

Lucius Beebe Memorial Library  
Board of Library Trustees

**Meeting Date: January 24, 2024**

**Meeting Location: Trustees Room at Beebe Library and Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Trustees Present**

Jeffrey Quinn, Aimee Lominac, Susan Wetmore, Chris Barrett, Scott Staiti, Jackie Natale  
Staff: Catherine McDonald, Jaclyn Powers

Public: Dan Sherman, Tarae Howell, Joe Bertrand, Jody Sherman, Steven Hun

**Documents**

Agenda  
Secretary's Report  
Staff Reports  
Operating Budget Status Report  
Gifts and Grants Status Reports  
Draft FY25 Library Budget  
Massachusetts Libraries Legislative Agenda FY25  
Public Correspondence (Daily Item)

**Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM**

The Trustees agreed to take the agenda out of order to take Finance Committee discussion of the FY25 budget as the first agenda item.

Director McDonald began the discussion with the Finance Committee by summarizing the increases in the proposed draft FY26 budget, highlighting the increase driven by changes in town accounting for IT capital, increases in book purchases to maintain accreditation, and increases in personnel costs. She noted that negotiations with the union representing the librarians is ongoing.

Finance Committee representatives expressed reservations about the amount of the increase and the total new salary, both in absolute terms and relative to a selection of a handful of regional town library directors. The result if the budget were not approved by various town bodies or were voted down at town meeting would be to force cuts elsewhere. They floated the idea of renegotiating the Director's contract to spread out the increase over several years.

The Trustees explained the rationale used by the Personal Subcommittee in coming up with the new salary and the justification both in terms of relative salary within the library and within other Town Department Directors.

Director McDonald indicated a willingness to renegotiate the contract to spread the proposed increases over the term of the contract if it would be in the best interest in the library budget for FY25. She expressed a belief that it was important for the Finance Committee to support the library budget through the budgetary process.

The Finance Committee representatives and the Trustees discussed the relative merits of some points of comparison picked by Mr. Sherman. The group discussed the relative salary

of the Assistant Director. The Finance Committee indicated it would be a difficult pitch to get the budget approved without changes, and that significant advocacy by the Trustees would be required, and may in the end be unsuccessful.

The rest of the budget was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

The Director reiterated a desire to garner wide support for the library budget, and would be willing to renegotiate the contract if required to achieve that support. She did point out that the position should be equitable within town, and that the position does require specialized education and training.

The Trustees pointed out the difficulties with comparing salaries with other directors in other towns due to the different sets of responsibilities in each context.

The year over year decrease in trust fund income offset was discussed. The timeline for budget approval was discussed.

### **Acceptance of Secretary's Report**

Staiti moved to accept the Secretary's report, Lominac seconded.

Motion approved unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Staff Reports**

Lominac moved to accept the Director's and staff reports, Staiti seconded.

Discussed late reimbursements for library charges on personal credit cards. Alternate solutions are being researched now that costs associated with QuickBooks makes that solution suboptimal and cost ineffective. Will discuss with other departments to investigate their approaches.

Discussed fixing leaks, and the relative cost of different approaches to the fix.

Discussed spending on the Keough fund.

The motion to accept the staff reports was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Public Participation**

Jody Sherman attended, representing the Friends of Beebe.

Steven Hun attended. He is interested in a position at the library.

### **Correspondence:**

Discussed a handout covering Massachusetts Libraries Legislative Agenda, and a positive notice in an opinion piece from the Wakefield Daily Item.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Budget:**

Discussed timeline for reconvening to renegotiate the Director's contract and reapproved the budget within the overall town budgetary timeline. The idea of going into executive session at

the end of the current meeting was discussed. The executive session would be in relation to the publicly posted Finance Committee review agenda item.

#### **Building and Grounds:**

Discussed the new bird feeder, Bird Buddy, with digital camera for birdwatching.

#### **Friends:**

Wetmore attended in December and Staiti attended in January. They discussed the future of the book sale and book storage in December. In January they discussed revenue in 2023, and the state of the Hurd School building. Revenue was up but donations to the library were also up. They also discussed Bay State Books book drops.

The next Friends meeting is February 8. Barrett to cover.

#### **Gift Funds:**

Discussed Stout Fund expenditures.

#### **Legislative Advocacy:**

There are legislative breakfasts planned to discuss this year's budget and topics for advocacy, but none are being hosted near Wakefield. Discussed solid connections with local representatives on Beacon Hill.

#### **Personnel:**

Discussed Meghan Kinton taking over as head of Technical Services and backfill for Meghan's position at Circulation. Other libraries in the area are seeing a lot of turnover.

Discussed construction at the Melrose Library. Some overflow traffic is being seen at Beebe.

MBLC has turned over most of its personnel in recent years, for a variety of reasons.

#### **New Business**

Discussed pause in Youth Room programs. The staff is re-examining offerings for children and collecting information about ways to expand and improve children's programming. Staff have met with various stakeholders and patrons to get new perspectives on programming and community needs.

Discussed strategic planning interviews. Trustees are asked to pick a name of someone in town to interview, and send it to the Director and/or Board. The goal is to discuss with someone one on one how they see the library and how they use the library. For example, they could discuss challenges and barriers that the library could solve.

Discussed closing the library at 4PM on April 27 in support of preparation for that evening's Blossoms at the Beebe event. Lominac moved to close, Staiti second, and the motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Discussed closing from 9AM to 11AM on Monday February 12 for strategic planning and professional development. Barrett made the motion to close, Lominac seconded, and the motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Discussed creation of an IT subcommittee. Idea is to be discussed further at the next Trustees Meeting.

Discussed going in Executive Session to continue discussing specifics of personnel budgeting for FY25. Barrett moved to enter Executive Session, Lominac seconded, motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 28th, 2024.

**Adjourn**

Meeting ended in an Executive Session.

Public portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.