DEPT./BOARD: Library Board of Trustees

DATE: February 13, 2019

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Library – Director’s Office, Second Floor

AGENDA*

Call to Order

Review of Minutes

Citizens’ Time

Friends Report

Policy Review

Director’s Report

New Business

- Donations and Legacies
- Fine Structure

Old Business

Adjournment
*Agenda is subject to change.
MEMBERS PRESENT: Hiral Gandhi, Robert Neufeld, Ram Voruganti, Steve Wasserman, Adam Woodbury

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Sheehan

OTHERS PRESENT: Mary Hamel – Resident; Janice Leahy – Resident; Roger Riggs – Resident; Michael Wick – Library Director; Alison Varrell – Recording Clerk

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: The Minutes from January 10, 2019 were reviewed.

MOTION: Motion to accept January 10, 2019 Minutes as amended: Steve Wasserman
Second: Ram Voruganti
Motion carried: 4-0-1

CITIZEN’S TIME: None

FRIENDS: Adam stated that from now on he would like to have this part of the Trustees meeting be used for all liaison reports, not just the Friends’ liaison report.

Adam related that the Friends Annual Meeting was held last month. It was well attended. Marnie gave out handouts and discussed upcoming programs with the Friends. It was also reported that Barbara McDonough is leaving as Recording Secretary and Ann Petty will be taking over the position. Adam stated that the Friends spent $23,000 on programs, displays and passes. The major fundraisers held were the book sale ($5,200), May baskets ($4,700), the bookstore ($2,400) and the Flatbread event ($1,500). Adam also suggested that the Trustees hold an annual meeting date for the Friends to attend, perhaps every May. Discussion followed.

Adam reported that the January 16 Ways and Means meeting focused on Department contracts and the School finance investigation. They settled the 3-year Police contract. The Fire Department is not yet settled. The School Department finances investigation showed that there were historical overspends carried forward and the PO process was lacking in transparency. As a result they have moved to a monthly financial reporting system. At the February 6 meeting, Ways and Means stated that they have a blended operating budget between the School and the Town of 3.5% but that the Town blended budget came in at 3.25% (school offset). Cuts were
made from administration departments because it was the only option available during this process. Paul Sagarino stated that there will probably be a change in the budgeting process in the future and put department heads on notice for that eventuality. Adam further related that the Library will experience some questioning about the salary discrepancy from a couple of years ago, but is not concerned due to the fact that Mike brought the discrepancy to the attention of the Town himself and showed where the errors were being made.

POLICY REVIEW: None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Mike reported the latest warrants to the Trustees. The Board is aware that warrants #T29/19, #T30/19, #T31/19, #T32/19 and #T33/19 were processed from January 4, 2019 – February 11, 2019 for standard Library business. Warrants #T30/19 and #T33/19 were processed for Occupancy from January 4, 2019 – February 11, 2019.

Mike stated that Burlington Reads books and program information have been distributed to community partner locations. The books have been running out so he is purchasing more. Burlington ComixCon is nearly finalized and will take place Saturday, March 30 from 10am-4pm. Mike is anticipating over 20 exhibitors including local comic book shops, Virtual Reality demonstrations, “Nerd Trivia,” craft and activity areas and four rotating programs throughout the day. Rob asked if there would be extra security for this event. Mike responded that there will be extra staff, but not specifically staff ‘security.’

Mike reported that the Library’s focus group for the Town Website was held on Wednesday, February 6, led by Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting. There were 12 attendees. Mike is working with Barbara to formulate an online survey that is intended to run from February 24 – March 9. Amy Warfield is convening the Town department heads on February 11 to discuss website structure. Amy is aware of the Library’s focus group and survey and will be working to fit them into her timeline. Adam thanked Mike for acting so quickly to include the Library in the Town’s plans regarding the new website.

Shelley Slobodor, Reference and Social Media Librarian, has written and received a grant of $2,000 from the University of Massachusetts—Worcester, on behalf of its National Network of Libraries of Medicine New England Region and the National Library of Medicine. The grant is funding a Bright Light Therapy Project, allowing the Library to circulate
two Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) lights for onsite use, as well as providing programming and promotional materials related to the topic. Dr. David Mischoulon will present “Beat the Winter Blues” on February 26. Steve asked if Dr. Mischoulon could be asked to determine if lighting in the Library is sufficient. Mike stated that he didn’t think so. He stated that the event with the Dr. is more about focusing patrons on this new non-traditional Library loan. Hiral said that she is very familiar with grants like these and stated that there are many such grants available in the Library Science area with a lot of money available. She queried whether it might be a consideration to have a grant writer in-house, even if she/he were not full time. Discussion followed.

Mike stated that he would present his research on the possibility of a Fine-Free Policy under New Business in the agenda. Mike also reported that if the Trustees would be amenable to rescheduling the April meeting to April 18, he found a clerk that could cover Alison’s absence. Discussion followed.

**MOTION:**

Motion to change the April 2019 Trustees Meeting from Thursday, April 11, 2019 to Wednesday, April 10, 2019: Rob Neufeld

Second: Steve Wasserman

Motion carried: 5-0-0

Mike reported that both three-year Trustee positions have had papers pulled and returned to fill the upcoming openings. The one-year position has had papers pulled but not returned as of this meeting.

