Approved March 26, 2025

Dunstable Public Library Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2025

Location: Virtual Meeting
Meeting held on Teams due to technical issues accessing original Zoom link.
Meeting summarized using an AI Meeting Summarizer, reviewed and edited by Amy Watson.

Attendees:

- Maureen Strauss (Director)
- Amy Watson (Trustee & Chair, elected during meeting)
- Jayne Barnes (Trustee)
- Robyn DeAngelis (Trustee)

Introduction

- The meeting commenced with Maureen Strauss calling it to order after confirming the presence of all attendees. The primary focus was to discuss various updates, including policies, budget considerations, and community engagement.

Key Discussion Points

Chair and Policy Review

- Chair Appointment: Amy Watson was elected as the new chair, with a commitment to assist in taking minutes and guiding future meetings.
- Policy Review Proposal: Maureen proposed reviewing one policy per meeting to ensure thorough understanding and updates. The group agreed to receive policies a week in advance for review. The group will also review a proposed Staff Handbook, to be based on one generously shared by the Dracut Public Library.

Budget and Advocacy

- Budget Preparation: Discussion on preparing for the upcoming budget season, with emphasis on advocacy for the library's funding. Trustees commented on the impressive year over year increase in circulation metrics, as shared in the Library's 2024 Annual Report. Amy suggested creating a one-pager highlighting library usage statistics and the risks of under-funding to present to the Advisory Board.
- Community Engagement: The importance of community involvement and potential outreach to local businesses for support was discussed.

Library Updates

- Architect: Maureen will meet with an architect who has been hired to discuss improvements for the library; estimate is ~$6,000, to come from earmarked state funds.

- HVAC Issues: Maureen reported ongoing HVAC problems, with only two of four boilers operational. The children's room has dropped below 60 degrees at times. Trustees also discussed the further potential risks to the building, such as frozen pipes, which could cause additional damage if this is not addressed. She is seeking quotes for a complete system replacement, which is estimated to be over $100,000. Unfortunately this capital improvement project has likely been pushed to 2028.
- Lighting: An exterior lantern has fallen off a post. While it poses no immediate risk to safety, Maureen received comments from a patron. She's spoken with an electrician who will provide a quote to repair or replace the broken lamp.
- Snow/Ice removal: The library has experienced some issues with the current vendor responsible for clearing snow and ice from sidewalks in a timely manner. The staff have needed to shovel or apply ice-melt and have received complaints about unsafe conditions.
- Staff Appreciation: Maureen proposed purchasing fleece coats for staff to enhance their professional appearance and comfort due the the ongoing HVAC challenges.

Community Programs & Collection Development

- Upcoming Events: The library is planning various community programs, including a herbal tea event and children's Valentine programs. Maureen emphasized the need for consistent programming to engage the community.
- Large Print: Maureen was able to purchase additional copies of large print books during a recent sale. These materials are very popular but usually expensive.

Historical Recognition

- Perry Family Recognition: A patron inquired about recognizing Harold and Bess Perry, who donated the land for the library. