

Chelmsford Public Library Trustee Minutes –Hybrid Meeting
February 8, 2023

Present: Acting Co-Director, Lesley Kimball (in-person), Acting Co-Director, Vickie Turcotte (virtually), David Braslau (in-person), Kathy Fox (in-person), Kevin Hamilton (virtually), Maggie Marshall (in-person), Deborah Robson (in-person), Adam Schertzer (in-person), Phakdey Yous (virtually), Office Manager, Melissa McCarthy (virtually)

Associate Board Members Present: Michelle Fearon (in-person), Wendy Segal (in-person), Josh Wimble (in-person)

Also Present: Library Union Representative, Jeff Hartman (in-person), Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Member, Susan Mackinnon (in-person), Boston Globe reporter, Nick Stoica (virtually), Kerry Sheehan (virtually), Melissa J. McCarthy, (virtually), Select Board Liaison, Pat Wojtas (in-person)

I. Meeting called to order by Adam at 7:03 p.m.

II. Correspondence

- A. Request from Stormgears, FIRST Robotics team, Boxborough
1. The Trustees reviewed the email requesting a collection box at the Library for FIRST Lego League donations which would help underprivileged children gain better experience in the field of robotics.
 2. The Trustees discussed whether there has been precedent of allowing a group outside of Chelmsford to have a donation collection box at the Library.
 3. Maggie motioned and Adam seconded the motion to allow Stormgears from Boxborough to place a box in the Lobby, one box, no posters, until March 10th. **Motion passed 5-2, with Chair Schertzer and Board Members Braslau, Fox, Hamilton, and Marshall in favor; Board Members Robson and Yous opposed.**
 4. Lesley will notify Stormgears of the Board’s decision and stipulations.

III. Announcements

- A. Maggie read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

IV. Approval of the Consent Agenda

- A. Maggie motioned and David seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
1. Lesley mentioned that there was information from Town Treasurer, John Sousa for the Board to discuss, which was not included in the Treasurer’s Report.
 2. Maggie motioned and David seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda minus the Treasurer’s Report. **The motion passed 7-0. Unanimous approval.**
- B. Treasurer’s Report update: Deborah received guidance from John Sousa regarding the Library’s CDs.
1. For the older CDs, cancel the CD, pay the penalty fee, and lock into a CD with a higher interest rate.
 2. Leave the smaller CDs at Enterprise and Salem Five since penalties are higher than interest rate gains.
 3. Have Lowell Five make the change they agreed to (raise interest rate to 2.75% for the remaining 6 months) and leave the other two CDs where they are.
 4. David motioned and Kathy seconded the motion to request that John Sousa direct Lowell Five to modify the existing CD so that we get the benefit of the higher interest rate for the remainder of the term and leave the other two alone. **The motion passed 7-0. Unanimous approval.**
 5. Deborah will contact John Sousa regarding the Board’s decision.

V. Memorial remembrance for Becky Herrmann

- A. The Trustees want to have an outward and physical memorial for Becky.
- B. Deborah received a recommendation from a member of the Friends to put a garden or something special such as a painting on a wall outside in the courtyard within view of Becky’s office window.
1. Adam questioned whether the courtyard was often used. Lesley answered that the courtyard is used frequently by staff and patrons.

2. David mentioned the possibility of using the narrow cement wall across from the courtyard doors.
- C. The total amount of Impact Fund donations received in Becky's memory was reviewed.
- D. An anonymous survey will be sent to staff about ideas discussed at the January and February (current) meetings and an invitation to contribute other suggestions.

VI. Celebration of Life with library staff

- A. The celebration of Life is on Friday, February 10 at 4:00 p.m. The preparations for the event were reviewed.

VII. Library Director recruitment

- A. The Library Director position has been posted and some resumes have been received. Names of applicants will be kept confidential.
- B. Kathy has invited a library patron recommended by Youth Services staff to be on the Search Committee.
- C. The closing date for the position is February 21, 2023 and the Search Committee will meet after that date.

VIII. Public Comments

- A. Susan Mackinnon was present as a member of the Town Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, She offered the support of the DEIC Committee to the Library when facing controversial meeting room use.
- B. Melissa J. McCarthy, library user, spoke about concern regarding the Pastor Story Time. Melissa said that none of the content that she has seen or heard addresses impacts on children or mental health, especially during a mental health crisis, resulting from the pastor speaking at the Library. Her question was: how does the Library plan to support the community and the mental health issues that are going to surround all of this?
- C. Kerry Sheehan, concerned former library user, voiced concern as a trans person for their safety. Kerry felt that the Library was no longer a safe space and shared that they have lost friends to suicide because people have allowed hate to have a space.

