**Marlborough Public Library Board of Trustees**

**Meeting Minutes February 6, 2024**

**Meeting held at the Marlborough Public Library**

The meeting was called to order by Fred Haas at 7:03 PM.

**Board Members attending:** Chair Fred Haas, Tom Abel, Bill Brewin, Nena Bloomquist, Jason Homer, Samantha Khosla, Rustin Kyle, Janice Merk, Robyn Ripley

**Also attending:** Sara Belisle, Library Director, Morgan Manzella, MaryEllen Klusacek, Alison Gontarz, Deborah Jakubowski Russ

Documents Reviewed/Referenced: Minutes of Jan. 2 meeting, Trust Fund/State Aid Report, Director’s Report, draft of community survey

**Proceedings:**

1. **Minutes:** A motion to accept the minutes for the January 2, 2024 meeting was passed (Merk, Ripley).
2. **Trust Funds/ State Aid Report:** Interest from trust funds, Transcripts from scholarship winners.   Last issues from Main Street Journal - Request for Director Belisle to use State Aid for Microfilm (Abel, Ripley)
3. **Staff Introduction** - Kara Dzindolet will attend next month.
4. **Director’s Report:**

**Building:**

One of two compressors for the HVAC system failed and the heating on the 1st floor has struggled to keep up. City Facilities and the HVAC contractor isolated the major issue so the main spaces that don’t have optimally-functioning heat are the corner of the 1st floor that affects the Director’s office and 3 study rooms. The heat stabilizes at a mild temperature. The needed part should be arriving in early February.. Commissioning for the HVAC system has been ongoing and a few trouble spots have been identified with solutions incoming.

Donor signage is in production with installation before February 10th. Additional signage will come in 2 more phases including a new exterior sign to replace the old one that was on West Main Street.

There have been issues with patrons likely flushing non-flushable items down the toilets causing some blocked toilets and floods. Signage has been installed in all the restrooms. City facilities respond quickly to all issues. A trustee asked if facilities had considered installing flood alarms. Director Belisle said this is under discussion.

The art rail system in the café was installed, art hung in the children’s room, and 8 of the Old Homesteads of Marlborough are on the walls with the plan to rotate them quarterly.

**Staff:**

Interviews continue for the vacant part-time circulation assistant position. Two candidates have been selected: one is in process with HR, the other candidate will be notified on Feb. 7.

Giselle Rhodes, a part-time circulation assistant, is moving to California in the spring. The current position and posting will stay open due to this notice.

Director Belisle attended the Finance Committee meeting on Monday, January 29th. The Finance Committee approved the positions with no discussion, and it will be passed back to the full City Council on February 12th. Job postings for those positions along with postings for pages will be ready to go to HR as soon as approval is given.

Director Belisle is working on pulling salary data for comparison communities for all Library positions, in preparation for budget season.

Assistant Director Manzella has analyzed how many staff are needed for the Library to be open on Sundays next Fiscal Year. Based on her findings, the Library would need to hire at least another 4-6 part-time staff to ensure we have proper coverage on that day and not have services suffer during the week. A trustee asked if we need 4-6 staff to provide programming on Sundays, or would 4 be sufficient just to be open. Director Belisle said they expect the Library will be busy if it is open on Sundays and they don’t want to be short-staffed. A trustee asked if patrons have said that they want the Library to be open on Sunday and Director Belisle said they have.

Director Belisle will be away on vacation from 2/14-2/23.

**Patrons**

A temporary no trespass order was issued after an incident during a children’s program. A parent came to a program with their child and the parent was intoxicated. Concerns from patrons and staff were raised about them driving with their child after the program. Marlborough police were called and assisted in finding a family member to take the child home.

**Programming**

The screening of the documentary “Drive to Sing” went well. Other programs in the Grice Community Room have been well received and patrons have come even during poor weather. A program about space presented by the Ecotarium was very well received with about 45 people in attendance. Virtual programming partnerships are seeing Marlborough residents attend as well. Director Belisle suspects this is due to increased interest in the Library and the ease at which the new calendar system allows patrons to see upcoming events and register.

In February, staff have plenty of programs booked for school vacation week along with our first movie showing in the Grice Community Room. Director Belisle reported that the Library has acquired a movie screening license for one year. Movie screenings are popular and she hopes to offer a screening at least once per month. The AARP Tax help will be at the Library every other Saturday starting February 10th until the end of March.

