

Waltham Public Library
Waltham, Massachusetts
Trustees' Meeting
Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Present

Mr. Alan Humbert, Mr. Steven Mann, Ms. Martha Creedon, Ms. Marie McKenzie, Ms. Maureen Taddeo, Ms. Kelly Linehan, Director

Mr. Humbert welcomed the Trustees to the September 2021 Trustees' Meeting of the Waltham Public Library and called the meeting to order in the Trustees' Room of the Library at 1:07 p.m.

Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the regular Trustees' Meeting, held on June 10, 2021 were reviewed.

Ms. Creedon moved to approve the June Minutes. Ms. Taddeo seconded the motion and the Trustees voted to approve.

Expenditure Report

Ms. Linehan reviewed the Expenditure Report for July and August. She reported that the expenditures were on target. There was some discussion about the Computers line item. These purchases had been suggested by Todd Strauss, who worked on this project extensively when the library was on limited hours. Furthermore, the Trustees were assured that a slight shortfall can be covered by state aid or from movement within the 5200 accounts. Additionally, Ms. Linehan outlined a few projects that would be paid by state aid, which can be expended in most areas, with the exception of personnel

Mr. Mann moved to place the Expenditure Report on file. Ms. Creedon seconded the motion and the Trustees voted to place the report on file.

Report on Library Operations

Circulations Statistics Report

The library is now back to normal (i.e. pre-COVID) operating hours, although the study rooms are not yet open to the public.

Circulation Statistics Reports were distributed for FY21, June 2021, July 2021, and August 2021.

There had been a 25% increase in the overdrive statistic. Ms. Linehan shared an article entitled, *The Surprisingly Big Business of Library E-Books* by Daniel Gross, which appeared in the September 2, 2021 *New Yorker*.

Ms. Linehan continues to believe that the circulation statistics are good in spite of all the COVID constraints. Waltham currently ranks #15 in Circulation within the Minuteman Network. (The June ranking was #18.)

Operational Statistics Report

The Trustees received the new format that summarizes and/or categorizes Programs' Attendance, Hourly Visits, and when appropriate, Meeting Rooms Use.

Ms. Linehan stated that the summer interns who worked with Luke Kirkland (**Mina**) and Aaron Strauss (**Makaylah**) were wonderful. Both are bilingual, one in Arabic and one in Spanish. Both teens had been placed through the Partnership for Youth. Both will be hired as library pages.

HVAC

Ms. Linehan updated the Trustees on the status of fixing or replacing the air conditioning unit. It remains an issue whether it can be done as a “fix” by the Building Department since a total replacement had not been anticipated in the City budget.

Personnel

There have been two retirements, Gary Smith in Custodial Services and Nancy Rea in Children’s.

There are currently eleven vacant positions. Ms. Linehan reported that five offers are underway. Efforts in advertising more broadly had brought a pool of more diverse candidates. The salary scale also was an attractive feature. Due to the current staff shortage, Ms. Linehan is taking on a Thursday night shift.

The Pages are now receiving \$15/hour, which is now in line with the scale of teen employees in other city departments.

Ms. Linehan shared with the Trustees her enthusiasm and praise for the great staff at the library.

A new initiative in the library will be the addition of a social worker. The intern is from the Boston College School of Social Work and will potentially be on-site two days a week for six months. This might include some evening hours. A recent article published in the **Boston Globe**, *In a space open to all, help for more than finding books* by Gail Tziperman Lotan, outlined such a program in Cambridge. Waltham will be working with the Health Departments in Waltham and Cambridge as well as the Cambridge Public Library in this initiative. Although the obvious issues of homelessness and addiction will be addressed, services will extend to issues faced by young families and by families involved in the foster care system.

A second initiative will be undertaken beginning with “training the trainers” sessions. Kelly Linehan, Seanna Rabbitto, and Laura Bernheim will be trained in Touch Point, a program originally designed by child life specialist, Dr. Berry Brazelton. The focus is on best practices for re-engagement of families in the library.

MLN

There was no network news at this time. On the local level, kudos to our Laura Bernheim, who will facilitate the digital collection for the Minuteman Network.

Friends Report

At this time, there are no plans for an Ice Cream Social in the near future due to the large number of unvaccinated children who would probably attend. It might also appear to be a mixed message as masks would not be used while the ice cream is being consumed, but masks are mandated inside the library.

The spring Book Sale is proposed for April 1, 2, and 3, 2022. Gita Haddid will take over in the ongoing sorting and processing of donations, replacing longtime volunteer Marie Alesse who “retired”. Parrish Rice will continue as Chair of the FWPL Book Sale.

COVID 19 Updates

- Operations are mostly “normal” since Tuesday, September 7, when regular operating hours resumed.

- Scheduling any indoor events and the use of any meeting rooms will be considered on a month-by-month basis.
- Masks are required for all, regardless of vaccination status, according to library policy.
- The portable toilets have been removed from the front lawn.
- Provisions have been made to “zoom” any outdoor events that may need to be cancelled for weather or COVID issues.
- Children’s programs held on the lawn have been successful. Parents have been thrilled with these programs.
- Staff members have done a great deal of outreach in the community –such as at the Farmers’ Market, Food Pantry, Summer Camps, and Healthy Waltham’s Pop-up Pantry.
- A COVID safe, mask-required Halloween Costume Party/Parade is being planned. The parade route is around the property and a band will perform outside.

New Business

The library has received fifty hotspots from MBLC. Twenty-five will be available for general circulation and twenty-five will be for community groups and organizations.

An orientation binder has been developed for all new staff members. The documents are also available on google drive.

Debora Hoffman has been busy organizing a yearlong project focusing on Black History. The first presenter will be Dr. E. LaBrent Chrite, the new president of Bentley University, who will discuss the role/impact of Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU)

Todd Strauss’s MakerSpace is tentatively scheduled to be up and running in January. Materials have been provided through the generosity of the Friends.

Bentley University students, in connection with Todd Strauss, have conducted an audit of the website and useful information has been obtained.

Ms. Linehan is considering a few updates for the library, using a portion of the accumulated state aid funds. Ideas include replacing a few desks, replacing the carpeting in the New Books area, waterproofing a critical storage area, and installing new flooring in Children’s.

Unfinished Business

Art Ownership

No updates at this time.

Bylaws Review

No updates at this time.

Interviews

Interviews are continuing with internal and external candidates for a variety of full and part-time positions.

Adjournment

Ms. Taddeo made the motion to adjourn the September meeting at 2:07 p.m. Mr. Mann seconded the motion and the Trustees approved the action unanimously.

The next scheduled Trustees' Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 1:00.

Submitted by Marie J. McKenzie, Secretary/Clerk