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Board of Library Trustees  
 Shirin Baradaran, Chair  
 Tom Turner, Vice Chair  
 Annette Raphael, Secretary  
 Brian Keaney  
 Crystal Power

**DEDHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**  
**7:00 p.m. January 5, 2021 Remote Meeting**

<b>MEETING CALLED BY</b>	Board of Library Trustees, Dedham
<b>TYPE OF MEETING</b>	Monthly Meeting
<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	Shirin Baradaran
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Annette Raphael
<b>OTHER BOARD MEMBERS</b>	Tom Turner, Brian Keaney, Crystal Power
<b>PUBLIC ATTENDEES</b>	Amber Moroney, Interim Director of the Library Leon Goodwin, Town Manager

***Call to Order***

Time: 7:00 p.m. by Chair Shirin Baradaran

***Public Input***

None

***Introduction of Leon Goodwin***

Leon Goodwin began by noting that he appreciates the work of the board members in supporting the function of the library. He also offered to share the services of town employees' expertise to better help us do our jobs. When asked for his own input about whether the library director should report to the town manager or the board, he suggested that whatever configuration best resulted in stability, support, and enabling the director to succeed would be best and that he had seen both configurations work well for a town, but that his tendency might be for the director to report to the town manager.

Brian Keaney asked about any circumstances from the past board's resignations that could be learning opportunities for our improvement and Leon Goodwin said that effective communication was the best way to proceed.

Shirin Baradaran asked if he had any pieces of advice for us and he had 4 suggestions: 1) trust the director and have faith and confidence in her work, 2) keep the lines of communication with the town open, 3) develop robust understandings of the budget, methods of procurement, and working with a unionized work force, and 4) understand how to navigate the tension between innovative ideas and constraints that come from following accepted procedures.

Tom Turner asked about upcoming forecasts for the FY 22 budget which, unsurprisingly, will be very tight especially because of the lack of any continued CARES Act money, declining revenues from taxes, and increased costs that come with PPE, cleaning and personnel. Town Manager Goodwin asked departments to level fund and also see if there can be creative ways to consider discretionary budgets without cutting necessary services. He is hoping that the hiring freeze that was implemented in March would not have to be reinstated.

## ***Director's Report***

Amber Moroney reviewed three items from her report: 1) new keys for emergency access to both the Main Library and the Endicott branch, 2) supporting the Council on Aging's technology grant to help seniors at the Dedham Housing Authority and 3) moving the Dedham Collection to the rotunda to increase accessibility and visibility. There was a discussion about digitizing some of the contents (not able to currently be a priority)

Brian Keaney asked 2 weather related questions. One was about the maintenance temperature at the Endicott branch while it was closed. The other question was about coming up with a policy for making decisions about closing the library for snow during times when town offices are not open (right now the director makes the decision in consultation with the DPW and it is approved by the Board chair), since this is a board decision but could benefit from review. He also asked about the appointments to pick up books – the algorithm for arranging pickups currently allows 750 spaced pick-ups each week, with 6 for each 15 minute increment.

Shirin Baradaran requested Amber to send her any warrants since the last meeting.

## ***Update on 2021 Budget Process by Tom Turner and Amber Moroney***

In an excellent 3 part presentation, Tom Turner gave us background financial information, benchmarking insights, and a look at the beginnings of the draft budget prepared by Amber Moroney. He reminded us that we were creating an aspirational budget for a fully functioning reopened library for FY22. He met with Kevin Preston the outgoing head of the finance committee and with Amber Moroney. Major points included:

1. Our commercial tax base is relatively high and our residential tax base is relatively low. This obviously has major implications for revenue during the pandemic as many businesses are struggling. The state is also running at a deficit.
2. The Robin Reyes fund is meant for capital projects and that money from it generated by hotel stays and from restaurant consumption has also been severely affected.
3. The MAR (Municipal Appropriation Requirement) which is the average of the last three years' allocation x 1.025, must be considered for budgeting purposes.
4. Fully reopening the library with all the community services will be even more important once we emerge from Covid quarantining.
5. We have benchmarked many of our statistics against those from Milton, Needham, Westwood and Norwood libraries since 2017.
6. The MBLC also does state benchmarking (last shared from 2018) and the town does (last shared from 2016) that we can use to help us think about our own budget.
7. Takeaways:
  - a. Our library is open more hours, offers more services, and has fewer staff than our benchmarked towns – we are open 1500 more hours with 2 fewer FTEs
  - b. We are one of two library systems among these five towns that operates more than one building
  - c. The cost per resident to run our library is about \$52; in our benchmarked communities the cost is \$55-\$58
  - d. Our budget grew less from 2006-2018 than did the budgets of our peer libraries
  - e. We have lower circulation and fewer registered borrowers than peer libraries
  - f. Our director's salary is the lowest of our benchmarked communities

