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

**DEDHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**  
**7:00 p.m., July 8, 2021**  
**Meeting both at the Main Library and remotely**

<b>MEETING CALLED BY</b>	Board of Library Trustees, Dedham
<b>TYPE OF MEETING</b>	Regular monthly meeting
<b>CHAIR</b>	Shirin Baradaran
<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>	Tom Turner
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Annette Raphel
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	Brian Keaney, Crystal Power
<b>PUBLIC ATTENDEES</b>	Lisa Desmond, Endicott Branch Supervisor Rosemarie Shrewsbury, Assistant Director of Administration Gayle McCracken, Dedham HR Director

Note: Underlined items are action items.

***Call to Order:***

Shirin Baradaran called the meeting to order at 7:03

***Public Input:***

Lisa Desmond, Manager of the Endicott branch, alerted the trustees to her concern about low staffing levels and provided comparable statistics from Natick, Needham, Medfield, and Norwood. These statistics from other towns were budgeted positions that were publicly available, and the statistics that she shared from Dedham were current actual employees. Our budgeted positions will compare more favorably once the openings are filled and proposed reorganization is approved by the union. The current problems are caused by unfilled positions, a union need for approval to restructure openings, a recent resignation, a lack of system for vacation allocation, prior positions that were based more on specialties rather than more pragmatic needs, and staffing two branches. Currently the budget does not seem to be a driver in the problem, though after full staffing it will be necessary to see if additional personnel are needed.

Lisa Desmond did not feel qualified to offer immediate solutions. Potential short-term solutions discussed include:

- Expanding and activating the per diem roster of available substitutes, noting that any openings must be offered to full-time and part-time employees first
- Having people temporarily work in both branches during one shift, to make sure there is adequate coverage
- Continuing to robustly work with HR to post and hire for open positions
- Meeting with the union to approve changes in job descriptions which will benefit the library
- Having a standing trustee meeting agenda item to review staffing and hiring at each monthly meeting
- Although it will not affect staffing requirements, re-examining the library page program and asking for a historical report and ideas at a subsequent meeting
- Paying special attention to Tuesday and Thursday afternoons which precede both branches' evening openings
- Figuring out how to train new people and per-diems given the current staffing pressures

Potential long-term solutions include:

- Evaluating data from new sensors to determine peak library usage times
- Considering addressing, with the union, eventual solutions for vacation times to avoid too many people out at the same time

Lisa Desmond ended with positive comments about vacation flexibility in the past and the heartening number of children attending story times.

### ***Discussion and Vote: Update on the Director Hiring Process***

A motion was made by Chair Shirin Baradaran, seconded by Crystal Power, and unanimously affirmed by the board via roll call for the board to enter into Executive Session with HR Director Gayle McCracken in order to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for contract negotiations with non-union personnel, since an agreement has not yet been reached on the Directorship. After the executive session a motion was made and affirmed to resume the public portion of the meeting.

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

- Circulation numbers are encouraging with data looking like pre-Covid June numbers
- Digital circulation is on par with last year
- In July, we will have a door counter number for the entire month for both buildings and we will be able to analyze the data for peak and under-utilized usage.
- Staffing is an identified challenge
- Hot spots (T-mobile Sprint) will be coming and can be checked out and used anywhere there is power.
- The Finance department is working with departments so that warrants can be electrically signed off.
- Open Houses is September will welcome everyone back to the buildings and offer the opportunity for a personal welcome to the permanent Director and the Board. Proposal will be September 15 (during the day) at Endicott and possibly (evening) September 14<sup>th</sup> at the Main Library, since the first suggested date is a Jewish holy day.
- Building updates: the awning is done and facilities will cover \$7,000 cost of repairing the roof to hopefully stem the leaks.
- Doors are an ongoing problem, with a formerly installed but only recently activated Keycard system. Nancy Baker has been contacted about expanding access to open or lock buildings without calling

town hall and Tom Turner volunteered to talk with Leon Goodwin about the priority of fixing this critical problem since the buildings are not reliably secured or opening on time. Amber Moroney was asked to email to the board in cases where advocacy is needed.

- July 23-30 Amber Moroney on vacation.
- Gayle McCracken is conducting exit interviews with departing staff.
- Amber Moroney met with Norwood's Library Director to talk about town reaction to Pride Month and other items of mutual interest. Brian Keaney ascertained that there were no protests in Dedham by emailing Norwood's Director and confirming with Amber Moroney.

#### ***Update on Library Re-Opening***

- Generally, the reopening is going well except previously-mentioned staffing and locking issues.
- Magazine and newspaper renewals have been resubmitted.
- The reptile program was very well received. Mask compliance is generally good but not enforced.
- The remaining sign that requires social distancing was missed in evaluating signage, and will be removed.
- Amber Moroney was asked to check with the health department about access and cleaning recommendations to inquire about reinstating ipads and toys which have currently been removed in the children's rooms.