An additional $1,770 in donation funds have been received in memory of Jackson “Jack” Walsh, the eighteen-month old boy who passed away on December 26, 2018. The total donations come to approximately $3,800. Mike is looking to set a meeting date with the family in late February.

The Trustees looked over the monthly Budget Expenditures and Balances handout. Adam asked if there would be more requests for materials from LIGMEG in the future. Mike replied yes. Adam asked specifically about the MELT data. Mike responded that MELT data accounts for the education and travel for Library staff. Discussion followed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mike presented a possibility of establishing a Sponsorship Policy. He asked that the Trustees look into having a standardized way of accepting and laying out where donations are appropriate (e.g. to fund additional services, etc.). He stated that such a policy would allow the Library to
delineate the way it views donations, how it handles donations and what donors can expect when they choose to donate to the Library. He further explained that without a policy, legal issues may rise when specific requests aren’t honored within a donation. Establishing language could mitigate some of these issues. Mike looked at other policies—from Libraries and other nonprofits—to get ideas. He stated that his vision is to have donations categorized into two types: unrestricted funds and restricted/limited funds. The Trustees would use this policy to determine if a donation could be accepted and/or how it would be handled. Mike stated that any policy drafted needs to be passed by Town Counsel to check on legal obligations.

Mike said that historically, the Library has had varied ways of handling donations. He stated that the Town shies away from naming rights. Discussion followed. The Trustees requested more time to consider and look through the example policy provided by Mike. Steve suggested that a sponsorship policy be as simple as possible—restricted and unrestricted—and also a protection for very large donations. Mike added that he is concerned with restrictions set by donors and how that would impact policy. Adam asked the Trustees to note (on the example policy handout) any ideas they agree or disagree with and any notes they feel should be discussed. He added that no sponsorship policy is needed right away, but that Mike would like for the initiation of a sponsorship policy to be considered and discussed.

Mike’s second topic for new business was to discuss the idea of a Fine Free Policy. Trustees were given a handout of Mike’s research into such a policy. He stated that at the Town’s recent department heads budget meeting, the Town Administrator had advised departments to review their associated fines and fees, in relation to the surrounding communities, in order to “ensure that they are reasonable in comparison to those in the area.” Mike reviewed the Library’s and in so doing, found that within the MVLC:

- 26 Libraries do not charge fines on books; 10 Libraries do (Burlington included)
- 21 Libraries do not charge fines on DVDs; 15 Libraries do (Burlington included)
- 23 Libraries do not charge fines on eReaders, software, etc.; 13 Libraries do (Burlington included)
BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
DIRECTOR’S OFFICE
TRUSTEES MEETING
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- 1 Library does charge fines on certain high demand books and DVDs, but not on others
- Burlington is one of 10 Libraries out of the 36 MVLC Libraries that charges fines for all three types of items

Mike researched data on surrounding communities:

- Billerica and Tewksbury charge fines on books, DVDs and special collections
- Andover, Carlisle, Chelmsford, North Andover, North Reading and Wilmington do not charge fines on all or some of their collections

More information was provided on fines income, costs of fines, potential benefits and potential risks. Discussion followed.

Steve stated that currently Library fines go to the Town in the unrestricted general fund. He noted that the Library does not receive any benefit from collected fines at all. Mike asked if there were any concerns about stopping fines.

Concerns:

- Steve asked about the possibility of losing books (non-returns) as a result of discontinuing fines and queried whether the fines area deterrent for book loss. Discussion followed.
- Rob asked if there is a breakdown of where fines come from—DVD, books, etc.

Hiral left the meeting at 8:00pm.

- Ram asked if there is a cost of recouping fines (e.g. creating more/unnecessary work, etc.) Also, is there a drop off in food donations if fine forgiveness is regular?
- Adam asked if there is a way to find out if people aren’t coming to use the Library because of fines.
- Rob asked how many accounts were on hold.

Discussion followed. Mike said he would collect data on how many fines were forgiven during fine amnesty week and how many accounts were on hold. He noted that he is seeing shorter “hold” times network-wide. Mike stated that even if a Fine-Free Policy were put into place, the Circulation
Desk would still need to have conversations with patrons about items being overdue. He noted that any conversation with a patron regarding fines/money always takes more time and is more stressful for both the patron and the staff member. Currently a book is qualified as needing to be replaced when it has been out on its initial loan of 3 weeks plus 30 days.

Conclusions:

- Steve had no objection if the Town is okay with the Fine-Free Policy. He stated that he feels the time it takes to track down fines doesn’t appear to be worthwhile.
- Rob had no objection except for the high demand collection (14-day books) and high demand DVDs.
- Ram has some reservations about going completely fine-free but is unsure about what could be done as an alternative.
- Mike estimates that the probable cost of having staff spend time chasing fines is about $3-$4,000.

Mary Hamel asked if it is the Trustees decision to do away with fines. Adam replied that the Trustees set policy with fines but that it is advisable to run such a decision past the Town because the collection of fines goes directly to the general fund. He added that the Trustees should have a reason behind presenting such a change. Mike also added that the fine-free discussion is a question of customer service and circulation, especially if people live closer to other Libraries who have implemented a fine-free policy. Rob asked if there is a way to know if residents visit other Libraries. Mike said he would see if he can get some more data.

OLD BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.