

# Pollard Memorial Board of Trustees – Meeting Minutes

The meeting took place on February 1, 2023, as a hybrid meeting, both in person and via Zoom.

## Opening Business

### Attendance

#### Present:

Steve Robichaud  
Donna Richards, Chair  
Judith Davidson, Secretary  
Suzanne Frechette  
Helen Littlefield  
Muriel Parseghian  
Amy Watson

#### Excused:

Katy Aronoff, Vice Chair

#### Guest(s):

Christine O'Connor

### Meeting call to order

Meeting was called to order by Donna Richards at 5:37 pm.

### Acceptance of / Amendment to Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Judy Davidson and seconded by Suzanne Frechette.

### Prior Meeting Minutes approval

The meeting minutes from *January 4, 2023* were unanimously accepted (with one abstention) on a motion by Donna Richards and seconded by Helen Littlefield.

## Current Business

### Update on Board Vacancies

Richards has reached out again to the City Manager's office about this issue, but there is no update.

### Update on Strategic Plan

#### Distribution of the Annual Report

Richards shared copies of the first ever Annual Report distributed by PML. It is a product of the Strategic Plan Advocacy Team. The Trustees were impressed with the design and the photos. Richards explained it can also be found in a pdf format on the PML web site. She hopes that they will be able to get photos of all staff members for the next report. She also mentions that the program coordinators provided wording to describe the specific programs.

The annual report was developed in part to answer the staff concern that "nobody knows what we do at the library". The photo from the Trustees was taken at the Legislative breakfast and includes a member from each group (Trustees, Friends, and Foundation).

In the discussion someone asks if key parts of the annual report might be made into a poster that could be placed in various organizations around the city, such as Lala Books, Boys and Girls Club, Y, senior center, and other locations. Donna Richards will bring this suggestion to the Advocacy group.

## Permission(s) for Filming and Photography

Donna Richards raised the issue of the permission forms submitted to Trustees for feedback. There are two: 1) general form; 2) commercial form. Librarians are concerned that so many people have phones with cameras and librarians can't police this. PML has nothing posted, and we have no policy to point patrons/and or photographers to. Steve Robichaud explained that the staff person who brought this concern to him is concerned about people taking photographs of PML artwork and making a profit—how can we protect these materials?

A discussion followed that included the following comments. Suzanne Frechette suggested a statement noting “For personal use only...” and/or “Regardless if you are an amateur or not, you cannot use this for commercial purposes.”

Donna Richards called for internal signage that would look professional.

Judy Davidson shared a model for a photography/recording policy from the Hartford, Connecticut library and it was agreed this addressed many of the issues Trustees and PML staff were concerned about. The Governance Committee will use this as the starting point for development of a PML policy on this topic, also incorporating the two forms created by PML library staff. Per the policy process instituted by PML trustees, once the Governance Committee has completed drafting the policy, it will be forwarded to the Library Director for internal discussion and comment.

## Update on outside signage for the Library

Steve Robichaud reported on his conversation with Peter Crewe in the Lowell City government who said that sign approval will ultimately be up to Steve Stowell of the Historic Commission. Crewe also raised issues about getting the sign installed because of a long backlog in that office.

Donna Richards had spoken with Owl Stamp in regard to a banner. Their company can do printing, design, and installation of a banner. There was discussion of the timeline and how long work is currently taking.

Before speaking with Peter Crewe, Steve and Donna had spoken with Steve Stowell about some of the signage design ideas. Steve Stowell had promised to talk with people he knows who can make the metal lettering that will not damage the building.

Questions were raised about who will have the ability to make the final approval for the sign, how to build on the current branding as much as possible, and how would the sign be funded. Steve Robichaud assured the group that the Library can fund the banner itself. Richards stated, “we don't know the cost of the more expensive metal letters.”

Two other funding sources were discussed: 1) the Lowell city government; and 2) the Davis Trust.

Donna Richards described the layers of signage under development now: 1) a banner; 2) a permanently installed sign on the building; and, 3) the Colburn Street Bulletin board. Steve Robichaud shared examples of an outdoor/weather protected standing bulletin board from library catalogs. They started at a little over \$1,400.00 for one. Steve and/or Donna will ask Steve Stowell his thoughts about getting approval for this design.

## Reports

### Chairperson's Report

1. Donna Richards reviewed the vacancies for Trustee Committees—There are 5 open positions on committees due to two Trustees leaving the Board. There is one position open within the Strategic

Plan Committees. Steve Robichaud noted that Liz and Doug from the Culture committee (a Strategic Plan Committee) are promising something will be coming out soon. Richards asks everyone to review their committee appointments and feel free to ask to change committee placements if you think you can do better service in another position. Send her your requests.