#### ***Opening the Building Late for Staff Meetings / Staff Development***

Historically staff meetings used to be able to be accommodated before opening as the library formerly opened at 10:00 am and staff arrived an hour before. Amber Moroney requested that regular one-Friday-a-month late library openings for staff meetings or training be allowed, because on Fridays everyone works the same 9:00-5:00 schedule. A discussion followed examining financial implications for doing this before or after hours as well as the impact from current understaffing. Shirin Baradaran reminded us all of the detrimental effects of a lack of communication from the leadership contributing to many other problems. Although professional development is not required in Massachusetts for licensure, it is important for library growth and Amber Moroney gave examples of recent programs around homelessness and mental health as examples of valuable in-service.

Tom Turner made a motion to give the director the latitude to open the library late on identified and communicated Fridays and to revisit this decision in four months to consider feedback. Brian Keaney seconded the motion and noted that eventual data from the counters will be helpful in our evaluation of the impact.

Crystal Power – yes, Shirin Baradarn – yes, Brian Keaney – yes, Tom Turner – yes.

Annette Raphel abstained because of current staffing issues, recent Juneteenth and Memorial Day Saturday communication challenges about library closing, but supported the idea of communication and professional development.

#### ***Discussion and Vote: Network Agreement from Minuteman***

Leon Goodwin, Town Manager, Amber Moroney, Library Director, and Shirin Baradaran, Trustee Chair, will need to sign off on 2022 bill of \$49,775 as there is no room for negotiation and we value and appreciate the consortium.

#### ***Discussion and Vote: Five Complaints Received from Brian Keaney Regarding Books in the Library's Collection and the Minuteman's Digital Collection***

Amber Moroney received email June 12, 2021, complaining about insensitive material in the collection. She followed up by doing research and documented circulation of the materials in question and drafted a written response. Brian Keaney participated in the subsequent discussion as a trustee, although he submitted his complaints as a citizen. He had no intention of having the materials removed and did this as a way to make a point about a prior vote, with which he disagreed, affirming the new circulation policy. He appreciated the director's response. Annette Raphel, one of the co-writers of the policy felt he missed the entire point, which is that the policy allows patrons to raise objections but never was intended to have patrons determine whether or not materials should be removed. She felt, given staffing, that this was not a good use of the director's time and that the letter undermined trust in the staff to make good decisions. Crystal Power felt that there was a better way to go about his objection. Tom Turner felt this was not a bad test to have gone through, and insensitivity is not an inappropriate consideration for a patron to raise. Shirin Baradaran understood his goal but noted a tone that was inconsistent with issues that deserve legitimate consideration.

There was a unanimous vote to approve Crystal Power's motion to endorse Amber Moroney's thoughtful, thorough, and appropriate response, which was seconded by Tom Turner.

#### ***Discussion: Update from Transition Team***

The next meeting is July 19<sup>th</sup>, so there is nothing new to report.

#### ***Discussion: Strategic Plan Development***

Amber Moroney previously shared a document about timing and training surrounding our next strategic plan and said that the typical process lasts 7 months. Our strategic plan will be due no later than October of 2022 and we appreciate both the opportunity to go through this exercise as new trustees and our ability to submit it allowing us to apply for grants. Our preliminary steps, by the end of the summer, include:

- Soliciting four strategic plans from MBLC, two that are exemplary, and two from the list of comparable towns alluded to by Lisa Desmond
- Looking at the requirements and beginning to do those items that we can accomplish ourselves
- Becoming familiar with our prior strategic plan, which none of the current trustees were involved with
- Having Amber come up with a suggested timeline including building in a way to go back to stakeholders to evaluate our progress and to especially consider our physical facilities

#### ***Discussion and Vote: Approval of Minutes from June 10, 2021 and June 17, 2021***

Tom Turner, seconded by Brian Keaney, voted to approve the minutes. Trustees unanimously voted for the approval. Shirin Baradaran noted that the June 17<sup>th</sup> minutes of executive session will be released after negotiations for the contract for the Director of the Library are complete.

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

- Brian Keaney asked Amber Moroney to monitor the social media posts to make sure they reflect focus on the library
- Brian Keaney asked about whether there was any dress code for the library.
- Shirin Baradaran and Annette Raphel will collate a list of items that we will bring to the union, the next time they renegotiate the contract in three years, for discussion. There will be an education session on the contract that will be moderated by Annette Raphel and Amber Moroney and will be planned at a meeting on June 12th.

***Schedule Next Meeting***

- Due to scheduling conflicts, there will be no meeting in August
- Wednesday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. will be an in-person only meeting at the Main Library, with advance notice to the public about no virtual option
- Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.
- April, June, Sept and December are required meetings times according to the by-laws

***Motion to adjourn***

At 9:07 Brian Keaney made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Crystal Power and unanimously affirmed by the all members of the board.