



Board of Library Trustees

July 29, 2014 – 3:30 p.m. – **Minutes**

New Bedford Main Public Library, 613 Pleasant Street

The Board of Library Trustees met on July 29, 2014, 3:30 PM,
in the Trustees Room of the Main Library.

Present: Carl Cruz, Vice-Chair
Elsie R. Fraga
The Very Reverend Father Constantine Bebis
Helen Rogers
Dr. John Fletcher
Diana Henry
Rev. Kevin Harrington
Lee Blake
Jill Horton-Simms
Geoffrey Dickinson, Acting Director
Karen Stefanik, Head of Branches

Excused: Mayor Jon Mitchell

Called to order: Mr. Cruz called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

Joan Halter, President of the Friends of the New Bedford Free Public Library, presented her report first. The Little Free Libraries project is moving forward. The Friends are finalizing the plans for the Bierstadt event in August. Ms. Horton-Simms is helping with the publicity. There is money to cover the event, and also to put towards frames for the Bierstadts. Ms. Halter is putting together bags of 5 themed books (i.e., cooking, etc.) for event attendees to buy, and suggested that the Trustees might want to donate books towards these bags.

Ms. Halter said that there has been poor attendance at past annual meetings. Mr. Cruz said that the annual meeting does not have to be an event; it can just be a meeting of members. There will be no change of officers this year.

Father Harrington pointed out that the American Library Association will have its annual meeting in Boston in January 2016. Someone from the Friends might want to attend to meet with other Friends groups. Mr. Cruz suggested that some library staff members should also go.

Mrs. Fraga moved to accept the meetings, it was seconded by Ms. Blake, and unanimously approved.

Dr. Fletcher made a motion to accept the June Trustees Minutes and it was seconded by Rev. Bebis. Dr. Fletcher pointed out that the Mayor should not be listed as excused for that meeting as he was present, so that change will be fixed. The minutes were unanimously approved.

STAFF REPORTS

Dr. Fletcher made a motion to accept the staff reports and it was seconded by Rev. Bebis.

Denise Plaskon started as the new manager at Lawler at the end of June. Mr. Cruz has already welcomed her. She has begun wedding the collection and recruiting volunteers. Mrs. Rogers suggested Ms. Plaskon come to a meeting. Mr. Cruz suggested having one of the fall meetings at Lawler.

Mr. Cruz pointed out that the Library does not currently recognize its volunteers for their service and asked Ms. Stefanik to set up a ceremony and certificates for that. Ms. Blake volunteered to help.

Rev. Bebis expressed concern over lower circulation statistics. Mr. Dickinson pointed out that those numbers do not count the electronic materials (such as e-books) that were used. That number is growing. Mrs. Rogers suggested providing more technology. Mr. Dickinson said that the idea of making tablets available for use has been investigated, but there is a great risk of theft. Ms. Stefanik suggested to allow more than 2 DVDs to be checked out at a time. The rule of only 2 DVDs was created when the Library had a limited number of DVDs and a smaller budget. The DVD collections at all locations have grown, and could support patrons being able to take out more than 2 DVDs.

Mr. Cruz said that when the Library is fully staffed, some staff and the Trustees should have a retreat to explore these various issues. Ms. Blake echoed that idea.

Rev. Bebis was concerned about the nonfiction collection at the Main Library. Mr. Dickinson said he is welcome to give any suggestions to the staff.

