**Marlborough Public Library Board of Trustees**

**Meeting Minutes March 5, 2024**

**Meeting held at the Marlborough Public Library**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Fred Haas at 7:04 PM.

**Board Members attending:** Fred Haas, Tom Abel, William Brewin, Nena Bloomquist, Samantha Khosla, Janice Merk, Robyn Ripley

**Also attending:** Sara Belisle, Library Director; Morgan Manzella, Assistant Director; Kara Dzindolet, Head of Circulation

Documents Reviewed/Referenced: Minutes of Feb. 6 meeting, Trust Fund/State Aid Report, Director’s Report, draft of community survey

**Proceedings:**

1. **Minutes:** A motion to accept the minutes for the February 6, 2024 meeting was passed, with copy edits (Bloomquist, Ripley).
2. **Trust Funds/ State Aid Report:**

Director Belisle reported that microfilm for Main Street Journal was added to the collection. A library staff member was sent to a training course for mindfulness yoga for children. The Director has asked the City for funds for an upcoming conference hosted by the Massachusetts Library Association.

A motion to accept the trust fund/state aid report was passed. (Ripley/Abel)

1. **Staff Introduction:**

Kara Dzindolet, the new Head of Circulation & Technology, joined the meeting. Ms. Dzindolet previously worked in academic libraries and the library for the Town of Grafton. She is a resident of Marlborough and very excited to join the MPL. The Board asked about her experience in Grafton and what she would like to do in Marlborough. Ms. Dzindolet said she worked mostly in the adult section of the library and had started to offer drop-in art classes for adults. She would like to do something similar for MPL and also schedule presentations of adult interest, e.g. assisted living facilities, financial literacy, etc. Two more staff will join the circulation department this month. The Board thanked Ms. Dzindolet for her attendance.

1. **Director’s Report:**

Director Belisle informed the Board that the HVAC system has been repaired. The restrooms have had seven clogs in the drains, caused by paper towels. The bathrooms have been closed as a temporary measure until hand dryers are installed. This has happened in several bathrooms and the staff do not know who caused this. It is probably several people. This wasn’t a problem in the old building. A Board member asked if there is a problem with the system. Director Belisle said the restrooms have low-flow toilets and the pipes are longer. There is not enough water to push paper towels through. The overflow of water damaged some of the carpets.

Director Belise reported that construction work is complete. The staff had a nice sendoff for the construction manager.

A Board member asked if any people had been sleeping outside against the building at night. Director Belisle said residents of the shelter visit the library during the day, but nobody has been seen at night.

Director Belisle informed the Board that two new part-time circulation staff are starting next week. Arden Norian has prior public library experience and wants to pursue a MLS degree. Matthew Kocienda is a Marlborough resident with a good background of customer service experience. A candidate was selected for the open part-time children’s department assistant. Paperwork is currently going through HR and they will start later in March. The City Council passed two full-time positions and the pay raise for pages on February 26. The new positions should be posted next week.

Budget requests are due on Wednesday, March 6. Director Belisle will request a pay raise for the Assistant Director and the Part-Time Reference Librarian positions. This request was submitted last year, but it was cut. The Director will request more money for the Library Materials budget line to bring us as close as possible to the minimum spending required of the library to qualify for state aid. This will allow state aid to be used for more innovative services and programming. Lastly, she will request the Sunday stipend needed to be open on Sundays from September-June along with 4 additional part-time staff and 1 more full-time position. This full-time position would be for the Children’s Department with a focus on outreach. The overwhelming love of the new children’s room by Marlborough families has resulted in the current children’s staff stretched thin. Currently the department has 3.5 FTE. Staff from other departments fill in on nights and weekends. During certain times of the day, two staff are needed to manage the room, which is often not possible.

A Board member asked if the new full-time librarian would work on Sundays. Director Belisle said her goal is for every employee to work on a Sunday rotation.

The Board discussed the staffing for the Children’s Department. It would be good to provide data about room usage, staff time spent on children’s services, planning, programming, etc. Director Belisle said the layout of the Children’s Department is different from the old library, so it requires more staff than previously thought. She has to decline requests for library staff to visit schools, daycares and preschools, due to the shortage. Because the Marlborough schools no longer have libraries, the MPL serves the students. A Board member said the budget request could include a cost comparison that accounts for the number of librarians cut from the school budget when the elementary school libraries closed.