**Website Redesign**

The Finance Committee approved a transfer to allow for the City to move forward with a website redesign and upgrade project. Director Belisle has been discussing this with the Mayor's office to see how the Library website fits into the larger project. Based on samples given of other libraries that use this upgraded Civic Plus product, the change would be very positive. She discussed the need to have more control over the navigation menu and home page of the Library website and was assured that this upgraded product allows for that. Three departments: Senior Center, Parks and Recreation, and the Library will have an additional website within the system. Discussion is ongoing and Assistant Director Manzella will be involved as she has been the webmaster for the Library.

**New CWMars Catalog**

The new patron facing catalog for CW Mars (Aspen) has a target launch of March 4th. A team of 3 staff have been attending the admin training and started to work on customizing our scoped version of the catalog. All staff training is scheduled for February, prior to the launch. A trustee asked how this will affect patrons. Director Belisle said the new design is more intuitive and easier to navigate, but it will be a change from what patrons are used to seeing. The catalogue and interlibrary loan request will look different. The staff will be trained to assist patrons with the new interface. Director Belisle noted that Minuteman Library has switched to Aspen and she has not heard any many negative comments about it.

**Local History Room**

After the donor appreciation night, the Local History room will be available for patrons who need access to our historic collection for research or genealogy purposes. The room will remain locked and staff at the Information desk will be available to open the room for those researchers. Assistant Director Manzella is working on a policy for this space along with procedures for the staff at the desk.

A partnership has bloomed with the Marlborough Historical Society in regard to this space. They will have a rotating display of Marlborough history objects in the 2 display cases in the room. Their first display is Frye Boots. MHS will hold its next board meeting in the Library. In March, the Library is partnering with them to have an evening program with a historical reenactor. A trustee asked if MHS will have volunteer hours to keep the exhibit open. Director Belisle said MHS would like to do that. It has lost some members and is currently working to rebuild its membership.

To celebrate the opening of the room to the public the Library will hold an “open house” event where the room will be open and staffed so folks can explore the room. This along with 2 other upcoming programs about local history and the current art in the café focuses on indigenous people of the Marlborough area we will be sending out a “Celebrate Local History at the Library” eNewsletter in mid-February.

**Statistics:**

75 programs with 670 attendees

Study Room Reservations: 357

Door Count: 12,701

 Checkouts: 13,000+

1. **Friends of the Marlborough Library**

Chair Haas welcomed Alison Gontarz and Mary Ellen Klusacek, members of Friends of the Marlborough Library. Ms. Gontarz and Ms. Klusacek said they are working on getting the word out that the Friends is operational again and they want to recruit more members. They have an email address and are setting up a Facebook page. They have met with Director Belisle to discuss how they may support the Library and to find a way for patrons to get to the Friends’ Facebook page via the Library website. The Friends are working on a plan to collect donations to host a book sale.

A trustee suggested that a sign-up station for the Friends should be set up on Donor Appreciation Night. She will also send Ms. Gontarz and Ms. Klusacek an old membership list of the Friends. The trustees agreed that the Friends is re-starting at an opportune time when there is renewed community interest in the Library.

1. **Marlborough Public Library Foundation Report**

Deb Jakubowski Russ, the new president of the MPLF, informed the Board that 265 people are expected for Donor Appreciation Night on Feb. 10. The event will be 3 hours long and include food, music, and a scavenger hunt in the Library. The donor wall on the window and the donor signs will be up. The Foundation hopes to raise more funds at this event to close the gap in its goal.

Trustee Bloomquist reported that the MPLF will continue to fundraise when the major campaign is done. Future funds may be used for capital expenses, e.g. furniture. Trustee Merk reported that the MPLF has given $1 million to the City. The balance can be used towards future projects.

The Foundation initially received $100,000 earmarked funds from the Commonwealth, but the Governor has cut the earmarks to $50K. Going forward, the MPLF will approach businesses mostly for fundraising.

1. **Policy Subcommittee: Arts and Exhibits Policy**

The policy subcommittee submitted a new Arts and Exhibit Policy for the Board’s consideration. The Board also received the application form. Director Belisle said the current policy applies to the display case in the old building. The new policy will cover the café space. She said that the Library will not discriminate on what will be displayed. Access will be based on space availability. The policy reserves the right of the Library to view the art before it is displayed. The artist is responsible for mounting the work and for removing it. Director Belisle said she has received a lot of requests to display work in the café. Some blocks of time will be reserved for Marlborough schools to display student art.

A trustee asked if we have a limit on what can or cannot be displayed. Director Belisle said there are physical limits, i.e. dimensions of the space and weight for what the art rails can support. She hopes the space will generate enough interest to have a juried process to display art and to have rotating displays.

A trustee said the policy is silent on the amount of time work will be displayed. Is there an expectation of a particular period of time? Director Belisle said the displays would be up for at least one month, to allow adequate time for the community to view the work. The Library staff will work with an artist to plan an opening.

