

**Bedford Free Public Library
Library Trustees Minutes
Tuesday March 12, 2024, 7:00 PM
Zoom meeting: Meeting Online**

In attendance: Padma Choudry, Elizabeth Hacala, Emily Stein, Renae Nichols, and Gyasi Burk-Abbott, Rachel Field

Other attendees: Richard Callaghan, Director; Noreen O’Gara, Assistant Director, Emily Mitchell, and Marie Kelley, Administrative Assistant

Call to Order:

Rachel called the meeting to order. Elizabeth would like to make a motion to the board to elect Rachel as the acting Chair of the Bedford Library Trustees for the meeting on March 12, 2024. Padma will second the motion and all in favor.

Public Comments:

None

Secretary’s Report

In the February minutes under New Business there was a discussion about the repair of the front steps and Rachel suggested we consider using granite instead of cement. She did not volunteer to speak to NE Nursery and suggested it might be a worthwhile idea to approach any number of businesses in town. She specifically mentioned NE Nursery to contribute to the granite because they supply granite. Richard suggested we wait on choosing a vendor until we have a discussion with facilities to see what our choices would be. Currently, we are not sure if granite is possible. Richard will amend the February minutes to change this information. Rachel motioned to approve as amended the minutes of the February meeting. Padma motioned to approve as clarified as amended the minutes. Renae seconds the approval. Elizabeth, Padma, Rachel, and Renae vote on the amended minutes.

Director’s Report

March is peeps month and we will be having peeps diorama and a contest at the end of month. The library is also doing March madness to participate in our reading competition. There is a partial solar eclipse next month and we are given out glasses to look outside the eclipse on April 8.

We upgraded the wireless bandwidth last month and got a new modem.

The Public Library Association Conference takes place at the beginning of next month. Nicole Monk from our Children’s Library Department will be attending this conference in Columbus OH. She received a grant from the Massachusetts Library System to attend the conference for free.

Yesterday Richard was at a Minuteman Library Network meeting, and it was decided to sign a three-year contract with the NY Times. We will be getting the NY Times for the next three years at a good price.

FY24 budget is on target to date. We are getting a little ahead of ourselves on the building and ground books, which usually happens this time of year. Statistics were down by 1.3%. The last two months we had more circulation than the previous year, so it's been a reversing trend. The last two months have been busy. Foot traffic was very busy. February was one of the busiest months we had. A motion to approve the Directory's Report. Padma motion to approve and Renae second. Everyone approved of the Directory's Report.

Unfinished Business

- HVAC Project update

We got some subcontractor bids last month and there was a meeting with the vendors on February 22nd. The subs bids came in for the electrical below the bids from last year. Richard received an email from Ron stating the general contractor bids are due this Wednesday at 11:00 am. They will need a week or two to vet the bids and when they choose a bid it will go to the Board of Selectman on the agenda for their next meeting. This will take place on April 9th. After the general contractor is chosen, the general contractor applies for permits with the Fire Department and Code Office to do the work. Ron also mentioned in his meeting that he would like to be at the next April meeting to review what the next steps are.

Noreen and Richard were walking around the building and saw spaces that the contractors would need to get into to do their work. These areas have all kinds of stuff, and the stuff will need to be moved and put in storage containers. Some stuff can be recycled. We will be working with the DPW to assist with the recycling.

The Strategic Plan

We are looking at a couple of coordinators. Noreen and Richard have a scheduled meeting this week with a person they really like.

The FY25 action plan is filed with the state each year and it includes what has been done and some of what we hope to do. The plan is an update to the original plan. This is the same kind of form that is filed with the Board of Library Commissions every December. The plan is updated by seeing what kind of progress has been made and what changes we have made. We will be working on the next strategic plan this year and it will be filed by the end of the year.

We are looking for a coordinator to come in to help run the focus groups and surveys. We hired someone to do this in 2016. It's a lot of work and keeps the pressure off us. Also, it's good to have a neutral party talking to the residents about what they want in the library. We are talking to Maura Deedy who used to work at the Board of Library Commissioners to help us with the focus groups.

New Business

The annual town meeting is on March 25th. Referring to article 8, which is the CPC funding for the front steps that will cost \$75,000. Articles 13 and 16 are the salary administration plan by law and salary planned additional funding. This information is always at the town meeting. This year the salary administration plan by law has been changed a lot. There are fewer categories of classifications for employees. The library employees' classifications will be increased. This helps with hiring and hopefully will pass. The by law itself is article 13 and the salary additional funding is article 16, which both need to pass. Our operating budget is in article 14.

Parking spaces in the parking lot have been a problem. The parking lot behind the library is not our parking lot. It is the town municipal parking lot. In the spring, some of the students do not have stickers so they will park in the library spots. The students who don't have stickers are supposed to park in the middle lot, but instead will park in the library spots, which leaves no available parking spaces for our patrons. The school faculty should be parking behind the high school but are parking in the student's spots. In the past Richard has spoken with the HS principal. The principal has made an announcement to the students and that usually fixes the problem. Another problem we encountered this year is we were told that some seniors are on a rotating schedule and don't have to come in for their first period class. If they come in after 8:30 anybody can park there, it's an open car parking lot. The town officials have been notified of this problem.

Other Business

April's meeting will be via Zoom.

Friends Library Book Sale is on April 4th-April 7th. The books need to be moved because this is where the HVAC system will be installed. Richard is meeting with the Friends at the end of this month to discuss moving the books.

-Appointments:
None

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 9th, 2024

Emily motioned to adjourn and Gyasi second. All agree to adjourn.