

Lucius Beebe Memorial Library  
Board of Library Trustees

**Meeting Date: September 27, 2023**

**Meeting Location: Lecture Hall and Zoom**

**Trustees Present**

In-person: Jeff Quinn, Laura Cutone Godwin, Scott Staiti, Chris Barrett, Susan Wetmore, Adam Rodgers

Via Zoom: Jackie Natale,

Staff: Catherine McDonald, Jackie Powers

Public Participation: Michael McLane, Andrea Ahearn, Lavender Li

**Documents**

Agenda

Staff Reports

OverDrive Digital Library flyer

FY24 Gifts & Grants Status

FY24 Operating Budget Status Report

Trustees Gift Funds Report

FY24 Beebe Library Information Technology Five Year Plan

Flag Policy: Opinion from Thomas Mullen, Town Counsel

Patron email about “Conversations in Whiteness” program

Email from Assistant Director at Otis Library in Norwich, CT about Beebe website

**Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.**

**Acceptance of Secretary’s Report**

The Secretary's Report is not yet available; we will approve it at the October meeting.

**Staff Reports**

Godwin moved to accept the staff reports; Staiti seconded. Motion was approved unanimously by roll call.

Discussion:

- Plaza Jazz: The musicians were very good and the events were well attended. Wireless equipment for Plaza Jazz would be wonderful.
- Photos of roof replacement progress were helpful.
- SpeakOUT Boston event: Was moved from the summer to fall because of low registration numbers, but the numbers are still low. (Scheduled for mid-October.) Should we invest additional money to advertise this event to help get it off the ground? We partnered with the Human Rights Committee for promotion. Consider advertising at upcoming Farmer's Markets and Town Day (10/7). The Friends will be at Town Day and could be an option for the promotion. (Library will not be at Town Day.)
- Majority of people attending the technology trainings learned about those events via the library website or newsletter. The demographics tend to skew older (these are daytime events). They're also heavily promoted at the Senior Center and via the town. These events are regularly scheduled for Wednesdays which helps with consistent attendance.
- It would be interesting to send a similar survey to BeebeCon attendees to determine how they learned of the event.

### **Public Participation**

- Andrea Ahearn attended to represent the Friends. They will try to have a representative at each meeting.

### **Correspondence**

- Patron email about "Conversations in Whiteness" program
- Email from Assistant Director at Otis Library in Norwich, CT about Beebe website: glowing review of new website

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Budget**

- Annie will finish up her classes this Fall. She did not submit a request for funds.

#### **Building and Grounds**

- Barrett made a call to Sardella signs.
- McDonald suggested the look of the highway Clear Channel digital signs.

#### **Friends**

The September meeting was held on 9/14/23. Aimee Lominac attended.

- Good meeting.

- Reviewed finances; about \$100K on hand, put \$30K in CD.
- New board is in place.
- Looking for new space for storage/book sales.
- Discussion about the history between Friends and Trustees.
- The Director made a request for funds for the year (\$28K) which covers all programming, museum passes, and document center up until the Summer Program; that was approved.
- Per Andrea Ahearn: There is a new regime in place so she anticipates a smoother relationship between Friends and Trustees.
- Per Michael McLane: A number of books are being donated to an organization in Boston. New books are being received this week. He asked about potential space at the Senior Center. He's visiting it tomorrow to assess underutilized space.

The October meeting is scheduled for 10/12/23. Quinn will attend.

### **Gift Funds**

- Stout request:
  - This year's budget doesn't include funds for IT, so McDonald would like to use Stout money to cover these expenses.
  - This money is managed by the town and, since the 1990's, has been designated for technology.
  - Technology runs between \$8K - \$13K per year.

### **Legislative Advocacy**

- MBLC's legislative agenda for the year has been released; McDonald will review it.

### **Personnel**

- A full-time Reference Librarian has been hired and will start on 10/2/23.
- Need to fill a custodial vacancy.
- Staff survey results: It's an opportunity to learn what's top of mind for the staff.

### **New Business**

- Strategic Planning
  - Last planning meeting was five years ago.
  - McDonald has contacted other libraries for ideas.
  - For two towns, their board members each took a single person (i.e., key stakeholders in town – small businesses, fire department, PTO, public health administrator, etc.) to interview them about their interests/needs.

- These one-on-one interviews would be in addition to an open forum for the public.
- McDonald suggests using a consultant; the consultant from five years ago was very good.
- Timeframe: Entire report is due to the state October 2024. We'd like to approve the plan in June 2024 so we want to start the planning in January 2024.
- Would this be a strategic direction or needs-assessment? The state wants a needs assessment but that doesn't fully give us the information we need.
- The library has a Youth Action person assigned to us; she may be able to help with that perspective.
- Trustees to start thinking about potential stakeholders to interview.
- Develop a script of questions/what do we want to learn.
- Flag Policy
  - This was left in place at the June meeting.
  - McDonald reached out to Tom Mullen (town counsel) and shared his opinion in the packet.
  - Mullen outlined three options: maintain our current flag policy; adopt the "government speech" approach like Town Council; or open the use of the flag pole to everyone.
  - He recommends we maintain our current policy.
  - The legal perspective from Mullen is helpful because it provides the missing piece to our discussion.
  - Majority of trustees agree about retaining our existing policy. Quinn suggested that even by maintaining this policy, we should do more to bring education/awareness – i.e., utilizing the digital sign/marquee. (Flying a flag is a symbolic gesture but not necessarily educational.)
  - Natale suggested amending the policy to include federally recognized special observances. Lominac (via email) expressed a similar sentiment. Discussion was had about using banners to amplify those themes/occasions. Barrett noted there are 24 federally recognized observances; Natale clarified her suggestion refers to the 9 National Archives Equal Employment Opportunity Special Emphasis Observances.
  - Trustees and staff are open to public feedback about missing educational opportunities.
  - Per McDonald, trustees are here to advocate for the library and its services, and to represent the public.

**Items not reasonably anticipated by the chair**

- Trustees congratulated Rodgers for being named “Boys and Girls Club CEO of the Year” in MA.
- Trustees are invited to an event on 11/2/23 by First Financial. McDonald shared details via email.

Next Trustees meeting is October 25th.

Staiti made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Barrett seconded. Motion approved unanimously by roll call.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.