

Chelsea Public Library
Board of Trustees
October 17, 2023
Minutes of Meeting – APPROVED 11/28/23

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1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Chairperson Beth Novak.

2. Roll Call: At Roll Call, the following attended: Chairperson Beth Novak, Vice Chairperson Monica Elias, Grace Lee, Lisa Makrinikolas, Kristina Byrnes. Ana Venegas-Rivera and Alexandria Christmas were absent (excused). Library Director Lisa Mucciarone was also present.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: On a motion made by Kristina Byrnes and seconded by Lisa Makrinikolas, the minutes from September 26th, 2023 were approved with an amendment. The amendment noted Monica Elias' absence on September 26th, 2023 as an excused absence. Additionally, it was agreed to remove the item regarding the resumption of quarterly community outreach under Unfinished Business, as the Board of Trustees is not directly involved in such activity.

4. Communications: None.

5. Children's Department Spring Programming Update:
 - The board reviewed (as agreed in the last minutes and approved) the initial request for funding \$2,030 for spring programming following the historical practice of not funding material/books, but only programming. The motion to not approve the funding request was passed unanimously.
 - Additionally, the Children's Librarian, Katherine Palencia, presented an alternative programming and funding request, which was shared as an attachment titled Chelsea Reads Outline dated October 17, 2023. A motion was made by Monica Elias to defer the vote to the next board meeting, seconded by Kristina Byrnes.
 - Board members expressed the need for detailed session output data and other relevant metrics to be provided, aiding in a more comprehensive assessment of future program funding decisions.

6. Report of the Library Director:

- The 2024 Massachusetts Financial Report was signed by the board's Chair, Beth Novak, filed on October 5th. This report, along with ARIS, must be filed in order to get State Aid, which is distributed in two installments, in February and April.
- Yareli and Amanda are both involved with continuing programming. For Yareli's intergenerational story time at the Senior Center, she recently had a guest reader. Victor Tiernan, the City's Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, read The Red Balloon. Yareli's next book club meeting will be held on November 15th. The session will include bubble tea and is made possible through the ALA Great Stories grant. On Saturdays, Amanda has been running a continuing program called Teen Switch Saturdays.
- The Library Director has written three letters of support for cultural grants that would bring two programs and a photo exhibit to the library. The adult program is titled Carving Out Your Story. It is an oral history workshop, and she thinks it would be a good complement to the City's 400th celebration next year. The photo exhibit is titled Night and Day, Chelsea MA, by the photographer Cathy Weaver Taylor. The third potential grant is for a comics-based program geared towards tweens and teens and facilitated by the Boston Comics Arts Foundation. It would run in three sessions during the summer.
- As far as current programs for adults, we have the monthly book club that meets on Thursdays (facilitated by Alicia P.), and we will be running a coloring night for adults on Tuesday, November 14th (facilitated by Amanda). The director has also signed the library up for the Massachusetts Center for the Book monthly reading challenge for next year. They will send us postcards to have on hand, and we will make our own signage to promote it.
- The Library Director has an upcoming meeting with Dr. Aaron Jennings, Equity, Diversity and Excellence Officer and Malik Howshan, Officer of Innovation, Access, and Opportunity from the School Department. Having strong ties with both of them will be a help to the library, both with promoting our programs and CITY OF CHELSEA, MA Department of Planning and Development resources and keeping open the lines of communication between the schools and the library.
- The Library Director has been working with the police due to a patron who has been verbally abusive to staff. Unfortunately, he was trespassed from the building, and She is currently seeking guidance from the police about next steps. It is always a very difficult situation to have to take action in a case like this. While libraries exist to welcome one and all, there comes a time when patrons who continue to break behavior policies cannot be ignored. We also must keep the building safe for both patrons and staff. The patron in question previously had been asked to leave for a three-month period by Sarah Gay Jackson. More recently, he had been asked to leave for the day each time his behavior became disruptive.
- Bob Collins will be celebrating 52 years at the library this month. The Library Director has enjoyed his oral history of his many decades in this building and hearing about how the staffing structure has changed over the years.

7. Unfinished Business: No unfinished business was discussed.

8. New Business: No new business was discussed.

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9. Ongoing Business: The issues regarding banned books were discussed.
 - Trustees discussed the need for guidance on formal challenges regarding banned books and agreed to adopt a similar approach to the Boston Public Library (BPL).
 - The Library Director is tasked with obtaining BPL's banned books policy and emailing it to the group.
 - Considering the differing municipalities, potential edits will be made, with assistance from the board's Vice Chair Monica Elias.
 - Members are required to reach a consensus on the policies and changes, with a vote scheduled for the next meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting: The next board meeting was scheduled for November 28th, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

11. Adjournment: On a motion made by Kristina Byrnes and seconded by Lisa Makrinikolas, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lee

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