

# Marlborough Public Library Board of Trustees

## Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2020

*Due to government orders prohibiting public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held online via City's Microsoft Teams.*

Meeting called to order by Tom Abel at 7:04pm

Board Members Present: Tom Abel, Fred Haas, Nena Bloomquist, Robyn Ripley, Janice Merk, Karen Bento, Rustin Kyle, Bill Brewin, Samantha Khosla

Also Present: Margaret Cardello, Library Director; Steven Kerrigan, Marlborough City Clerk; Wilson Chu, Marlborough Assistant City Clerk; Mark Gibbs, Marlborough IT Director

### Documents Reviewed/Referenced:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes from the March 3, 2020 meeting
3. Trust Fund/State Aid report for March 2020
4. Director's Report

### Proceedings:

1. **Minutes:** Nena Bloomquist pointed out a typo in the March 3, 2020 minutes. *With that correction, a motion (Bento/Bloomquist) to approve the meeting minutes from the March 3, 2020 meeting was passed via a roll call vote.*
2. **Trust Fund Reports:** *A motion (Bloomquist/Ripley) to approve the Trust Fund Reports for March 2020 was passed via a roll call vote.*
3. **Director's Report:** (see attached for more details)
  - Margaret shared that today was extremely difficult for the library staff, as 14 staff were laid off and 4 open positions were cut, leaving just seven employees, including Margaret, to manage all library functions. Some of the impacted individuals have been with the library since 1985. While devastated, staff members were gracious, and several said they would love to return to their positions. The employees were notified in writing that the layoff was permanent but that according to the MMEA contract they can be called back within two years.
  - Reopening the library with current staffing levels will be very problematic. Prior to the shutdown from the pandemic, the library was open to the public for 66 hours a week. The state would allow those hours to be reduced to as low as 53 (representing 90% of the state's required hours of operation) but that would

result in a 12% cut in the state aid appropriation.

- Margaret is very concerned about maintaining security and normal library operations for a city of this size with just a team of seven when the library is reopened. The staff has done an exemplary job of providing online services – bedtime story hours for children, crafts for all ages, e-book recommendations, fun and informative videos, and many others – but many of the people who have been preparing and presenting these programs have been laid off. Once the library reopens, Margaret anticipates a tremendous amount of pent-up demand for library services which will significantly strain the small team.
- In addition to the staffing challenges when the library reopens, Margaret has been exploring what changes need to be implemented to ensure the health of patrons and staff. Among the ideas being considered by leaders within the broader library community are limiting the number of people allowed into the library at any one time; installing plexiglass partitions between the staff and the public; and requiring the use of masks. The MBLC is developing guidelines for libraries, and Margaret also plans to confer closely with the City's Board of Health for recommendations.
- Margaret attended a webinar on state aid and certification on April 21. Libraries whose budgets have been cut will be able to apply for state certification waivers. If the waiver is approved, the City would need to formulate a plan for restoring the budget back to required levels.
- The Mayor approved a work at home/in library plan through May 1. Decisions to extend the plan are made weekly. There are three to five people working in the library each day, along with one library supervisor. Each staff member provides a daily report of his/her activity and hours worked. Margaret sends daily reports to the HR Director and weekly updates to the Mayor.
- In a new partnership with the Marlborough Senior Center, staff members have begun calling library patrons over the age of 60 to check in with them. Any needs they express are passed on to the senior center for follow-up. Initially, the staff is focusing on the library's home delivery patrons. Feedback has been very positive.
- Margaret provided several updates regarding the library renovation project:
  - The Building Committee met via Zoom on April 9 to review the architectural changes made based on public input. The design team was able to address the public's concerns regarding the entrances and the building committee approved the new design. An additional concern regarding parking may be addressed with the purchase of another parcel on Witherbee Street. The city is currently in negotiations with the property owners.

- Construction documents must be submitted to MBLC by January 7, 2021.

#### **4. Committee Reports:**

- Marlborough Public Library Foundation:
  - MPLF Chair Nena Bloomquist noted that fundraising activities have temporarily paused due to the pandemic.

#### **5. Old Business:**

- Trustee Scholarships:
  - There were 14 essays submitted for the MPL Board of Trustees College Scholarships, awarded each year to Marlborough residents graduating from a local high school. The board was very impressed with the quality of the submissions. *A motion (Bloomquist/Merk) to award the two \$1,000 scholarships to Chloe Wing from AMSA and Dinh Ton from MHS was approved on a roll call vote.*
  - Margaret will send a letter to each student notifying them of the award.

#### **6. New Business**

- There was no new business at this meeting.

#### **7. Adjournment:** *A motion (Ripley/Bloomquist) to adjourn was approved via roll call vote at 7:50pm.*

Minutes submitted by Janice Merk.