



**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES  
Fuller Meeting Room  
10 Bird Street, Foxborough, MA 02035  
Monday, December 18, 2023  
7:00 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Chairman Kevin Penders, Joyce Parlapiano, Collin Earnst, & Clerk Jennifer Ooi

**Not Present:** Anisul Chowdhury & Christine Igo Freeman

**Also Present:** Library Director Libby O'Neill, & Friends Member Sue Collins

**Documentation:**

Meeting Minutes for Approval- November 12, 2023

Reports: Professional Librarian Reports, Director's Report, Financial Reports November 2023, FY24 YTD Book & AV Breakdowns

FY25 Budget Drafts (2)

**Called to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by K. Penders.

**Public Input:** None.

**Meet and Greet with Marie Almodovar, Town of Foxborough Finance Director:**

K. Penders introduced Marie Almodovar, the Town of Foxborough Finance Director, to the group and gave an overview of the Board members and their positions.

M. Almodovar provided an overview of budget-related takeaways from the State of the Town. Since the start of COVID, budgets have been kept low and no new positions created. The Town is now seeing a return to pre-pandemic revenue numbers, activities, and subsequently, budgets. The Finance Department is encouraging departments to put together thoughtful and justified but less conservation budgets than have been seen in recent years.

L. O'Neill inquired about the Beyond Books Gift Fund, which the town recently transferred from Bartholomew Investment Services to Eastern Bank. M. Almodovar advised that the Town uses Bartholomew for investments. The yearly audit flagged this account as it's labeled as a gift fund rather than a true trust, so it was moved out of Bartholomew. Including November's interest, the account has a current balance of \$297,056.62.

The other trust accounts will be staying with Bartholomew as they are true trusts. M. Almodovar explained, though, that the state laws governing what the Library, as a government entity, can and cannot invest changed as of September 2023. In short, the Library is now able to invest the equity in our trust accounts. M. Almodovar mentioned that Bartholomew has over 300 municipal clients and has historically excelled at managing and protecting the investments of these municipalities. K. Penders recommended following the investment strategy of the town if we decide to go this route and L. O'Neill agreed. The latter questioned the ease or difficulty of spending down equity if it's invested. M. Almodovar explained that Bartholomew would have to cash stocks and transfer the funds to our account. If the Library would like to pursue the newfound ability to invest equity, there would need to be a town meeting vote to adopt the law change. We can continue with business as usual and not pursue this option if preferred.

*Given the inclement weather, K. Penders suggested addressing matters out of order to get through the voting items first in the event that any of the members needed to leave early to attend to power outages/generators. The group agreed.*

**Vote to Accept Gift Donation of \$2,100.00 to Boyden Library on Behalf of the Foxborough Rotary Club:**

Children’s Librarian Emma Brelsford made a targeted ask to the Foxborough Rotary Club for funding for Chromebooks. They will be used for all ages, but will be used for a children’s coding club to start. C. Earnst made a motion to accept the donation of \$2,100 from the Foxborough Rotary Club. J. Ooi seconded and the motion passed 4-0-0. Additionally, J. Ooi will put together a thank you card to the Foxborough Rotary Club for the donation.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

C. Earnst made a motion to approve the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes without changes. J. Parlapiano seconded and the motion passed 4-0-0.

**New Business, Study Pods Quote – Discussion and Vote:**

L. O’Neill reported that she obtained three quotes for three study pods, one for \$10,500, one for \$15,406, and one for \$19,109. The lowest quote is a discounted price as the pods were purchased, never used, and then returned fully assembled. L. O’Neill has the company holding these pods for the Library and has gotten the PO/procurement approved by the Finance Department. The doors and elevators have been measured to ensure the pods will fit in the building, there is just one more shelf to be moved to make room before delivery can be set up.

The Boyden Memorial Fund has \$21,000 in expendable funds and is for general use. C. Earnst made a motion to approve an expenditure not to exceed \$12,000 from the Boyden Memorial Fund for the purpose of acquiring three study pods (the excess of \$10,500 quoted to cover any delivery charges yet to be determined). J. Parlapiano seconded and the motion was passed 4-0-0. M. Almodovar advised that L. O’Neill should email Brandon Roberts to adjust the account on the PO to reflect approval of use of funds from the Boyden Memorial Fund.

