

Newburyport Public Library
Board of Directors
March 20, 2024
VIRTUAL MEETING

- I. Call to order at 5:18 p.m.
- II. Roll call and introductions
 - a. Welcome new Board member Kristen Donahue
 - b. Present: Mayor Sean Reardon, City Council President Ed Cameron, James Connolly, Kristen Donahue, Gary Gorski, Christian Hansen, Sarah Holden, Stephen Moore, Sarah Spalding, Madeleine Whitten, and Head Librarian Kevin Bourque
 - c. Absent: Caroline McCarthy and Elizabeth Valeriani
- III. Discussion: Recording Library Board of Director (LBOD) meetings
 - a. Things to consider
 - 1. Logistics
 - 1. The necessary resources (Zoom account, OWL, location on the LBOD webpage for meeting video links) are available
 - 2. Change to Call to Order
 - 1. Needs to include wording, "This meeting is audio and video recorded."
 - 3. Video accessibility
 - 1. Within two to three business days following the meeting, the shareable Zoom video link will be posted to the LBOD webpage on the City website
 - 4. Official record of the meeting is still the meeting minutes
 - 1. Approved at next monthly meeting
 - 2. Approved minutes posted to the LBOD webpage on the City website
 - b. Mr. Moore motioned to record the meetings and post them online. Ms. Holden seconded. There was no further discussion, and the vote was unanimous.
- IV. Public comment
 - a. Use of chat by non-Board members
 - 1. During public comment, use of the chat function is permissible. Use of the chat function by non-Board members is considered public comment.
 - 2. After public comment is closed, chat is reserved for Board members to address technology issues.
 - 3. Visitors will receive a reminder if they try to use the chat function after public comment. Further use by that visitor will result in their removal from the meeting.
 - b. Commentary
 - 1. Walt Thompson (100 State Street, Apt. 2, Newburyport) requested an independent investigation of the Mayor and his administration, the president of the City Council, Library staff, volunteers, the union, City Hall's Human Resources Department for ethical, policy, and procedural violations. He requested that the results of this investigation should be made public. Mr. Thompson also spoke about how he interviewed former volunteers and they reported that they had not engaged in any bullying

behavior. He mentioned that the union grievance was posted on the newspaper and library website. He spoke about how he believed that former Head Librarian Sara Kelso had an agenda to end the volunteer program and remove the department head in the Archival Center.

2. David Vine (47 Marlboro Street, Newburyport) shared that he had no idea what happened with the changes in the Archival Center. He requested that the Board help people understand why the former department head of the Archival Center is no longer working at the library.
3. Margo Vine (47 Marlboro Street, Newburyport) felt that it was a loss to Newburyport that Sharon Spieldenner is gone.

V. Approval of previous meeting minutes

- a. Request to revise meeting minutes from 17 January 2024. Andrew Levine, the City's Chief of Staff, spoke on the accuracy of the language in the January minutes.
 1. 17 January 2024, states, "Personnel City Hall has accepted the resignation of Sharon Spieldenner, the former department head for the Archival Center."
 2. Mr. Levine spoke, saying that the word "resign" is still accurate and "retire" would be more specific.
 3. Commentary
 1. Mr. Moore said that the individual who requested the change wanted the word "resignation" to be removed and replaced with "retirement."
 2. Mr. Connolly stated that if what happened was that she resigned, then that should be reflected in the minutes.
 3. Mr. Hansen asked about the letter submitted to HR and Mr. Levine shared that it contained the word "retire."
 4. A motion was proposed to amend the minutes to say, "City Hall accepted the retirement of Sharon Spieldenner." Ms. Holden motioned, and Mayor Reardon seconded. The motion passed.
- b. February 21, 2024, meeting minutes
 1. City Council President Cameron motioned to approve the February minutes and Ms. Holden seconded. The motion passed.

VI. Next meeting date: April 17, 2024

VII. Head Librarian report

- a. Budget
 1. Fiscal year 2024 (FY24) budget
 1. As of 1 March, 67% of the overall budget has been expended.
 - a. 73% of purchase of services
 - b. 64% of personnel
 2. The library budget proposal was submitted to Ethan Manning, the City's finance director, on Friday, 8 March.
 - a. Meets/exceeds the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR)
 - b. Meets materials expenditure percentage: regulatory requirement of 12%
 - c. Adjusts for inflation: initial proposal is 5.8% above last year's approved budget.