Discussion followed about how we order books, the quality of our collection (since we receive twice as many books from the Minuteman Consortium than we lend), and the number of books that we have compared to peer institutions. We discussed the board's role in advocating for the budget. Amber Moroney will check to see if the board has to vote on the first draft of the budget, due January 13<sup>th</sup>, and, if so, the Board will have a one-item meeting before then to vote on the budget which was first distributed at the meeting.

Amber Moroney shared information about her proposed budget, including salaries that are set through negotiated contracts, the implications of Covid on this year's Sunday openings and overtime, and on technology equipment and maintenance, both of staff computers (run through the Minuteman Network) and public computers. (run through a Verizon account). Technology is an interesting challenge as to whether its maintenance should be outsourced (commonly done) or provided by the library staff. We also identified several areas that may be vulnerable to any necessary additional cuts that may be requested by the town.

Amber Moroney also helped the board understand the line item of materials acquisition which, in order to maintain certification, needs to be 13% of the total operating budget, so the bottom line will affect that particular expenditure. There are no revenue streams since there are no late fees and any minimal costs for printing beyond ten pages goes back to the town budget.

Any innovative ideas about how to best allocate money can be discussed after the budget approval but the budget is not conditional on them as there is some flexibility between budget lines, except for salaries. It is possible that public appreciation for the library may be a factor in supporting budget requests.

#### ***Update on Open Meeting Complaints and Minutes Requests by Shirin Baradaran***

The Open Meeting Law complaint was addressed in a letter of December 29 by town counsel to Brian Keaney and to the Attorney General and is now considered closed. The missing minutes request by Deborah Doyle has not yet been addressed by town counsel officially, though Shirin Baradaran has repeatedly tried to get this issue resolved. It was suggested that she let the town manager know of our inability to bring closure to this.

#### ***Update on New Director Hiring Process by Brian Keaney and Crystal Power***

Because of holidays and the lack of a town HR manager, Brian Keaney and Crystal Power have nothing new to report, but hope to have some information for the next meeting.

#### ***Education Session: Overview of Library Functions and Roles***

Amber Moroney's efforts to capture the impressive scope of library functions and roles was very much appreciated by all of the board members. Annette Raphael asked about the history of the Mission and Vision Statements, which were adopted after the last strategic plan in 2017. There will be an opportunity to update them with the next strategic plan. Marketing all of the programs and services that the library provides is not yet a strength. Social Media posts could be more targeted to library themes.

The Library has seen many of its program fill quickly that are posted on EventBrite, and once the program is filled it is no longer advertised, leaving many patrons unaware of the scope or success of offerings.

#### ***Discussion and Vote: Minutes of November 17, 2020 and December 8, 2020***

Minutes had some spelling errors of 3 names and they will be corrected. Brian Keaney made a motion to accept the minutes with names corrected and Tom Turner seconded.

Brian Keaney – yes; Shirin Baradaran – yes; Annette Raphael - yes; Crystal Power - yes; Tom Turner – yes.

#### ***Old/New Business***

- Cambridge, Lexington and Dover libraries have decided to close for curbside pick-up until at least January 18<sup>th</sup>. The board took no action changing the status of our own curbside pickup services.
- The board may want to meet with the board of health to help us think about what it would take to reopen our doors, in addition to the planning that Amber Moroney has already engaged in
- January 15<sup>th</sup> nomination papers will be available at Town Hall if any current board member is interested in running

- Dedham Television would like to know if the board is interested in having our meetings televised, and the Library also has a You Tube channel. It was decided to invite Donna from cable TV to an upcoming meeting if there is time in the agenda, but also an acknowledgement that our meetings are already open and anyone can attend.

### ***Schedule Next Meeting***

The next meetings will be on the first Thursdays of the month at 7:00 p.m.

February 4, 2021

March 4, 2021

April 8, 2021 (actually the second Thursday)

### ***Adjournment***

Annette Raphael made a motion to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. The motion was seconded by Tom Turner. Brian Keaney – yes; Shirin Baradaran – yes; Annette Raphael - yes; Crystal Power - yes; Tom Turner – yes.