

Dedham Public Library Trustee Minutes
11/17/20

MEETING CALLED BY	Board of Library Trustees, Dedham
TYPE OF MEETING	Monthly Meeting
CHAIRMAN	
SECRETARY	
ATTENDEES	Crystal Power, Shirin Baradaran, Brian Keaney, Tom Turner, Annette Raphael, Amber Moroney
PUBLIC ATTENDEES	Lauren Goldberg, Rob Favini, Maura Deedy

Call to Order

Time: 6:04pm

By: Amber Moroney

Introductions

Amber Moroney introduced herself, followed by Brian Keaney, Shirin Baradaran, Annette Raphael, Tom Turner, and Crystal Power. Lauren Goldberg, Rob Favini, and Maura Deedy were briefly introduced.

Reorganization

Amber Moroney called for nominations for Chairman of the Board, Shirin Baradaran nominated herself as chair. Amber Moroney accepted the nomination and called for a motion; Brian Keaney motioned that Shirin Baradaran be named Chairman, Annette Raphael seconded; a rollcall vote was taken: Mr. Keaney – yes; Ms. Baradaran – yes; Ms. Raphael - yes; Ms. Power - yes; Mr. Turner - yes

Amber Moroney then handed the meeting over to Shirin Baradaran
Shirin Baradaran opened nominations for the role of vice-chair; Tom Turner nominated himself; Annette Raphael made a motion to name Tom Turner as chair; Crystal Power seconded; a rollcall vote was taken: Mr. Keaney – yes; Ms. Baradaran – yes; Ms. Raphael - yes; Ms. Power - yes; Mr. Turner - yes
Shirin Baradaran opened nominations for the role of secretary/clerk; Annette Raphael nominated herself; Brian Keaney seconded. A rollcall vote was taken: Mr. Keaney – yes; Ms. Baradaran – yes; Ms. Raphael - yes; Ms. Power - yes; Mr. Turner - yes

Shirin Baradaran asked for clarification on what the secretary was responsible for, Amber said essentially the secretary is responsible for taking minutes. Annette Raphael asked counsel on how detailed the minutes have to be. The minutes, according to Open Meeting Law expectations, have to have content that is sufficiently rich so that someone reading them would know what occurred at the meeting. Brian Keaney said that it was difficult to both take minutes and fully participate and that he hoped that someone could have note-taking as a job, as is true with other committees in town. Town Counsel Lauren Goldberg mentioned that it would still be the responsibility of the secretary to make sure the minutes were accurate and to prepare them for subsequent meetings and for official records. Also, recordings can also be reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

PUBLIC INPUT

Dick Pierce, Chair of the Friends of the Dedham Library, was recognized and congratulated and warmly welcomed the new trustees, looking forward to supporting them.

TOWN COUNSEL Q AND A

Town Counsel Lauren Goldberg gave a brief overview of three areas:

1) Open Meeting Regulations

- a. Nothing private can be worked on behind the scenes, and no conversations involving feelings, ideas, beliefs and concerns can occur outside of an open meeting with the exception of scheduling subsequent meetings
- b. No serial emails are permitted
- c. Agendas must be specific so that people can make an informed decision about whether something that they are interested in will be discussed, with the exception being to address reasonably unanticipated time sensitive issues that may arise
- d. When a topic not on the agenda emerges, generally it is wise to take it under advisement for the future, helping not to have a hasty public reaction and to comply with adding the item to an upcoming public agenda
- e. The chair has the ability and responsibility to recognize or not recognize people to enter a conversation, including fellow trustees.
- f. Q: Can you suggest agenda items by email? A: Yes, as long as there is no reason why the agenda item should be added, so that the actual discussion happens in public (or email Library Director directly to avoid chain emails)

2) Public Records Law

- a. Personal notes are ok, with the exception of the draft minutes taken by the clerk , which are automatically part of any public record
- b. A personal device for recording notes does not automatically confer the right to private notes
- c. All notes and email records should be kept on the town server so that they are accessible to the public. A suggestion was made to explore a special email account through the library so that any emails through that account are automatically part of the public record
- d. There was a discussion about the parameters of using social media to weigh in on any deliberations being considered by the library- especially if more than one person responds
- e. If someone asks a trustee to comment on pending considerations, it is often best to state that the issue will be on the agenda for an upcoming meeting and to invite the interested party to attend the meeting.
- f. All meetings must be posted 48 hours in advance. Having regular meetings times may help ensure that postings will be timely

3) Conflict of Interest Laws

- a. A general way to ascertain if there is a potential conflict of interest is if you even wonder if there is one. If it doesn't feel right, do not participate
- b. As appointed trustees we can solicit Select Board exceptions in advance. For those who are elected there can be no exemptions.
- c. One may not represent any position other than the town's. In clear cases where they may be a perceived, but not actual, conflict of interest, it is wise to be out in front and let the Select Board know in advance of possible perceptions and why you believe that there actually is no conflict.