3. First budget meeting with Mayor Reardon is on Monday, 1 April.
- b. Library statistics
 1. Attendance: February, 9,953; FY24 average, 10,638
 2. Circulation: February, 21,874; FY 24 average, 22,631
- c. Building and grounds
 1. Program Room AV system upgrade
 1. New England Data Integration (NEDI) will be coming in to upgrade and make repairs to the Library's existing system.
 - a. Upgrading wireless microphone system
 - b. Repairing broken wall jacks
 2. Friends of the Newburyport Public Library are funding the project (\$7,900)
 2. On 7 March 2024, the Department of Public Services (DPS) responded to a water penetration event in the interlibrary loan (ILL) room in the basement.
 1. Cause determined: Water came in through the window due to a blocked external drain in the window well.
 2. Water was removed
 3. Carpet was dried and cleaned
 4. Commentary
 - a. Mr. Connolly asked for a more regular review of the area. Mr. Bourque responded that he would get in touch with Mike Bartlett from Department of Public Services (DPS).
 - b. Mr. Hansen asked for clarification on the location of the drain and its proximity to the Archival Center. Mr. Bourque addressed the question and indicated that the water event was not in the area of the Archival Center.
 - c. Mr. Moore added that DPS should review this every few months. Mr. Bourque responded that he would ask to have it added to regular monitoring.
- d. Personnel
 1. Senior Librarian for Reference and Information Services
 1. Filled internally by Flor Gutierrez
 2. Ms. Gutierrez assumed responsibilities of the position as of Monday, 18 March.
 2. Current vacancy: Staff Librarian
 1. Assessing the staffing needs of the library departments to determine where the next hire will be assigned
 2. The new hire will be cross-trained to provide coverage in all departments
- e. Volunteer program development
 1. Donna Drelick, head of the City's HR Department, is in the process of reviewing the volunteer program documentation.
 2. Review by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union representatives will take place next
 1. Due to union contact negotiations, Ms. Drelick is holding off presenting the program to the union until negotiations have been completed.
 - a. Want the program to be reviewed and approved on its own merits
 - b. Approval to be put at risk if it gets caught up in the negotiations
 3. Commentary:

- a. Ms. Holden asked for a timeline for negotiations. Mr. Levine said that City Hall anticipates that this process will be done in June.
 - b. Mr. Hansen indicated that this was a long delay. Mr. Levine shared that the Board could request to expedite the review process.
 - c. Mr. Cameron motioned that the Board submit a request to recommend that Ms. Drelick and the HR Department work as quickly as possible. Mr. Hansen seconded. Mr. Cameron withdrew the motion. Mr. Moore agreed. Mr. Bourque will return with more information in April.
 - d. Mr. Connolly asked if the Mayor would be a good destination for questions on the topic of staffing and volunteers. Mayor Reardon indicated that he welcomes people to come into his office during his open hours.
- f. Outreach and community partnerships
 - 1. Outreach
 - 1. Home deliveries: Library staff continue to deliver materials to patrons unable to come to the library due to prolonged illness or mobility issues. Deliveries are made to ~12 patrons each month.
 - 2. Ongoing partnerships
 - 1. Newburyport Recreation and Youth Services
 - a. The Library continues to provide drop-in hours with City Social Worker Trish Boateng.
 - 2. City Clerk
 - a. On 5 March, the Library served as a polling location for the Massachusetts presidential primaries.
- g. Programming
 - 1. 57 programs were offered to patrons in the month of February
 - 1. 29 adult programs (21 virtual, 8 in-person)
 - 2. 28 kids and teens
- h. Calendar
 - 1. Previous month's closures
 - 1. Snow cancellation on Tuesday, 13 February
 - 2. Presidents' Day, Monday, 19 February
 - 3. Staff development day, 27 February 27; delayed opening at 1 p.m.
 - 2. Upcoming closure
 - 1. Patriots' Day, Monday, 15 April
- i. Strategic planning
 - 1. Community feedback surveys
 - 1. Adult (ages 18 and over)
 - 2. Teen (grades 6–12)
 - 3. Released to the public on Monday, 25 March 25, with responses accepted through 6 April
 - 4. Online participation encouraged
 - 5. Hardcopies will be available upon request at the library.
 - 2. Board of Directors strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results SOAR) activity: 27 March at 6:30 p.m.
 - 3. Focus groups
 - 1. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee is currently reviewing and preparing questions
 - 2. Groups participating
 - a. Friends of the Newburyport Public Library Board

- b. Parents
- c. Seniors
- d. Social services support organizations

VIII. Adjournment: At 6:15 p.m., Mr. Moore motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Cameron seconded. The motion passed unanimously.