

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Milne Public Library, 1095 Main Street, Williamstown
Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 5:30pm

Trustees Present: Anna Halpin-Healy (treasurer), Robin Lenz, Jared Della Rocca (vice-chair), Bridget Spann, Ben Lee-Cohen, and Katy Evans (secretary)

Trustee Absent: Micah Manary (chair)

Staff Present: Angela Zimmermann (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (representing the Friends)

The meeting was called to order by Jared at 5:32pm.

I. Library Staff Member - Welcome Ella!

Ella is a Library Services Specialist, who began working at the Milne over three years ago. She started while in high school and is now attending MCLA. Ella highlighted projects she has contributed to, including technology projects, and observed multiple positive changes at the library since Angie's arrival.

II. Meeting Minutes from September 11 (Katy)

Bridget suggested adding the secretary's name to identify who prepared the minutes.

Jared moved to approve minutes with this edit and Anna seconded. All voted in favor, except Katy who abstained.

III. Special Meeting Minutes from September 25 (Bridget/Jared)

Because we didn't have a quorum of Trustees who had attended the 9/25/24 meeting, we pushed this agenda item to the next meeting.

IV. Treasurer's Report (Anna)

Annual Appeal letters were sent to the Print Shop two weeks ago. Trustees were asked to review the list of recipients and personalize those to people they know. Letters and stamps will be left in Angie's office.

Sheds 'n Stuff will send an invoice for \$11,628, the final payment for the pavilion. After the Friends' donation of \$20,000, that will leave a balance of \$591 for the pavilion project. Bridget moved that the Trustees pay this out of the annual fund budget. Anna seconded, all voted in favor.

Discussion ensued about how to pay for the screening fence erected on the south side of the library. The cost for the fence came to approximately \$22,000. The town has said these funds will not come from the Capital Improvement budget, but it's unclear what budget should cover it. Because the 90% privacy screening requirement is applicable to all town buildings, and the library is a town building, the town should cover the cost of the fence. It was decided that we need more information from the town and the chair on who is responsible for covering this cost.

Anna will discuss a process for sending acknowledgment letters with Ben and Jared.

Ben moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, Robin seconded. All voted in favor, except Anna who abstained.

Fund Balances as of September 30, 2024:

Annual Fund	\$13,819.48
Botsford	\$76,914.79
Carpenter	\$10,661.27
Conway Glick	\$0.30
Craig	\$12,972.33
McFarland	\$303,575.28
Tenney Osborne	\$24,629.35
Trustee, Friends allocation for renovation fund	\$2,361.44
150th Anniversary	\$1,064.33
TOTAL	\$445,998.57

V. Director's Report (Angie)

The staff had their in-service training on October 4. The training brought the staff together, although there were some challenging conversations during the session on gender identity and sexuality and the speaker for the second session came late, unprepared, and was not the best fit.

Angie will be attending the NE Library Association Conference on October 20-23, 2024. The new director of Mass Libraries will tour the library on October 12.

So far there has been good feedback on the expanded evening hours. Programs have been consistently happening (thanks Kira!)

The Marketing and Communications Strategist position was posted and the closing date was today (10/9). The search committee is about to start interviewing candidates.

Regarding the building, Boiler #1 is officially out of service. Ashley Swift and the DPW assessed the situation, and DPW will be recommending whether a replacement or repair is needed.

Bridget said that the boiler system was installed in the Fall of 2017 and that it's a surprise that issues have arisen again. Angie will talk with Craig at DPW.

Angie is taking on some of the cataloging work of the Thingdom after Jack's departure. Currently there are about 150 items in circulation with a goal of 350.

VI. Friends Report (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth attended the start of the October 4 staff in-service training day. The Friends have a professional development fund, which Elizabeth advertised to the staff.

The Friends voted again to support the Words are Wonderful event through WES. They are also providing funds for the library's tech intern.

There will be a volunteer appreciation event on November 13, 4-5:30pm. The Trustees are invited and Angie will say a few words.

Elizabeth is working with Anna to get some data on the Trustees' annual appeals to compare with Friends' appeal.

Friends are working on marketing and welcome the Trustees' input.

Friends have dedicated \$1,000 to the 150th Anniversary closing party, to be matched by the Trustees. These funds will go towards food. It was determined that the Friends will transfer their portion to the Trustees and Anna will cut a check to the caterers for \$2,100. The Trustees will cover anything over from our 150th Anniversary Celebration account.

The Trustees and staff agreed that we are so grateful for the Friends!

VII. Buildings and Grounds Report (Robin)

The town has earmarked \$300,000 for capital improvement for the library, but it remains unclear what these funds will cover. The library has submitted invoices for building upgrades and repairs that have been declined. It may be that the library needs to seek prior approval?

It was discussed that there has consistently been resistance from the town for allocating funds from the capital improvement account to pay for expenses related to the building, even for items that had already been agreed on (e.g. the new windows and doors discussed with the Town in July). There was frustration that library staff and committees are spending time planning these projects if they will not be funded by the Town.

In addition, it was noted that the contractor who will be repairing the roof over the bathrooms requires a 25% down payment. The town has said they won't pay a down payment, per their

policy, but the roof repair can not go forward without this. It's unclear how to move this project forward and the library is waiting for feedback from the town.

Because the library is a town building, and because the town allocated \$300,000 to address building-related issues identified in the Centerline report, it's appropriate that the town take the lead on planning and coordinating these projects. This will protect library staff time and will allow the town to work out payment details directly with contractors.

It was also decided that the Trustees should confirm in writing with the town each time there's an agreement to fund projects from the \$300,000 capital improvement fund.

Micah is in the process of connecting with Bob, the Town Manager, on who will take responsibility for library building projects. This conversation should include the library director, Trustees representatives from the B&G committee, the Trustees Chair, Town personnel, and DPW.

