

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTES
April 13, 2022

Fitchburg Public Library
610 Main St. Fitchburg MA, 01420

Trustees present were: Chair Matthew Bruun, Robert Favini, Mary Rice Hurley, Joanne Huse, Cynthia Jones, Jacalyn Kremer and Jim Walsh. Director Sharon Bernard and Assistant Director Jean Tenander were also present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order 6:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of March 9, 16, 18, and 23, 2022

The minutes of the four meetings were accepted with corrections to those March 16 and 18.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Rob Favini attended a United for Libraries meeting the topic of which was intellectual freedom in libraries. He said he thought Fitchburg was reasonably well prepared for challenges to material in our collection.

Director Bernard attended a United for Libraries breakfast meeting and heard stories of organized protestors across the country attending Trustee meetings and demanding items be removed. MBLC has adopted a good statement regarding such challenges.

The New York Public has made free e-books available for the month of May to anyone over age 12 in the country. Brooklyn Public Library is doing the same for teens.

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Director Bernard met with the Mayor on March 21 to discuss moving forward with the building project. She said she wanted to let the Mayor know that the move to another location should be sooner rather than later. She would like to begin the steps toward asking the full City Council to approve the entire building program.

It is much easier and more efficient for a contractor to work with an empty building and thus be able to see exactly what issues will have to be considered in the renovation. Once the City Council has given its approval, the RFP can be posted and the design process can continue. She has been working with Jeff Hoover, the Tappé architect, to take into consideration the parking space behind the library which can now be part of the ultimate design.

The Director said we could raise money for the building project with an on line auction of art and other items that would not be needed in the new building. The architect has asked her what elements of the current building should be incorporated into the renovated one such as the frieze around the Youth Library building, the owl decorations, and the stained glass city seal.

There was a discussion of the cost of the move to a temporary location.

The Director said she believed receiving the ARPA money meant that there was no longer the need to set up a new foundation as we will not have to use the new market tax credits. She thinks working with the Community Foundation will suit the needs we have, however, it will still be necessary to have a Foundation Advisory Board. Fund raisers can put money for the Library into the Community Foundation whereas the Trustees cannot. A trustee or two can be on the Board as advisors and as liaisons to the Library. Four or five members would be appropriate. The Director said she would like to take an active part on the Foundation.

Rob Favini said he is thinking of resigning from the Trustees and devoting his attention to the Building Foundation. He said he thought it might be awkward for the new Director to have to seek advice from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners if he were still a Trustee.

There followed a discussion of what the relationship between the Board and the Director should be. The new Director will want to know what the Trustees expect from her and also what she can expect from the Trustees. This would be a good time to peruse the Trustee manual and develop a clear idea of what the expectations should be from each side.

Chair Bruun said he would have a conversation about this discussion with Deborah Hinkle. He will write a press release about the Deborah Hinkle's appointment. Director Bernard's last day will be May 16.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee—Joanne Huse reported the committee had met with Jim Hohman from First Financial Trust before the Trustee's meeting. She said the funds were slightly down from last year but that the overall picture is positive. She distributed copies of the most recent financial report.

Legislative Committee—Rob Favini reported that the House had funded the entire Library budget for next year and had even added to the administrative line.

New Director Search Committee—The search for a new director has been completed.

Building Committee—Matters relating to the new building program has been covered earlier in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Joanne Huse made a motion for the Trustees to accept the Annual Reports from 2015-2022. The motion was unanimously accepted.

The Trustees thanked Mary Rice Hurley for ordering various food deliveries to the Library staff during National Library Week.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Jean Tenander for
Cynthia Jones