The staff reports were approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1. Art:** Dr. Fletcher, Chair – The Mary Barros portrait unveiling in July went very well. More than 100 people attended. The Bierstadt paintings are back and there will be a special reception in August for those people who donated towards the paintings' restoration. A Ms. Bolton requested to be able to raise funds to recreate replicas of popular portraits so that these replicas could be lent out. Ms. Blake made a motion to allow this, it was seconded by Mrs. Fraga and unanimously approved.
- 2. Bookmobile:** Mrs. Rogers, Chair – Mr. Cruz asked about the Bookmobile grant that Ms. Stefanik wrote for the Friends. The grant is funded by the Lois Lensky Foundation in the amount of \$3000. Ms. Stefanik asked for this money to put towards buying picturebooks for the Bookmobile. An influx of picturebooks would allow the Bookmobile to increase the size of the kindergarten drop-off collections from 20 books to 25 books per class.
- 3. Building:** Ms. Blake, Chair – The extension of the Casa elevator grant was finalized. The goal is to have the elevator completed by the end of September. Mr. Dickinson pointed out that all the light fixtures outside the Main Library have been replaced except for one located near the driveway. This light is hidden by tall bushes. Mr. Dickinson has requested that those bushes be removed, as they also serve as a place for people to hide their alcohol, garbage, or for the homeless to stay. These bushes would then be replaced by decorative plants or flowers. Mr. Cruz said that Eden or the Buttonwood Park landscaper might be able to offer suggestions.
- 4. Security:** Mr. Cruz inquired about the status of the camera installation at the branches. Mr. Dickinson replied that the electrician has begun installing the cables at Howland-Green. Mr. Dickinson is working with DPI and Ann Lauro, the Preservation Planner with the City, to design historically-acceptable “No Loitering” and “No Smoking” signs for the Main Library. These signs will allow police to remove people without being called by staff. Mr. Dickinson has requested the custodians at the Main Library to regularly walk around the building to get people of the front steps. This of course takes time away from their regular duties.

The City would like to put something up in front of the steps to discourage loitering. Mr. Cruz does not want to approve anything without seeing it first. Ms. Henry pointed out that a chain would not keep anyone out; if the purpose of a chain would be to hang a “No Loitering” sign from it, maybe these signs could be put on the building in a different way. The Library occasionally opens the doors on that side of the building, and the Christmas tree is put on those steps, so the solution has to be easy to move when necessary. Father Harrington suggested that New Bedford look at what similarly cities do. Ms. Henry made a motion to not approve any solution without a visual; it was seconded by Dr. Fletcher, and

unanimously approved.

5. **Finance Committee:** Mrs. Fraga, Chair – Nothing to report.
6. **Gifts:** Father Harrington, Chair – There was a donation of \$500, and that person needs to be thanked. Father Harrington wondered if people want to make donations, does the donation go to the city. Dr. Fletcher pointed out that people can make a donation to the Trustees fund. Father Harrington bought and donated 3 copies of *The Whaling Captain*. Dr. Fletcher made a motion to accept the gift, it was seconded by Rev. Bebis and unanimously approved.
7. **Personnel:** Mrs. Rogers, Chair – A 12-hour Library Assistant at Howland-Green resigned, and one of the 12-hour Library Assistants at Wilks will be leaving in mid-August. The Library has received several applications for the Head of Special Collections position, and those interviews will take place at the end of August.
8. **Policy:** Ms. Blake, Chair. Nothing to report.
9. **Scholarships:** Ms. Henry, Chair. Mr. Dickinson gave the latest report on the Yeager fund to Ms. Henry. The Trustees administer the library portion of the scholarship; other scholarships for visual art and music are administered by other organizations.
10. **Director's Report:**
Rev. Bebis made a motion to accept the Director's Report, it was seconded by Mrs. Blake.

The City budget is printed but still not official.

Ms. Horton-Simms brought carpet samples for the Trustees to see. The Library is hoping to replace worn carpeting at the Main Library in late winter. A carpet representative will come in August to give prices. Ms. Horton-Simms showed samples of carpet tiles and broadloom. Ms. Henry asked if the tiles would easily come off when patrons move their chairs around, but Ms. Horton-Simms replied they would not.

Janice Hodson suggested having an archivist sit in on the interviews with the candidates for the Head of Special Collections. Mr. Cruz thought this was a good idea.

Mr. Cruz pointed out that the rotunda area is dark and could be a hazard. Mr. Dickinson replied that it is very difficult to replace the light that is over that open space. The Zeiterion has a lift that might work for that purpose.

The Director's Report was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

The Library received the grant for the FAIR program. It will run at the Main Library from April 4 to May 9. Ms. Horton-Simms will handle the publicity. Ms. Horton-Simms is also on the advisory committee for the FAIR pre-teen program.

Ms. Horton-Simms pointed out an article in the newspaper about writing camps for children. There had been one at Gomes School and one at Lawler. The writing camp (Buzzards Bay Writing Project) might happen again at Lawler.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cruz said that Trustees can discuss future portraits at the next meeting. There is generally only one portrait painted per year.

NEXT MEETING:

Regular meeting: Tuesday, September 30 at 3:30pm (There will be no regular meeting in August, but Trustees will call a special meeting if needed to vote on an issue.)

Rev. Bebis made a motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Dr. Fletcher and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.