A brief discussion followed. Brian Keaney asked about the posting and approval of old minutes of both meetings and executive sessions. Since the draft minutes are public, they do not technically have to be approved by these new trustees.

There was a question about whether anything legal was pending, given the resignation of the prior board. There is nothing residual that the Town Counsel is aware of.

MBLC INTRODUCTIONS

Rob Favini began the introductions. The MBLC coordinates and improves libraries and grants state certification which allows libraries access to state funds and allows for the sharing of resources. They also support affiliates such as library networks (We belong to the Minuteman Consortium), Center for the Book and the Perkins School. There are 9 Commissioners who reach out to directors and trustees to be helpful. Maura Deedy talked about the kinds of support and webinar trainings that are provided, as well as virtual orientations.

REVIEW ONBOARDING PACKET

Amber Moroney reviewed the long list of information that she provided for the new trustees, including:

- Online ethics training must be completed within 30 days. Information is coming
- The Union Contract is important. Although negotiated with the town, it is important for the trustees to understand parameters, and who is covered. In the past few years the only changes have been salaries
- The Strategic Plan has two more years to go, but there is an opportunity to be better translate goals into action plans and to better assess accomplishments toward goals (although yearly reports to MBLC provide an impetus for doing that)
- Action plans are an important precursor to subsequent budgets (an example was given about making a commitment to ESOL and how to better serve the community's language needs)
- The stakeholders for the strategic plan are the MBLC, the town, library users
- There are evaluation templates from MBLC and ALA that can help us evaluate the progress towards identified goals
- Many policies are in need of examination and updating. There is a draft of ways to think about programs, for example, but current COVID restrictions have slowed work on both the way to think about making updates to policies, and the actual updating of them. Examples of policies include programming, computer use. Perhaps subcommittees could work on this.
- THE ARIS report is a yearly report to the state about the previous fiscal year which includes information about the program, curriculum, material acquisition and availability and staffing.
- The operating budget does not include facilities (for example, the custodians are town employees). Like other departments, the library is a branch of the facilities budget. The MBLC also gets financial data. Dedham has always robustly supported its libraries.
- Circulation statistics are collected every month.
- The costs and benefits of belonging to the Minuteman Network, which includes the software running the library, access to databases and book sharing
- The current state of level funding which is not perceived to be a problem
- Discussion of the Friends of the Library which donates money and supports programming, furniture and other special requests

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. COVID implications include the significant increased labor in delivering books to patrons, a change in ordering (Endicott is not open so that affects numbers of books and locations for now and for the future when the branch reopens, and the way money is spent, including increased spending on ebooks, which will probably continue even when the libraries are fully reopened.)
2. Special Projects that have been possible: RF ID tagging completed in the main branch and now begun in Endicott, rearranging collection spaces, attending to facilities such as painting
3. An expression of deep appreciation for the people who work at the library-things have gone relatively smoothly because of the excellent staff

DISCUSSION AND VOTE: CLOSING THE LIBRARY ON 12/26 2020 and 1/2/2021

These are Saturdays after Friday holidays. This will not create an expected precedent, has no budget implications, is not in conflict with other town departments, and is under the purview of the Trustees who are in charge of the care and management of the buildings and the hours of operation. There was unanimous consent and a recommendation that the next time a contract is negotiated, there is consideration to Saturday hours when following a Friday or preceding some Monday holidays.

Annette Raphael made a motion to close the library on 12/26/2020 and 1/2/2021; Tom Turner seconded; rollcall vote was taken: Mr. Keaney – yes; Ms. Baradaran – yes; Ms. Raphael - yes; Ms. Power - yes; Mr. Turner - yes

Old/New Business:

The trustees will be adding some information sessions and discussions to upcoming agendas. Identified areas from this meeting included:

- Consideration and questions about the current and upcoming contract
- The next fiscal budget
- The relationship with school libraries
- List of policies that need attention from the viewpoint of the Library Director and staff
- Action Items based on the Strategic Plan
- Understanding the interim nature of these trustee appointments and staggering the terms for those who wish to run in the Spring election

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

December 8th at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Brian Keaneyn moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50p.m; Tom Turner seconded; rollcall vote was taken: Mr. Keaney – yes; Ms. Baradaran – yes; Ms. Raphael - yes; Ms. Power - yes; Mr. Turner - yes