**Old Business, FY2025 Budget – Discussion and Vote:**

L. O’Neill put together two draft budgets for FY2025. The first draft is for a 4.5% increase that balances the priorities of the Board with the needs and requirements of both the Town and the MBLC. The second draft is for a 3.79% increase, a more conservative budget that does not address all needs. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners requires the Library spend a certain amount of funds on materials expenditure and appropriations. Those funds must be spent to maintain certification and thus will be spent regardless of the budget. If the budget cannot accommodate, funds will be pulled from other places.

Both budgets include moving Jennifir Huston from part-time Teen Librarian to full-time. The 4.5% increase also prioritizes materials investment and routine expenses, the latter of which includes the purchase of 1-2 new copiers and new computers. K. Penders advised that the healthier budget demonstrates that the Library is rebuilding its commitment to the community, and C. Earnst suggested submitting the higher budget to the Town, seeing their response, and moving forward from there as needed.

There was a discussion surrounding the line items included in the budget, some of which are quite similar and could cover the same expenditures. There was a discussion on the merits of merging some of these line items, to which M. Almodovar stated the Finance Department can do so at any time and has been recommending departments do when possible. K. Penders advised L. O’Neill to reinvent the line items in

her image with consideration for the long-term story she'd like to tell with the budget. L. O'Neill will bring her recommendations back to the Board for approval.

J. Parlapiano made a motion to adopt the FY2025 budget with a 4.5% increase. C. Earnst seconded and the motion passed 4-0-0.

The next steps include a meeting the Finance Department on 1/18/24, followed by a meeting with ADCOM on 2/14/24. L. O'Neill and K. Penders will present to ADCOM an explanation of the priorities of the Library and subsequently the FY2025 budget, along with two slides of visual representations of these priorities.

**Old Business, Quotes for Intercom System – Discussion and Possible Vote:**

L. O'Neill provided an update on the Library's pursuit of an intercom system. Two quotes were received, a third vendor did not respond. One vendor quoted \$4,200 for 5 speakers and the second quoted \$21,000 for 28 speakers. After further inquiry from L. O'Neill, the second vendor provided a second quote of \$11,750 for 8 speakers. L. O'Neill will continue to pursue a third vendor and will report back to the Board at that time. No vote was taken today.

**Old Business, Follow Up on Town Model – Possible Vote to Move Item to Town Hall:**

L. O'Neill had researched the January and February 2012 Board meeting minutes, the meetings during which the town model was gifted to the Library. The minutes state that the model was an outright gift without terms, conditions, or future obligations, and that the Library has exclusive say on when, where, and how to display the model.

Town Hall was going to take the model, but it will not fit in the spaces they have available. At present, there are no other takers, including the Whall family, and the Board had a robust discussion about the future of the model and the obligations of the Library. J. Ooi expressed the preference for knowing who is taking the model and ensuring it's going to a good home. J. Parlapiano suggested perhaps Foxborough Cable Access or a local bank might be interested. The school superintendent is also asking the area principals if they have any interest in taking the model. It was noted that the language in the 2012 minutes doesn't specify that the model must be displayed, though a sufficient storage space has not been identified.

C. Earnst moved to authorize the Director, in consultation with the Board Chairman, to explore options for discharging the model to a different caretaker and act on an offer if a suitable home arises, with the outcome reported to the Board. J. Parlapiano seconded and the motion passed 4-0-0.

**Correspondence:** None

**Friends' Report:**

The new Friends of the Library treasurer, Sara Halton, revamped the membership brochure and added the FOL logo to the membership envelopes. She has organized and digitized financial information, making book sales significantly more accurate, as well as added the ability to take credit card payments.

The January newsletter will be out shortly with encouragement for Friends to pay their annual dues.

