

POLLARD MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD of TRUSTEES  
MINUTES

The meeting took place on January 4, 2023, as a hybrid meeting, both in person and via Zoom. We had no virtual participants as all members were able to attend in person.

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Donna Richards, Chair, at 5:34 pm.

Attendance:

Present:

Steve Robichaud, Library Director  
Donna Richards, Chair  
Katy Aronoff, Vice Chair  
Judith Davidson, Secretary  
Helen Littlefield  
Muriel Parseghian  
Amy Watson

Guests:

Belinda Juran  
Christine O'Connor

Excused:

Suzanne Frechette

➤ Acceptance of / Amendment to Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Judy Davidson and seconded by Helen Littlefield.

➤ Acceptance of Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2022

The meeting minutes were unanimously accepted on a motion by Muriel Parseghian and seconded by Katy Aronoff.

➤ Vote for Board Officers

Donna Richards, Chair, presented the issue: At the December meeting Katy Aronoff, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate for consideration to fill 1-year terms as Board Officers. Donna Richards, Chair, Katy Aronoff, Vice Chair, and Judy Davidson, Secretary

The slate of officers was accepted on a motion made by Helen Littlefield and seconded by Muriel Parseghian. All in attendance were in favor.

A question was raised by Steven Robichaud: Is the Library Director a voting member of the Trustees? The answer is no.

➤ Update on PML Trustee Board Vacancies

The Chair, Donna Richards, reported on the board vacancies. Three board members have requested reinstatement: Donna Richards, Helen Littlefield, and Muriel Parseghian. The two associate members on the board (Amy Watson and Judy Davidson) have applied for the full-board memberships that are currently vacant. In addition, a former trustee has applied for a vacant full-board membership. This means that the board is recruiting for two (2) Associate Board members.

Neither the Library Director nor the Chair of the Trustees have had word yet from the City Manager or the Director of the Health and Human Services Department regarding the appointment of the Trustees. Discussion ensued on this issue and the process of selection and appointment of trustees.

➤ Cultural Facilities Grant from the Mass Cultural Council

Director Robichaud will be attending the online informational session about this grant on January 12, 2022. The application deadline is February 2, 2023.

Associate Trustee, Amy Watson, has worked with this agency and on development of two successful grants submitted to this grant program and she is glad to answer any questions.

➤ Review **GUIDELINES for MANAGEMENT of LIBRARY POLICIES for TRUSTEES**

Steve Robichaud and Judy Davidson met on 11/29/22 to discuss the policy initiative the Trustees had embarked upon before he came on board.

Chair, Richards, pointed out that the Trustees had received the revised DRAFT v3 **GUIDELINES for MANAGEMENT of LIBRARY POLICIES for TRUSTEES** with updates discussed at the December meeting.

Director Robichaud informed Trustees he had shared this document with the Library Coordinators group, and they agreed with the process it described. Comments from the Coordinators group included: Make all policies as inclusive as possible and make sure they can be enforced. Each policy needs to be clear for all patrons. Their recommendation is that each policy should be under one page.

A Discussion ensued among the Trustees that raised these questions; are current policies enforceable? How are staff informed of the policies? It was noted that a value of the new guidelines is that input from library staff is now built into the process. The new guidelines also provide timelines for review. There is now input from the staff. It was pointed out that these are guidelines...not a policy. Davidson reminded the Trustees of how the document developed from earlier discussions.

Robichaud reported that, as had been discussed at the December Trustees meeting, we will be using the recently revised Materials Selection Policy as a test case for the guidelines.

More discussion about the policies followed. Trustees are concerned that there needs to be a revised meeting room policy, as well as a policy for use of the general public space for private events like weddings, and a policy for use of the study rooms (which has previously been subsumed under the meeting room policy).

On the computer screen, Richards showed a memo in which policies are currently under revision and at what stage. She will include this as an email attachment to the trustees.

➤ Update on outside signage for the Library

Both Director Robichaud and Trustee Helen Littlefield have been trying to contact Steve Stowell of the Lowell Historic Board, who has been out of the office for personal reasons, so there is no update on planning the meeting with him to discuss the outdoor sign for the Library. Littlefield will take the lead on trying again to reach him. The trustees discussed the purpose of the meeting they would like to have with Stowell (to review the building and grounds and to get suggestions for the process with the historical board), as well as who should be at the meeting (Steve Robichaud, Helen Littlefield, Donna Richards, and a member from the library staff Welcome committee).

➤ Update on Strategic Plan – Team Reports

Richard explains she did not ask for an update from anyone this time as the Trustee and staff vacancies make this problematic right now.

Richards informs the group she plans to formally request a SPOT TEAM Meeting to review committee assignments and lists of what each team accomplished during YEAR 1. (SPOT Team is the oversight committee for the Strategic planning effort undertaken by the library).