2. Mimi Parseghian raised the issue of organizing another outreach meeting, such as was held last year for city counselors and other politicians. She mentions that we now have a template for preparing an advocacy meeting with the city council or others that would make it easier to undertake.
3. Library Legislative Day will be returning to the State House on Wednesday March 15, 2023. This is in-person at the State House. (It has been virtual for the last few years). Suzanne Frechette described how it would work for those who had not attended one before. So far, Judy, Mimi, Steve, and Amy, are planning to go. Plans for the trip to Beacon Hill will be finalized at the next Trustee meeting. <https://www.mblclegislativeagenda.com/> .
4. Donna Richards stated that it had been suggested to her that PML Trustees host a legislative breakfast through the regional ALA offices. Group members spoke positively about undertaking this activity. (Members of the PML trustees attended the last area legislative breakfast, which was hosted by the Littleton Public Library.)
5. Richards reminded the group about upcoming professional development for trustees available from the MLA.
  - a. Library Meeting Spaces on *Tuesday, February 7 at 2PM EST*  
[More Information & Registration](#)
  - b. Library Meeting Spaces on *Tuesday, February 7 at 6PM EST*  
[More Information & Registration](#)
  - c. Library Collections on *Tuesday, February 28 at 2PM EST*  
[More Information & Registration](#)
  - d. Library Collections on *Wednesday, March 1 at 6PM EST*  
[More Information & Registration](#)

These webinars will provide information on the constitutional framework courts use to determine the constitutionality of a government regulation. Library Meeting Spaces will focus on library cases involving the use of meeting rooms by patrons. Library Collections will focus on the extant law relating to content objections in libraries, both physical and online collections, and the immunity for online content when the library is a qualifying service provider under federal law.

For staff, “Crisis Communication” is a training offered in March through the MBLC for Librarians and Trustees. It seems appropriate to have members of staff attend.

6. At the January trustee’s meeting a concern was raised regarding PML salaries being 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. Richards stated she had started a wage comparison using data from MBLC focusing on 3-5 positions that everyone has at most libraries.

## Committee Reports

### Governance Committee

*(Although this is a Trustee committee, Steve Robichaud was asked to make the report on the progress of the initiative as much of the recent work has been conducted by the Library staff.)*

1. **Materials Selection/Collection Development policy** is in the hands of library staff and their review process is underway. Once that is complete, the policy with changes, suggestions, and questions comes back to the Governance Committee for revision and sharing with Trustees again. In addition, the Governance Committee created a new policy (**Request for Reconsideration Policy**) which was submitted to the Library Director, and this is currently under discussion by Library staff in tandem with the revised Materials Selection Policy. Robichaud reports that PML staff are in the process of reviewing the two policies and plan to meet on 2/8/23 during the regular

director/coordinator's meeting. Once they have finalized their review, the revised policies with comments will be sent back to the Governance Committee for revision and submission to the full Board of Trustees for formal comment and discussion.

Robichaud said he has also requested that a third policy be developed to complement the two currently under review—This would be the "**Public Comment Policy**". The Governance Committee agreed and will make this the next priority to develop for library staff to review. In preparation for doing so, Robichaud sent policy exemplars to the Governance Committee to use in developing a first draft, which will then be started down the policy processing path.

2. His report led to discussion of the meaning of "public comment" as used in the library community. Robichaud explained to the trustees that this is not like "public comment" as used for federal laws. Instead "public comment" is the time when members of the public can come before the PML board and provide comments on any topic of interest to them regarding the library. The policy tells how the public can participate, describing the parameters, as well as providing parameters or boundaries for the trustees. A question was asked as to whether someone who was challenging the presence of a book in the library would be provided with an opportunity for public comment? Another question referred to patrons who have been barred from the library and who must go before the trustees to regain their privileges—would this be considered public comment?
3. Finally, the Governance Committee has sent the following revised policies to the Director for rolling out to library staff for review as appropriate:
  - **User Behavior Policy**
  - **Internet and Computer Use Policy**
  - **Meeting Room Policy**
  - **Child Safety Policy** (formerly the Unattended Child Policy)

#### Art Committee (Amy Watson/Donna Richards)

Donna Richards provided the following background information on the request that has been made:

On January 27, 2023 Bridget Cooley requested funding from the Davis Fund (estimated \$1,000) to have a professional photographer, Kevin Harkins (possibly), photograph artwork below:

- Frederick Stickney (first floor by circ office)
- John and Elizabeth Davis (first floor in the old AV section – now over our graphic novel collection)
- Oliver Howe Moulton (large portrait in the Director's Office)
- If possible, also capture an updated photo of the Rialto since it was refurbished.

These photographs will be used as part of a community-wide historical event to be held at the Lowell Cemetery. B. Cooley will also be participating in the event.

Amy Watson asks if the photographer could also take photographs of other artworks or PML architecture for use in the art brochure and/or the next annual report. Several important PML works have been refurbished since the release of the art brochure and getting new photos of them is important.

Richards stated that there is approximately \$78,000 in the Davis fund.

Discussion: It was suggested these questions be raised with the proposed photographer. Trustees also offered the names of other photographers in the area who might be available and do good work. Richards took names to share with Cooley and to consider getting bids.