Update on the Friends' lease: the separate meeting to work out these details still needs to happen. The process has taken longer than expected and Elizabeth will follow up with Pam and Ray from the Friends.

Update on MakerSpace initiatives: this initiative may necessitate some upgrades to the space in the library. Bridget is excited about the MakerSpace, but asked when we might stop upgrading the current library building in anticipation of a renovation or rebuild. Ben indicated that the upgrades would be mainly cosmetic and would be a minimal investment in the current building.

It was decided that we need to make a long-term plan for the current building. A sub-committee was proposed to explore continued investment in this building and/or how to proceed with planning for a new building. The Trustees will revisit this question at the next meeting when the Chair can be here.

DPW has taken ownership of the Centerline report (and the recommended building improvements), but this is separate from creating a vision for renovating the building or planning a new building.

Discussion ensued on how to use library grounds on the northwest side of the lot. Ideas include extending the Tree Walk, mirroring the landscaping of the new WCMA building in progress across the street, and continuing to minimize mowing.

Old Business

VIII. Vermont Roofing

In August, the Trustees approved paying \$16,809 to Vermont Roofing for repairing bathroom roofs, funds to come from the \$300,000 capital improvement account. It did not make it into the minutes from August so we approved it again. Anna will follow up with Sarah from the town to confirm, as well as to ask why the town needs Trustee approval for paying this invoice if the DPW has taken ownership of the Centerline Report and capital improvement projects recommended therein.

Bridget moved to approve \$16,809 for the bathroom roofs from the capital improvement funds. Robin seconded and all voted in favor.

IX. Service Animal Policy

Micah is working on updates. We pushed off discussion of this to the next meeting since we don't have an updated copy of the policy.

X. Annual Appeal (Anna)

Anna will talk with Angie about where to store printed letters and will then email Trustees when the letters are ready to be personalized.

Angie will highlight the annual appeal in the library newsletter.

XI. Director Goals (Anna)

Anna created a helpful spreadsheet of the priorities and goals for the Director, tracked to the Strategic Plan. Many tasks/projects are in process and some have already been completed. [Anna will share this spreadsheet with the Trustees as PDF so we can add to the meeting packet.]

Discussion ensued about how to prioritize different projects. It was decided that the Trustees will come to our next meeting with ideas of how they would assign projects to different tiers. Jared will email the Trustees with guidance on prioritization and organization.

It was noted that the Strategic Plan is a valuable guiding document, but is now a few years old and doesn't need to be followed to the letter. The sustainability of the Director is also important and not reflected in the Strategic Plan; this should be a priority as well.

It was decided that we will revisit the spreadsheet in 3 months to check in and continue to help with planning, and to guide the evaluation at the 1-year mark. It may be helpful to have another small group meeting with Angie after the list has been prioritized.

The Trustees completed an evaluation survey about the Director. Anna has presentation slides with the results, but because it wasn't on the published agenda for this meeting, we will discuss next month. Jared will email Micah to add it to the November agenda.

XII. Friends Funding Proposal

This was a mistake on this month's agenda. This used to be considered in the fall, but now not considered until the spring.

New Business

XIII. Library Volunteer Party - December 12

The library will be hosting a party to celebrate library volunteers on December 12. Kira is seeking funding from the Trustees to help defray the costs. Last year the Trustees donated \$500-600.

Anna moved to approve up to \$500 for the volunteer party, Ben seconded, and all voted in favor.

Kira also sought approval from the Trustees to serve alcohol at the party.

Robin moved to approve this request, Anna seconded, and all voted in favor.

It's important to note that the funds donated by the Trustees cannot go towards purchase of the alcohol.

The library will also need a 1-day permit from the Select Board for permission to serve alcohol. The Meeting Room Policy should be updated to reflect this requirement for events at the library. Angie informed Micah an update will be needed.

XIV. Staff Appreciation

Bridget proposed a staff appreciation event in November, similar to events in previous years. Possibilities include lunch, chair massages, and gift cards.

Jared asked about combining the multiple appreciation parties (staff, Friends, and volunteers). It was noted that a joint party was held in the past, but separated during Covid.

Anna proposed that we move the staff appreciation party to the new calendar year, when calendars aren't as full. February might be a nicer moment for a festive occasion, after the holidays. We will also have a better sense of our budget at that time. Bridget will put it on the January agenda to plan it for February.

XV. Books to Commemorate Judy / 150th Anniversary Committee

Bridget requested approval to spend up to \$200 for ~5 books to add to the collection to acknowledge Judy's work and the work of the committee. Anna seconded and all voted in favor.

XVI. Recording Board Meetings (Ben)

It was noted that there are drawbacks to having a member of the Trustees and a member of sub-committees take minutes in real time. With new technologies, the Trustees could look into recording and transcribing meetings.

Ben suggested bringing our ideas and research into possible recording tools to the November meeting.

Questions that arose about this shift in process included:

- Do we need to post these recordings?
- Could Willinet host the recordings?
- If the Secretary or other person taking minutes is the one who is recording, do they need to give a public notification?

XVII. Centerline Study / Infrastructure Funding

This was part of the B&G committee discussion above.

XVIII. Announcements

A reading with Jim and Karen Shepard will be held on October 29. This is at the same time as tango. There's an ongoing conversation about moving the reading to another date.

There will be an Arts Reception on December 4, which is the last 150th Anniversary event.

The Bloodmobile from BHS should come to the library; Angie will call them.

Robin moved to adjourn the meeting, Ben seconded. All voted in favor. Jared adjourned the meeting at 7:35pm.

Next meeting is Wednesday, November 13 at 5:30pm.

Minutes recorded by Katy Evans, Secretary