Richards will share the current committee assignments and vacancies before the next meeting, to allow for review and decisions at the next meeting.

➤ First Annual Report of the PML

We reviewed the very First Annual report on the library, noting the exceptional photographs of the library provided by Tony Sampas. Richards points out how each one of the departments are highlighted on a page. There is a strong emphasis in the text on easily digestible visualizations that share data about PML. Also included in the report is information on the strategic plan and the ways PML meets its MAR commitment (to join the larger network of the Commonwealth) and the benefits this provides library users. The report closes with a Thank you to City leadership and library staff.

The report has been posted on the PML website. It is currently at the printer. Plans are that City council, city administration, and community partners will all get copies. The committee responsible for the Annual Report is considering ways to present the material within the library to users.

➤ Chairperson's Report

Meet and Greet for new Library Director

Chair Richards announces that a community event to meet and greet the new Director is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 – 5:30PM**. This event will be sponsored by the Trustees. Richards will contact Melanie Gilbert to mention in the *5-Minute Read* of the Sun. Bridget Cooley will send out the notice in the PML January 11<sup>th</sup> newsletter.

Publicity targeted to individuals will be in the form of an invitation from the Trustees. Richards will draft the invitation.

There is discussion of who should receive the invitations. Trustees suggest they should be sent to the Directors of Area Non-Profits. Sue Murphy in Development Department—use her extensive list of contacts. City Clerk, Michael Geary, also has an extensive distribution list for the Council Mtg agenda. There will be refreshments. The group considers having a library card station in the community room for those who come.

Repository for library documents for the trustees

At the December Trustee's meeting there was discussion of how we could make better use of technology to store and share documents. The last library director, Victoria Woodley, had set up a google drive folder in which to store documents for the trustees to access. Trustees had hoped to have a shared online working space but after discussion realized that this could violate the Commonwealth Open Meeting Laws. Until other options open, the Trustees will use the google area already created for storing static documents and refrain from working in shared documents. Robichaud will check with other area libraries on the process they are using to see if there are other models available.

➤ Old Business

Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Organizations

"Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Organizations offers unrestricted grants ranging from \$5,000-\$75,000 to Massachusetts cultural organizations, collectives, and businesses negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic."

The library submitted a proposal to this program in September. Award decisions will be released in late January 2023.

➤ Director's Report:

Robichaud highlighted the key points described in his report, which had been sent to the Trustees. These included

- Facility issues regarding lighting.
- Elevator status.
- Assistant Director's resignation. 1/13/22 last day.
- Hiring of a new part-time administrative assistant and new full-time IT support person. The part-time administrative assistant is being trained by the Assistant Director on day-to-day work processes.
- There was discussion of the hiring of the part-time reference librarian and issues regarding the very low pay assigned to the position. The Trustees were pleased no staff are now below minimum wage but continue to be concerned PML salaries are lower than similar salaries in our region. PML salaries are not competitive, and this leads to loss of employees and/or the failure to attract excellent staff. The group discusses doing an internal wage and classification study on library staff to learn how we compare with other area libraries. Questions that arose included: Who should trustees take this information to? Can we present this during the budgeting process? What about the MBLC--do they have salary information? A suggestion is made to compare just 3-5 positions that everyone has at most libraries. There is a discussion of how comparisons were made in earlier studies which examined other local libraries, Gateway cities, and libraries we have lost staff to.
- 2 part-time custodians have been selected. In this round, applicants were not required to have a HS diploma or GED. There was just a basic requirement for literacy competence and basic math.
- Progress on the Book mobile included meeting with Applied Graphics Limited on the 50% wrap. Book mobile position descriptions are being developed to be posted soon.
- Programming highlights were described.
- This month there is a big drop in incident reports.

➤ Foundation Committee Report

The Foundation Committee will not be meeting until 1/18/23, so there is no report from that group.

➤ Friends of the Library Committee Report

The report was presented by Helen Littlefield:

- The Book Sale has been tentatively set for the first weekend in May and they are in the process of clearing the date with Bridget Cooley (Community Librarian).
- Lynn Ahern developed a list of activities Friends participated in over the last year.
- Their next meeting is 2/7 at 6:00 pm.

➤ New Business

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments: Request for Project Proposals

There is an informational meeting planned for Friday, January 6 at 9:00 am. Richards and Robichaud will try to attend. The group discusses who in city government might have membership on or information about this grant program. Dan Rourke is the representative for the Lowell City Council; Jerry Frechette of the Zoning Commission is also a representative to the group.

➤ Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 PM on a motion by Helen Littlefield and seconded by Donna Richards. All in attendance were in favor.
- Our next meeting is Wednesday, **FEBRUARY 1, 2023**.