The Board asked how the budget process works with the new mayor. Director Belisle said she will meet with Mayor Dumais in March, and then she will meet with the Finance Committee. She is asking for a program outreach and support position for the Children’s Department and doesn’t require a MLS, just a BA. She reiterated that the library staff are asked to do a lot of work to support the schools. The school has a summer reading list that has not been updated since 2017. School staff are making good use of the library for tutoring services and the library staff engage with the school reading specialist.

The Board asked about the activity in the teen room. Director Belisle said the flow is not as demanding as the children’s room, but it absolutely has to have staff coverage. After school and weekends are busy. Program numbers have jumped dramatically since the move. Passive programs are picking up speed. One staff person is split between children and teen and really needs to be in the teen room. Director Belisle said the two positions that were approved – head of adult services/technology and programming and outreach librarian – focus on adult services.

Director Belisle said school vacation week was met with a surge of attendance to all youth programming. One children’s program saw 150 attendees. Saturday morning Yoga registration has been filling fast and the waitlist has capped as well. AARP Tax aid has been going well.

The new CW Mars Catalog launched on March 4 . All staff have been trained and the promotional material has been updated. The events calendar can be integrated into the catalog. Staff can add books to the Booklist for summer reading.

Assistant Director Manzella reported that the Local History Room Open House had a good turnout, with a number of Marlborough Historical Society (MHS) members. The room will be opened when someone wants to do research, otherwise it is locked. The MHS might partner with the library to offer programs, noting that the MHS is not permitted to charge admission or to solicit donations.

Director Belisle requested $2400 to renew the annual license fees for the RFID equipment. The motion was made and seconded to approve this request (Abel/Brewin) and unanimously approved by the Board.

Director Belisle reported February data for checkouts, room reservations and new patrons. Board members asked about the room reservation system and usage. Director Belisle said she has been accepting reservations and the online form should launch soon. She needs to get more information about after hours custodian services. She has been surprised by how many requests are coming in for early morning meetings, e.g. Chamber of Commerce, teacher training workshops, legislative breakfasts. If the meeting is after hours, it has to be held in the community room. The training room is not open for booking outside events yet.

For February, the MPL has seen more checkouts than ever on a monthly basis; 40% is e-materials. The library staff are supporting people in how to use e-materials. The new IT person will host training/information sessions for e-books and Libby. They will also provide one-to-one instructions. Director Belisle expects more requests for assistance in using digital services for e-books as CDs are phased out. A Board member asked if she expects checkouts of digital/physical resources to be even. She said she expects more physical checkouts over the summer. As digital resources become easier to access, the usage will increase. A Board member asked if more digital services will be streamed. Director Belisle said MPL uses Kanopy. She is looking at other services to see if the budget can support them. Hoopla is very popular. MPL cannot lend anything with Netflix.

A Board member asked how the conversational English language groups are working out. Director Belisle said three volunteers are at the library on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. When additional full-time staff are onboarded, she might hold a volunteer drive to get people in to do this consistently. She may also apply for a grant for ESL conversation and citizenship classes. She receives requests for Spanish and Portuguese conversation services and would like to find volunteers for that, too.

1. **Friends of the Marlborough Library:**

The Friends of the Marlborough Library will meet on March 20. They are looking for volunteers to collect donations for a future book sale.

1. **Marlborough Public Library Foundation:**

Donor Appreciation Night on February 10 was a success, with 77% of the registrants attending, plus some walk-ins. Total attendance was 235 people. The MPLF will meet later this month to discuss next steps.

1. **Strategic Plan:**

Director Belisle provided the second draft of the community survey to the Board in the meeting packet. The Board requested a few minor edits. Director Belisle will launch the digital survey in April, dates tbd. The survey will be live for two or three weeks. A Board member asked if it can be linked to Mayor Dumais’s website. Director Belisle said he has a monthly newsletter and it can probably be included. The Board suggested advertising the survey on Facebook and posting a QR code with local businesses.

1. **Old Business:**

A Board member asked about the art exhibition policy. Director Belisle created a webpage to provide instructions for members of the community to show their art in the library. She reviewed old policies to see if there is any guidance for purchasing art. SHe is not sure if we have any policies on this matter. Assistant Director Manzella said she is pulling information for what is currently in the library collection and will report back later.

1. **New Business:**

There was no new business.

1. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Khosla

Secretary

Marlborough Library Board of Trustees