There have been some very successful drive-up book donation days, and the Friends anticipate receiving a large donation of books and CDs in the near future. The Friends are grateful for their partnership with Discover Books, who will come directly to a home if they have 10+ boxes to donate.

November saw one of the most successful book sales the Friends have had to date; Katherine Howard will bring the exact number to the January Board meeting. The Friends received great feedback on the selection

of quality of the books available, due largely to good donations being received and book sorters being more vigilant.

The Friends once again decorated the Library with poinsettias. Colleen McManus decorated the “giving tree” with discretionary fund requests. The deadline for collection was 12/8/23 and the Friends will provide an update on the success in January, though L. O’Neill commented that we saw a large number of items come in.

Bruce Beal made the FOL donation box housed in the vestibule of the Library. He recently passed and the family asked for donations to the FOL and another charity in lieu of flowers. S. Collins attended the services for Bruce to convey our thanks for his years of support and condolences to his family.

### **Professional Staff Reports:**

L. O’Neill provided two updates from professional staff. Two of the three shelves outside the administrative offices on floor 2A (mezzanine) were emptied and moved to the ground floor near the circulation desk. They now display available games and the Library of Things.

The SAILS app is no longer working. The only feature still functioning is patrons’ library card barcodes within the app, they will still scan at checkout. A fix is not forthcoming as SirsiDynix is working on a new app with a new company that is likely a few months out from launch. Staff have been routing patrons to access the catalog and their accounts via their web browsers.

### **Financial Reports:**

L. O’Neill reported that the Library is in good shape to date on expenditures. An initial State Aid award in the amount of \$22,703.75 is forthcoming. This is more than usual due to an increase in federal funding.

### **Director’s Reports:**

L. O’Neill gave an update on the request to purchase a new table for the tech room. Staff were able to rearrange the room and stored materials to make more room, so they no longer need a new table.

The Historical Commission would like to display some documents and items in locked display case at the Library given that we are open significantly more than they are. They will either be purchasing a display case to be used for this purpose at the Library, or will be using the existing glass display cases at the Library that currently house seasonal book displays.

L. O’Neill met with the Public Safety Social Worker, Christina LaRose, to discuss sharing a social work intern with the intent to have the intern at the Library two nights a week for drop in assistance and scheduled appointments. C. LaRose is working with Simmons University and Boston University to obtain the intern. The Fuller Room or conference room outside the administrative offices will be used based on availability. J. Ooi suggested looking into blinds for the conference room outside the administrative offices to increase privacy. J. Parlapiano mentioned that there may be value in having a social worker do a presentation about the services they offer and the associated benefits as some people may not be aware of what is available to them.

The Library Pages were due for step increases this past July and did not receive them. The increases have now been processed and the Pages will be receiving back pay with the next payroll cycle.

J. Ooi inquired about how the ESL classes have been going. Thus far, they have had low to no attendance. At the suggestion of one attendee, we will try offering some evening classes as well as Fridays at 11am. S. Collins will be working with L. O’Neill and Joanna Caristi to help staff some of these classes.

**New Business, Teen Room Bullying - Discussion:**

Last Wednesday evening (12/13/23), the Teen Librarian, Jennifer Huston, received a phone call from the mother of a young patron. The mother explained that her daughter and another girl had been harassed and bullied by other teens in the YA room on three separate occasions and wanted to press charges. J. Huston was able to deescalate the situation by instead disinviting the teens responsible from the Library for one month; the mother approved of this resolution. J. Huston filed an incident report and called the police. She was able to work with the School Resource Officer on the issue. J. Huston disinvited the 2 of the 4 teens when they arrived at the Library the next day as only 2 showed up. Two officers came to provide support while she did so, and they were able to follow up with the other 2 teens at school to present them with their letters of disinvitation.

The mother of a disinvited teen who was presented with a disinvitation letter at school called to speak with L. O'Neill. She stated that her daughter did not participate to which L. O'Neill explained guilt by association when with a group of teens that are actively bullying. The mother was ultimately understanding after receiving an explanation on disinvitation letters and that there isn't a "permanent record" involved through the library.

