

Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes
Tuesday November 12, 2024, 7:00 PM
Hybrid meeting: Reference Room & Online

In attendance: Abby Hafer, Padma Choudry, Rachel Field, Gyasi Burk-Abbott, Renae Nichols, and Emily Prince

Other attendees: Richard Callaghan, Director; Noreen O’Gara, Assistant Director, Emily Mitchell, Select Board, Marie Kelley, Administrative Assistant, and Dott Bergin, The Bedford Citizen

Call to Order: Chair Rachel Field called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. In attendance Rachel Field, Renae Nichols, Gyasi Burk-Abbott, Emily Prince, Padma Choudry, and Abby Hafer

Public Comments: none

Secretary’s Report

There are two daft reports. The first one Richard sent out last Friday for the October 8 minutes and Emily sent Richard the October 28 minutes. The Board decided to review the October 8 minutes and review the October 28 minutes in the December meeting.

In the October 8 minutes, Renae’s name is spelled incorrectly. Also, in the other Business Section, Padma’s name needs to be corrected. Gyasi moves to accept the minutes with the typos and spelling corrections, Padma seconds the motion. Motion passed 4-0-0.

Director’s Report

Richard mentioned that next Monday there is a special Town Meeting and there is nothing on the agenda that affects the library. Richard is meeting with the Friends of the library tomorrow night to talk about when we can start donating books again. Around January 1 donations can begin. There will not be a holiday sale, and the next book sale will hopefully be in April. We are closing early on Wednesday for the holiday and reopen on Saturday.

The expenditures as of today, we are already a third of the year done. Expenses are up to about 33%. The Flag maintenance expense is at 100% because it’s one bill every year and that has been paid. The other expenses are on track.

Statistical Report:

October was only 2% over last year. In September it was over 4%. Foot traffic has still been strong. Meeting Room should be available by end of January.

Renae moves the acceptance of the Director's Report and Emily seconds the acceptance of the Director's Report.

Vote 6-0-0.

Unfinished Business

The Tech Services Room has been painted and carpeted. Bob and the custodians are working on shifting the equipment from the Meeting Room to the Tech Service Room.

We are still waiting for the railing to be installed on the front steps and the workers need to put on one more skim coat. The workers stated the stairs should be done this week.

In the report from Northeast Engineering there is a schedule of what they are going to be doing. The workers will be working on the new addition in the library. They will start after Thanksgiving and go into January. Books in this area will need to be off the shelves and shelves will need to come down. Richard spoke to a library mover company to move the books and take the shelves down. The books will be in storage and patrons will need to request from the network if they want a particular book.

Noreen stated that there will be another crane pick coming in March and the library would have to be closed for 1 day. We would like to get this scheduled on a Saturday. The air conditioning unit is coming from Trane and is due to go to the rigging yard on March 5. The Town would like to get this done before April because it's the beginning of the Colonial Marching season. By the middle of March, the library will be closed, maybe on a Saturday.

Padma inquired that Ron mentioned a multiply day closure. Noreen explained to Padam the library will be closed during the electric phase and maybe be closed at the final commissioning. Noreen also stated that if we do need to close the library for a certain amount of time then it will be toward the end of the winter and during the end of the project.

New Business

New Director Search Process

Noreen and Richard provided the Board with a copy of the job advertisement. Richard will send the Board a list of where the postings will be sent out. The Board reviewed the job advertisement and made some edits. Renae will send the updated version of the job advertisement to Noreen, Richard, Marie, and H.R. The job advertisement will be posted before the next Board meeting

Richard has a draft of the 2026 budget, and it does not need to be voted on until December. The Finance Committee Meeting is on December 19

There are 2 points to consider, there is a 4% increase to the personnel side of the budget and 3.5% increase to the other expenditures part of the budget. Money has been taken out of Capital Outlay and re-distributed to other areas of the budget. Computer, Hardware/Software and Building and Grounds are higher because money was redistributed to those accounts. This budget will be in our state aid guidelines.

Padma suggested putting money in the budget for social media, either by getting a consultant or spending a little more money on advertisement so that patrons are aware of the library's programs. Padma is concerned that people are not seeing the library activities pop up on their social media feeds. Padma is asking us to find someone who understands how news feeds work, so that patrons are more aware of our programs.

Rachel suggested we should have someone(internally) review and make suggestions to upgrade the quality and reach of our social media. Also, she believes our website is due for an upgrade.

Rachel mentioned that the new Director should submit a budget exactly up to 3.5% additional having additional costs.

Rachel would like everyone to agree that there is more work to be done in certain areas of the library, and the new Director would also agree to this.

Rachel suggested and encouraged Richard to create a budget which asks for every penny to be used and to include social media in the budget

The annual Friends of the library meeting is this Saturday and will probably be on Zoom.

Rachel was concerned about losing the internal book drop. She would like to discuss at the next meeting how we can get back the internal book drop.

Other Business

Appointments: none

Renea moves to adjourn the meeting and Padma seconds the motion.

Vote: 6-0-0