IX. Meeting Room Policy review

- A. Lesley commented that the proposed revision is reordered for ease of use for the public and the staff and to make it easier to administer consistently. The importance of applying policies consistently was emphasized during a MBLC webinar on legal policy issues that Lesley, Kathy, and Deborah recently attended.
- B. The revision includes a requirement that publicity or communication from all non-profit groups that have had a meeting room reservation request approved must state that "the Chelmsford Public Library does not sponsor or endorse the ideas or content of this meeting/event."
 1. Wendy questioned whether the Library would review every group's advertisements for events.
 2. Lesley responded that the Library would not have to review all publicity for all groups, but if it comes to the Library's attention that a group is not following the policy we have justification to ask the group to add the statement or remove the reservation approval.
- C. Kathy asked how staff would define the requirement that a request not contain a "falsehood or misrepresentation." Lesley suggested that it might apply if a group's request described the use but then their publicity listed something not allowed under policy. As it is unclear, Lesley will investigate further.
- D. David questioned whether the policy prevents groups located outside of Chelmsford from reserving rooms.
 1. Lesley said that there aren't currently limitations on the meeting rooms based on location. Lesley also commented that sharing resources is part of our values as a member in the consortium and it makes sense to allow groups outside of Chelmsford to use the meeting spaces.
- E. David questioned whether Town Counsel has reviewed the proposed changes to the meeting room policies.
 1. Lesley confirmed that Town Counsel has reviewed it and suggested a few clarifying changes.
- F. David recommended rewording the statement about the Board and director's authority to revoke meeting room usage so that "in its sole discretion" is at the end of the sentence.
- G. Josh recommended adding a statement that would indicate that failure to follow the listed user requirements would result in the cancellation of the meeting reservation, and that we should indicate that we will first ask a group to correct the issue before automatically canceling their reservation.
- H. The Trustees discussed consistency in the application of the policies and want to ensure that they are not creating any barriers that keep people from accessing the Library's services.
- I. Wendy questioned when the Library might need to stop a meeting occurring in one of the meeting rooms since that is not addressed in the policy.

1. Lesley said that if public safety is threatened then safety personnel would be called and room use stopped. If a group's meeting violated stipulations (like noise) that impact those using the library outside of the meeting room then a group would be told to stop the disruption and the meeting would be ended if the group didn't comply. Library staff do not monitor activities inside the meeting room.
- J. The policy will be updated based on these discussion items and sent to Town Counsel for a thorough review.

X. Public Assembly policy

- A. Lesley said that a public assembly policy would define rules to keep Library entrances and exits safe in the case of outside gatherings.
 1. The details in the proposed practices were generated from a walk-through that was done with Lesley Kimball, Vickie Turcotte, David Braslau, and James Spinney, Town of Chelmsford Chief of Police.
 2. Paul Cohen, Town Manager and James Spinney have seen the proposed policy and have no concerns.
 3. David commented that it was important that the policy was clear enough that it could be enforceable if public safety needed to be contacted and on the premises.
- B. David motioned and Maggie seconded the motion to approve the public assembly practices policy with one grammatical edit. **The motion passed 7-0. Unanimous approval.**

XI. Public Comment

- A. Adam opened the public comment section of the meeting and said that staff members were allowed to speak during this time.
- B. Jeff Hartman, Library Marketing and Outreach Specialist, and Library Staff Representative to Chelmsford Federation of Teachers and the Massachusetts Federation for Teachers, read a letter out loud regarding recent meeting room use for a "Pastor Story Hour" by a non-library group. The letter had been sent to Paul Cohen, Town Manager, (with a copy sent to the Library Board of Trustees) and signed by Lauren Cochran, President of the Union and by Jeff Hartman. The letter detailed Union and union member concerns and requests regarding staff safety during Pastor Story Hours. Jeff said that he appreciates all of the discussions about this concern and pointed out that a preemptive statement by members and supporters of this group stated that librarians are "pedophiles and groomers" and such statements are an implicit threat to staff safety.
- C. Melissa McCarthy, Library Office Manager and Recording Secretary, spoke about no longer feeling safe at the Library. Melissa said that the signs saying "Hate has no home here" are no longer true. Melissa shared concerns that other staff members are also upset and concerned for safety.

XII. Adjournment

- A. Maggie motioned to adjourn the meeting and it was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa McCarthy

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