She noted that the original request was for photographs of four portraits, and we don't know yet how many other photographs we would like to get (if we expand the task). Richards will take the questions to Cooley for a full discussion of these issues.

It was suggested that the Library Director call the City Legal office to get started on making the request for the money from the Davis Foundation. To use this fund, the request has to go to the city and there will need to be a minimum number of bids to be considered.

The discussion progresses to consideration of creating a little booklet on PML, filled with these and other photographs. Trustees discuss what this might cost and who might be able to assist us in thinking through the process. There is also discussion of how we could do more around the art brochure if the photos are updated. Could this be a cultural council grant for a print and auditory material?

The suggestion is made that we could also use photos of iconic pieces of the building on PML T-shirts (for sale?)

This led to discussion of use of the updated brochure to anchor self-guided tours of the building and its art work. There are software apps or QR code possibilities that could be incorporated. This might be the kind of thing that could be funded by the Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF).

This leads into discussion of the three grant programs offered by the GLCF that will be taking applications soon:

One of the program areas focuses on equity; At the recent Meet-and-Greet for the Library Director, a community member attended who was hoping we offered language/translation technologies to support different communities. This might be a good choice for this grant area.

LeClair Elder Services is another grant program, and improving the technology in the branch library at the senior center would be a possibility for a grant submission.

Finally there is a program area that focuses on services for young people.

The description and forms can be found on the website for GLCF.

In tandem with this discussion, Steve Robichaud reported that he and Doug Cooper, Technical Services Coordinator, just visited the Senior Center, met the new director, discussed the facilities and the upcoming workshops.

## Director's Report

Steve Robichaud prepared the February Director's Report and distributed to trustees via email.

HVAC has been working in the library throughout January. They are trying to equal out temperatures across the building.

Staff also found an active water leak that was coming from the roof. It has now stopped but DPW will look more closely and figure out how to fix it.

The Assistant Library Director position was advertised internally and there are two internal candidates who will be interviewed.

Pam Colt, the part-time Reference Librarian started last week, and has been filling in on the reference desk—days and evenings.

The 2 part-time custodian applicants did not work out—they never completed the required physical exam. These positions will have to be reposted. The positions are for afternoons and evenings.

Plans for the Book Mobile are going very well. Library staff met with the design firm and reviewed 3 renderings that were then merged to get the final approved design. This is for the 50% wrap around the van. We could also use some of the branding from this design on other projects.

Molly Hancock, Youth Services Coordinator, received a grant for \$575.00 from Lowell Cultural Council that will allow her to present a program titled “Children’s Songs and Singing Games Family Concert.”

PML has been awarded a \$75,000 Cultural Sector Recovery Grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The grant application was submitted by Dory Lewis, former PML Acting Director. Robichaud will contact the Massachusetts Cultural Council to become the new contact person and to create a new log-in for the PML account that has now been established with them. He will also work with the city administration to secure the City Council vote for acceptance of the grant.

Robichaud was very pleased to announce that incidents in the library had decreased significantly over the last month.

Last Saturday, an advocate for the homeless in Lowell, with a public access TV show, using social media had asked the public to meet at the library to discuss homeless removal without first checking with the library and reserving a space. Steve Robichaud reached out to learn more and was able to schedule the Community Meeting Room for him. Robichaud also met with him on Saturday. In the end there was no photography or recording, and this individual had two hours of conversation with several individuals from the homeless community. The Trustees praised Robichaud’s actions, the way he treated the individual with respect and allowed the conversation to take place.

The Library Director must get budget spreadsheets in soon for the annual Council review.

### [PML Foundation](#)

Donna Richards, representative to the PML Foundation provided this report:

1. Meeting was held on January 18, 2023.
2. The financial plans for FY23 were discussed and approved.
3. Lauren Belfer has been contracted to speak at the annual fundraiser, Author Night. The date is May 4<sup>th</sup> (which is Star Wars Day).
4. The next meeting is March 15, 2023.

### [Friends of the PML](#)

Helen Littlefield, representative to the Friends of PML stated that: 1) the next meeting of the Friends’ Board is 2/2/23 at 6:00 pm in the Library Director’s Office; and 2) this Saturday (2/4) LaLa Books is having a benefit for the library (10 am to 8 pm). The profit from all used book sales will go to the Friends of the Library.

### [Old Business](#)

None.

### [New Business](#)

Mimi Parseghian raised an issue: Her Strategic Plan committee had presented a list of swag they wished to purchase to the PML Foundation. It was some time ago, but they have gotten no feedback. She will send the list to Donna Richards who will find out how to get this moving.

Steve brought up the Audubon Print issues, which were raised in his discussions at the Senior Center. Steve has found old files on the Audubon prints—but found no plan for circulating them through the building and to other places.

### [Adjournment](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 PM on a motion by Donna Richards and seconded by Suzanne Frechette. All in attendance were in favor.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, **MARCH 1, 2023**.