

Westwood Board of Library Trustees
Monday May 9, 2022
Remote Video Meeting
Westwood, MA 7:00pm

Library Director Elizabeth McGovern called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 pm. The remote meeting was video recorded and will be posted on Westwood Media Center's YouTube Channel. https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=westwood+media+center.

In Attendance via Remote Participation:

Library Trustees: Paul Fitzgerald, Mary Beth Persons, Mary Masi-Phelps, Nancy Donahue, Maureen VonEuw & Maria Ryan.

Library Staff: Elizabeth McGovern

Reorganization of the Board:

Paul Fitzgerald nominated Maureen Von Euw as Chair (seconded by Masi-Phelps), and the Trustees voted unanimously in favor by roll call vote.

Mary Masi-Phelps was nominated as secretary (Fitzgerald/Von Euw) and the Trustees voted unanimously in favor by roll call vote.

Ms. McGovern turned the meeting over to Ms. Von Euw.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Persons/Ryan) to accept the minutes from April 11, 2022 as presented. The Library Trustees voted in favor (unanimous) via roll call vote.

Director's Report:

Ms. McGovern was present to discuss the Director's Report. Highlights:

April was a busy month due to April vacation and in general we are seeing more people in the building.

Harry Potter night was very popular (returning after pandemic hiatus) with over 100 people.

Reptile event with live animals was held at Wentworth Hall, and was also well received.

For adults - Suzy Canale held another Living Library event. The library now has seeds, plants, etc. to circulate. Information is available on the library web site.

Facilities: A new chiller has been ordered; due to supply chain challenges it will not arrive until August so a chiller will be rented for the summer.

The library's budget passed Town Meeting, including funds for needed parking lot repaving. The Town will schedule the work to minimize disruption to patrons, and Ms. McGovern may compensate by adding branch hours.

Comments/questions:

Ms. McGovern was asked to review other items approved in the library budget: these included patron/staff/user technology upgrades, including regular scheduled upgrades to public use computers; a project to bring in an acoustical engineer to study possible sound dampening solutions; mobile shelving units to help create more flexible spaces; and \$30,000 to rehabilitate a used COA vehicle as a first stage of creating a library bookmobile.

Will the library need to close for installation of the chiller? As of now the library will not have to close.

The Director's Report was accepted as presented.

Staffing:

2 recognitions:

Tricia London has been with the library for 25 years and works Monday nights and weekends. Ms. London brings insight from being a school librarian, and is a valuable tech resource and a dedicated Young Adult proponent. She has cataloged the Philbrick collection and prepared exhibit material for display.

Allie Palmgren has been a substitute reference librarian for 5 years and brings expertise from working as a tech librarian in Norwood.

Abby Walsh is now eligible to accrue 4 weeks vacation with Trustee approval. A motion was made/seconded (Fitzgerald/Persons) and the Trustees voted unanimously to authorize the Director to go to personnel board for approval.

Islington Branch Library:

Staff are still getting word out that the library is open. Outreach will be continued in the town newsletter, social media, etc. Staff are considering a plant swap or other activity that can be held outside the library to attract attention. Suzy Canale did a Living Library event there and plans another in June.

Mr. Fitzgerald suggested getting a banner. A motion was made and seconded (Fitzgerald / Persons) and approved unanimously to authorize Ms. McGovern to go ahead with this.

Discussion of proposed Naming Policy:

Ms. Von Euw shared the draft with Friends of the Library Tina Bronkhorst. Questions raised: Who would develop the list of naming opportunities and any corresponding donor agreements? Trustees - this should be reflected in the next draft.

Would this apply to a scholarship the Friends intend to give in honor of a former member? Consensus was that the naming policy would not apply to naming a scholarship.

Further discussion tabled until next meeting to respond to questions raised; Ms. Persons to work with Ms. Von Euw to revise.

Strategic Plan-Update:

The Library is following a research-based process to set the strategy. Staff have been working on research for 4 months on cross-functional teams to conduct a community survey, 4 focus groups, plus library visits. Staff have also done a comprehensive data study on patterns of usage based on available computer data. Every staff member has been involved with the planning process on a voluntary basis. Research is now complete. Ms. McGovern noted that the Library received over 1500 survey responses - 9% of town population, which is around 5 times the response received when a survey was last taken.

Ms. McGovern shared the schedule for remainder of planning process (included in handout), and a summary of the research findings.

The survey was carefully crafted to be succinct and focus on questions that couldn't be answered in data. Focus groups helped with "why" and how the library fits in for selected groups to get insight into some responses from the community survey. The survey also included questions that provided information about services that respondents might not be aware of.

Highlighted responses:

Expanded library of things

Not much demand for remote work capabilities

Strong interest in lifelong learning / improving quality of life / getting new ideas

Islington branch - interest in creating a space for creativity, community, readers advisory.

Strong interest in hands on programs

Spaces in highest demand: More comfortable/cozy reading space, and outdoor space.

Items requested - less interest in CDs, and similar media - this confirmed what the Library is seeing in circulation. People want to access audio through apps rather than physical media.

Books and diverse collections continue to be in demand.

Events of interest include concerts, civic events, etc., that help people connect as a community.

STEM kits under heavy demand.

Focus groups: focused on underrepresented demographics: newcomers, Chinese, non-users, men.

Comments:

Mr. Fitzgerald: Very informative

Ms. Persons: Thank the staff all for the incredible amount of work. Interesting to see what was / wasn't expected in the results. Westwood is already outstanding - this will make it more outstanding

Ms. Masi-Phelps: Innovation in the ideas brought forward.

Ms. Von Euw: Comments are helpful to see other perspectives.

Friends of the Westwood Public Library Update:

Friends of the Library had their Annual Meeting on Thursday May 5th with a remarkable local author/student, Charles Goodman. Friends are planning for a fall book sale.

The meeting was well attended - students as well as adults..

21st Century Fund Update:

The Fund held its quarterly meeting in April. Thanks to Thorsten Becker and Brian Mulvey for sound management of the endowment through a period of market volatility. Ms. McGovern asked the Fund to support creation of reusable bags for Westwood Day that would include images of the two library facilities, which the Fund plans to support and use in fund raising.

Approval of Acceptances and Expenditures:

Ms. Von Euw asked for a motion and a motion was made/seconded (Fitzgerald/Ryan), and the Trustees voted unanimously in favor.

New Business:

Ms. Von Euw welcomed Ms. Donahue to the Trustees.

Ms. Ryan raised the idea of docking stations for electric cars.

Question from Ms. Masi-Phelps on whether to eliminate fees - Ms. McGovern noted that Westwood is in the minority for Minuteman still charging fees. Pandemic hiatus will expire later this year; many libraries have gone fine free. Studies have indicated fines don't really help in terms of getting books back.

Trustees asked Ms. McGovern to send a letter to the recognized staff members thanking them for their service on behalf of trustees. Staff will also be presented with a book.

Liaisons: Ms. Ryan will to continue to be liaison with Friends, to be joined by Ms. Donahue.

The Trustees extended thanks to Conni Cranos who continues to serve as a consultant to the strategic planning process.

Public Participation:

None.

Handouts:

Agenda, Minutes 4/11/2022, Library Director's Report, Departmental Expenditure Report, Trustees Accept and Expend Reports, April 2022 Monthly Stats, STRATEGIC PLAN FINDINGS

Next Meeting:

MONDAY JUNE 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM probably via Zoom (given spike in COVID cases).

Adjournment:

At 8:18 pm a motion made/seconded (Fitzgerald/Persons) to adjourn, The Library Trustees voted in favor (6-0) via roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary Masi-Phelps