
Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees

The Board of Library Trustees met on November 23, 2021 3:30 PM
in the meeting room of the Main Library

Present: Diana Henry, Vice-Chair
Carl J. Cruz
Elsie R. Fraga
Helen Rogers
Ann O’Leary
Lee Blake
Maria Gloria de Sa
Olivia Melo, Director
Carmen Brodeur, Office Assistant

Excused: Kimberly S. Ferreira

Guest: Janet Barbosa, representing Mayor Jon Mitchell
Alexandra Copeland, Library Art Curator

Called to order: Ms. Henry called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Ms. Melo welcomed new Trustee, Maria Gloria de Sa to the Board.

Mr. Cruz asked Ms. de Sa to share a little bit about herself and her interest in joining the Board. Ms. de Sa stated that she came here from Portugal at 17 years of age and has lived here for 50 years. She is retired from UMass Dartmouth as a professor of sociology and faculty director of the Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives. She is passionate about the role of public libraries and hopes to help our library fulfill its mission of meeting the needs of the community.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the minutes of the October Trustees’ meeting with minor corrections; seconded by Ms. Rogers; unanimously approved.

Ms. Melo asked Ms. Henry for a few minutes before the Board moved on to the motion for approving minutes and staff reports to review the role of the Public Library Trustee and how Open Meeting Law applies as she has received on-going questions from both new and long-term Trustees before and after meetings regarding topics on the agenda.

The Trustee Handbook from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, which each Trustee has received, answers some of these questions as well. Of utmost importance in the role of a Trustee is the need to have knowledge of the accomplishments and challenges faced by all library staff to be effective advocates to the authorities who allocate resources to the Library.

The agenda and staff reports are developed to guide the discussion which will be recorded in the minutes, as an archival document of the New Bedford Public Library. Topics for discussion are intended to keep the Trustees informed and not as a cause for disagreement or tension. When it happens, it makes it uncomfortable for those in attendance if the tone of discussion is not respectful or is perceived as antagonistic. The Board meeting is the place for a productive discussion and if clarification on a topic is necessary, it should be verbalized at the meeting and not via a post-meeting phone call to the Director.

Ms. Melo also noted that the order of the staff reports will rotate to be inclusive of all departments as over the last few meetings there has been some departmental achievements which have been missed as the document now is inclusive of all departments and is lengthy.

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the staff reports; seconded by Ms. O'Leary; unanimously approved.

Ms. Rogers stated that she was pleased to read in the report that the Bookmobile was parked in the afternoons at the Howland-Green branch for awareness of the library being open for business and to make neighbors aware the parking lot is a library parking lot.

Ms. Melo highlighted metrics in two reports from the managers of Howland-Green and Casa da Saudade, respectively.

- The Spanish materials at Howland-Green branch had a low circulation and this had already been an observation by the former branch manager pre-Covid. The Teen Room was also documented in the exit report of the branch manager as something that need to be re-evaluated as the teens used the space only as an afterschool hangout and none showed interest in the programs provided by the library. With the re-opening of the space, the computers have been removed and only books and magazines are available in the space now.
- The Casa da Saudade's Portuguese speaking patron's numbers are low with only 35 Portuguese speaking patrons walking through its doors in the last month. The elderly Portuguese patrons are being notified of materials available for their pick-up and they are borrowing them for the entire month utilizing the automatic renewal feature. This results in a measurable circulation count but is not completely accurate as the checkout is to singular patrons.

Ms. de Sa and Mr. Cruz expressed their opinions that Spanish and Portuguese speaking patrons are in the community and we should roll out more advertising targeted to them that we have plentiful resources available for them to enjoy.

Ms. Blake agreed that we need to reach out to these communities and maybe a good way might be to use cable access television to allow parents to see that there are resources for them, as well as their children for homework, or help with language, or just for enjoyment.

Ms. Rogers acknowledged Bethany Coito's incredible work with the amount of outreach to children she is doing with all the various programs.

Ms. O'Leary noted that Bethany Coito's take home craft bags are a welcome answer to parents who want a free project to do with their children at the library or even at home during the pandemic. She uses this available craft treat for her own grandchildren and it's a wonderful opportunity that people should take advantage of.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the Director's report; seconded by Ms. Blake; unanimously approved.

Ms. Melo reported the following:

- The Mass. Library Systems Contract Specialist to discuss the magazine subscription services bid process. Current vendor COX has received a one-year extension on the contract. EBSCO is a larger vendor that should be considered to bid as well.
- The Laundry Project action plan was finalized and Pauline Robillard, Library Assistant at Howland-Green branch, is managing the project with the assist of the Bookmobile driver, Dan Wieghmink.
- The Covid-19 Vaccine Policy for City Employees went into effect Monday, November 15th and employees are required to upload proof of vaccination through the Employee Self Service system or submit proof of weekly testing. Employees who are not in compliance with this policy will be placed on mandatory leave. Accrual banks including personal, vacation, and comp time will be used as PTO during this leave, however, accrued sick time will not be accessible for this purpose.
- The Capital Plan for 2021-2025 [library section] was discussed in the April 27th meeting via Zoom [document was emailed]. It has been re-shared via email recently as requested at last month's meeting for new reference. Also emailed was the list with items to be repaired and it explains that it is unclear when and in which order these items will be repaired.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the Committee reports; second by Ms. Blake; unanimously approved.

1. **Art:** Ms. O'Leary, Chair-An Art Committee meeting will be scheduled for January 10th at 3:30pm to discuss the draft for the 2021 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the New Bedford Library and the New Bedford Art Museum / Artworks and an art donation to the Library.
2. **Building:** Ms. Rogers, Chair – The bid award process for the roof & windows project is still a work in progress
3. **Development:** Ms. Ferreira, Chair – Nothing to report.

4. **Finance:** Ms. Fraga, Chair – Nothing to report.
5. **Personnel:** Ms. Blake, Chair – A meeting will be scheduled for January 10th at 2:30p.m.
6. **Policy:** Ms. Blake, Chair –A meeting is to be scheduled to discuss the Collection Development Policy and the Filming & Photography Policy update. The date is undetermined as of this moment.

OLD BUSINESS

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the New Bedford Free Public Library and the Art Museum/Artworks! has been revised once more by the Art Museum/Artworks! Board and will need to be reviewed by the Library's Art Committee.

The delivery van is on route from the Ford plant in Mexico and the new generator for the Bookmobile is scheduled to be installed soon. The new generator is on its way and will be installed in the bookmobile soon.

NEW BUSINESS

The FY2017- 2022 Strategic Plan is completed and a new plan will be initiated in the spring for completion in the fall with a five year plan for FY2023 – 2028.

The *Presepio* from Casa da Saudade will be exhibited this year at the Main Library from December 2 – January 7th to provide a new viewing experience to our community or for those who have not been aware of it being on exhibit at the Casa branch for many years.

A service order request has been submitted to the Dept. of Facilities Maintenance for repair of the solar panels which power the lights for the Lewis Temple statue in the front.

COMMUNICATION

Ms. Melo reported that the furniture which was moved from Casa da Saudade's meeting room will be shared with other branches in need of new furniture.

The president of the Regional Government of the Azores will be visiting the area from Dec 1st to the 8th and Ms. Melo has extended an invitation to his delegation to have him visit the Main Library to see the *Presepio* da Lagoa on exhibit on the 3rd floor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE BOARD

NEXT MEETING:

Regular meeting: Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 3:30pm at the Main Library.

Meeting adjourned at 4:49 pm.

Clerk,
Lee Blake