote passed.
 - d. Public Comment
 - i. Jack Garvey (20 Jackson Way, Newbury) reviewed a Newburyport Daily News article from June 2023 that included a comment on volunteers handling money. This information also appeared on the library website. He shared that the word "money" was not defined and added that there was a response article from the volunteers that said that the money was from photocopying. He wanted to know if the board knew about this information. Jim Connolly, Board Chair, responded that he had not read the article and confirmed that it had already been removed from the library site. Mr. Connolly thanked Mr. Garvey for sharing his comments.
 - ii. Linda Harding (13 Tremont Street, Unit 12, Newburyport) spoke about the former library volunteers. She shared that people are reconsidering financial support of the library and expressed concerns about the archival center as a place for active research. She mentioned that after her retirement, Sharon Spieldenner has not been recognized for her many accomplishments.
 - iii. Mr. Connolly invited Ghlee Woodworth to speak and she declined.
 2. Minutes
 - i. Approval of January 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes: Ms. Holden motioned to approve and City Councilor President Ed Cameron seconded.
 3. Next Meeting Date: March 20, 2024
- II. Head Librarian Report
 - a. Budget
 - i. Fiscal year 2025 (FY25) budget season is under way.
 - ii. Mr. Bourque met with Ethan Manning, the City's Financial Director, on February 15, 2024, to discuss the particulars of the Library budget and Newburyport's budget process.
 - iii. Budget proposal is due to the Finance Director by Friday, March 8, 2024.
 - b. Statistics
 - i. Attendance: January, 10,977; FY24 average, 10,736

- ii. Circulation: January, 23,121; FY24 average, 23,957
- iii. Commentary
 - 1. The Board shared their support for the current breakdown for the monthly statistics.
- c. Building and Grounds
 - i. Request from Homes.com made on February 12, 2024, to take interior pictures of the building for their website. Photos depict patrons using the Library. Policy states that the board needs to approve commercial photography in the building.
 - 1. Commentary
 - a. Ms. Holden asked for further clarification. Mr. Bourque responded with information on the types and location of pictures that were included.
 - b. City Councilor President Cameron mentioned expense of homes for sale on site.
 - 2. Mr. Connolly motioned for approval and Mayor Sean Reardon seconded. The motion passed.
- d. Personnel
 - i. Senior Librarian for Archival Services
 - 1. The Senior Librarian for Archival Services position was filled internally. After reviewing current staff member Dana Echelberger's experience and education, she was offered and accepted the position. She will assume full responsibilities on Friday, March 1, 2024.
 - 2. Archival Center Schedule: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Wednesday and Friday, 1:00–9:00 p.m. on Thursday, and a rotating weekend schedule of 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. on every third Saturday.
 - 3. On Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. and scheduled Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Ms. Echelberger will be at the Adult Reference Desk.
 - a. Providing research assistance and being visible at the Reference Desk is crucial for relationship building with patrons.
 - b. Anecdotal data from library staff suggests that patrons are being made more aware of the services/resources in the Archival Center through interactions at the Adult Reference Desk.
 - c. Increasing visibility and awareness of the Archive Services
 - d. Help patrons see that Archive Services is a part of the greater Library and not a separate entity
 - ii. Archival Center: Open for walk-ins and open by appointment
 - 1. Thursdays 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, and Saturdays between 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, the Archives Room will now be open by appointment only.
 - a. Patrons looking to access the room during these times will be asked to either call or visit the Reference Room for assistance. They will have the option to schedule an appointment online (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScG0f_DcmbcE_zAiiNFBYAS0r-wlqhtsVVHNCt5qWedZ5LXwg/viewform) using an available QR code.

City's social worker, Trish Boateng

- b. Allison Privitera negotiated a collaboration for a 6-week Summer Program series.
- ii. Outreach
 - 1. Immaculate Conception School
 - a. On January 26, 2024, Ms. Privitera provided educational outreach, and instruction on how to identify credible sources for research projects for the school's sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.
- g. Programming
 - i. A total of 46 programs were offered to Library patrons during the month of January.
 - ii. 20 Adult (7 in-person, 13 virtual)
 - iii. 26 Kids and teens programs
- h. Calendar
 - i. Previous month's Library closures
 - 1. Snow cancellation on Tuesday, February 13, 2024
 - 2. Presidents' Day, Monday, February 19, 2024
 - 3. Upcoming Library closures:
 - a. Staff development day, February 27, 2024, delayed opening at 1:00 p.m.
 - b. Library will be closed from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.
 - i. Staff will participate in a strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) strategic planning exercise and have departmental meetings
- i. Strategic Planning
 - i. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee
 - 1. First meeting on Monday, February 12, 2024
 - 2. Feedback was offered
 - 3. Potential community survey questions
 - 4. Potential focus group participants
 - 5. Teen questionnaire will be gamified with a small reward, potentially sponsored by the Friends of the Newburyport Public Library.
 - ii. Staff will be participating in a SOAR exercise on Tuesday, February 27, 2024.
 - iii. Mr. Bourque shared that there is a need to schedule an opportunity for the Board of Directors to participate in a SOAR exercise.
 - 1. Two-hour long exercise
 - 2. Can be done virtually on Zoom
 - 3. Commentary
 - a. Mr. Connolly asked about how the dates would be selected.
 - b. Mr. Bourque followed up with a request for the best times, dates, etc.
 - c. Mayor Reardon asked for a few dates to be selected. Ms. Holden asked for Wednesdays. Mr. Bourque said that he would review the options. There will be a survey available for Board members who cannot participate in the virtual session.
 - d. The SOAR exercise will be considered an open meeting and the public is welcome to attend. There will be a posted agenda, a period for open comment, then the SOAR

exercise will begin.

- j. Mr. Connolly asked for further comment. Mayor Reardon thanked Marcia Edson, Kathy Carey, and Elizabeth Valeriani for their many years of faithful service to the Library as they depart the Board. Two candidates will be sent to City Council. Caroline McCarthy and Kristen Donahue are both candidates. Stacey Brandon, President of the Friends of the Library, also met recently with Mayor Reardon.
- III. Adjournment: At 6:12 p.m., Mayor Reardon motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Holden seconded.