A trustee asked if anyone could apply to display their work. Director Belisle answered in the affirmative.

A motion to approve the policy was passed. (Merk/Rustin)

1. **Art Purchase Proposal**

Director Belisle received a proposal from Scott *Strong Hawk* Foster for the Library to purchase three of the artist’s photographs for the Library’s permanent collection. The Board received the artist’s proposal in the meeting packet. The artist’s work is on display in the Sudbury Library.

A trustee asked if the photographs on offer are the same as the ones in the Sudbury Library. Director Belisle thought they were. Another member asked if there are other photographs in the series and said it would be preferable to have photographs that are unique to the Marlborough Library. A trustee asked if we are required to purchase all three photographs and Director Belisle said we are not.

A discussion followed about art acquisition. If the Library is going to have a permanent collection, what is the intent behind it and how do we want to develop the collection? Assistant Director Manzella said the Library currently has watercolors, maps, architectural designs, and paintings of individuals important to Marlborough history. The Board generally agreed that acquisition should be planned and not on an ad hoc basis. Director Belisle said she will look for the current policy about art acceptance and send it to the Board. A trustee said with any acquisition, we should make sure we are not obliged to display the work in perpetuity.

Chair Haas said that the Library needs a guiding mission for acquisition, now that we have more space to display art and objects. We also need to know what additional steps or financial commitments are necessary to archive and protect acquired works.

With respect to the proposal under discussion, the Board agreed that Director Belisle would contact the artist to ask about other photographs that may be available. The artist will also be asked to provide captions for the works.

1. **1st Amendment Audits**

Director Belisle informed the Board that local libraries have been subject to First Amendment audits from members of the public. A trustee said the Marlborough Library had one a few years ago that was uneventful. Director Belisle said, in preparation for the new building, the staff had a training session about how to manage audits and took steps to secure the staff-only spaces. The auditors know that they are supposed to stay in the public spaces of the Library.

1. **Strategic Plan**

Director Belisle submitted the first draft of the community survey for the strategic plan. The survey asks respondents to rate the current Library services and provide input on other services they would like the Library to provide. The Director said she hopes to get community-wide engagement and will post the survey online and distribute it in the e-newsletter. Hard copies will be available in the Library and at local businesses. There was discussion of a City-wide mailing with a QR code. A trustee noted that Mayor Dumais is starting a monthly newsletter and might agree to distributing the link to the community. Another trustee said the survey, or the QR code, might be included in the quarterly water bills, which the DPW sends to the entire community.

Trustees gave their input for refinements to the survey questions. A trustee asked if the survey will also be available in Portuguese and Spanish. Director Belisle said it will.

Director Belisle said she will edit the survey and submit it to the Board for a second review for the March meeting.

1. **Old Business**

Per request of the Board, Director Belisle gave a report about IT support services. Currently the Library has 3 open IT tickets, down from 9 a few weeks ago. The current open IT items are on the vendor side, not the City IT side. There is a problem with the mobile printing and Director Belisle is talking to the vendor. The self-checkout stations are ready to go, but we need printers that are compatible w/the software. The Director is not satisfied with the vendor, TechLogic. There are problems with RFID pad and she has already planned to investigate an upgrade. The Library has the contract for 3 years and the City IT is on board with looking for something else.

There are remaining IT issues with the building. The electronic bulletin board is installed, but nobody has received training from IT yet. Some patrons use laptops on loan; 5 have been set up, 5 have not. Director Belisle is waiting for the new tech librarian to start and set up the laptops. The City IT prohibits the use of VPNs on their network. Director Belisle has not found documentation about libraries that do or do not allow this. IT says it is willing to work with patrons who want to use VPN, but the process they outlined is not feasible.

The Library staff had a shared Microsoft profile. IT pulled the plug on the shared profile with no warning to the Library staff. This slowed down services because the staff had to log on and off for the RFID, etc. Director Belisle was told that there is no workaround for a shared profile because IT wants to know who is logged in for security reasons.

Chair Haas said there is a tension between security and usability. A trustee said the IT City director has authority for security, but there is a problem when security restricts service. The Library has to be usable and accessible to the patrons. Director Belisle said there is no designated IT liaison for the Library who is knowledgeable about the Library’s systems and services. She hopes the new tech librarian will liaison with City IT. A trustee said that IT services are important to the strategic plan as well. Another trustee asked what the replacement schedule is for the Library IT. Director Belisle said she has not seen a schedule.

The Board agreed that the City IT director should be invited to a Board meeting to discuss Library services and the replacement schedule.

1. **New Business**

There was no new business.

1. **Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Khosla

Secretary

Marlborough Library Board of Trustees