As a result of this incident, J. Huston provided some suggestions to L. O'Neill on how best to update the Teen Room Policy to explicitly state that hate speech and bullying will not be tolerated. L. O'Neill will revise the policy and bring it to the January Board meeting for consideration and approval. This incident further underscores the need for the Teen Librarian to be full-time and given the ability to nurture broader minds among our teen patrons.

**Old Business, 2024 Community Read Update:**

L. O'Neill provided an update on the 2024 Community Read. The agent for Brendan Slocumb, author of *The Violin Conspiracy*, had originally thought B. Slocumb would be willing to go all in for \$10,000. However, the contract negotiations stated \$10,000 plus the cost of hotel and associated room service for the duration of the stay. The Board deliberated covering the costs of hotel and room service, until L. O'Neill pointed out the additional programming, book, and promotional costs of the event. K. Penders supported pushing back on the original offer of \$10,000 all in, and J. Parlapiano emphasized mentioning the additional costs and our hope that this offer does not change B. Slocumb's ability to attend. The event was originally scheduled for 3/21/24 but due to another commitment on B. Slocumb's end, the Board agreed 3/27/24 should work as well being that there are currently no other major Town events scheduled for that day.

**Old Business, 2024 Public Library Association Conference:**

L. O'Neill ran the numbers related to staff attending the 2024 Public Library Association Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Including the conference, ALA and PLA memberships required for attendance, hotel, and flights, the cost for 2 staff members is an estimated \$3,000 and \$4,400 for 3 staff members. ALA and PLA membership must be paid for by 1/12/24 to secure conference early-bird pricing. L. O'Neill and Children's Librarian Emma Brelsford are interested in attending with one additional librarian considering.

C. Earnst suggested covering meals for staff attending the Conference as that is generally the standard practice for work trips. K. Penders supported this idea and M. Almodovar advised that the Town has reimbursement rates we can follow. L. O'Neill suggested funding the expenses associated with the Conference from the State Aid account.

J. Ooi made a motion to approve an expenditure of up to \$5,500 from the State Aid account to cover the cost of the conference, ALA and PLA memberships required for attendance, hotel, flights, and meals for

three staff members to attend the 2024 Public Library Association Conference. C. Earnst seconded and the motion passed 4-0-0.

**Old Business, Follow Up on Trustee Town Email Addresses:**

K. Penders reported that the matter of trustee town email addresses was brought to the Acting Town Manager, who deferred to the Town Counsel. K. Penders will report on updates as they become available.

**Old Business, Follow Up on AEDs and Narcan Discussion:**

L. O'Neill reported that the public health nurse did a walkthrough of the building with regard to AED needs and placement. He will be joining the January Board meeting to give a formal recommendation. Per feedback received at the December staff meeting, staff are cautious about getting AEDs. They are concerned about training and any liability should staff not be able to use the AEDs in an emergency. Training would be provided and L. O'Neill will inquire with Town Counsel regarding the liability aspect.

Also discussed at the staff meeting was the possibility of having Narcan at the Library. Consensus was that staff does not want Narcan onsite. Based on the feedback from the public health nurse, there isn't a reasonable need within the Town. Narcan has only been administered 3 times in the community, though the timeline during which these instances occurred is unclear. Additionally, staff have concerns that word would get out and people would come to the Library to use, as well as concerns about Narcan recipients waking up combative.

The Board agreed that Narcan isn't necessary and it does not need to be discussed further, the public health nurse need only discuss AEDs at the January meeting.

K. Penders asked the Board to consider some form of recognition of staff for the holiday season. J. Parlapiano agreed and volunteered to organize an informal breakfast/brunch for staff. With input from L. O'Neill on staff availability, Thursday, January 4, 2024 was decided as the date and the Board agreed on a budget of \$100, funded personally.

J. Ooi inquired about Library newsletters and whether they are available online. Neither the current or past editions are available online. J. Ooi suggested making at least the current edition available on the website to make it easier for patrons to access and share with others.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by C. Earnst and seconded by J. Parlapiano to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. All were in favor and the motion was approved 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Spinner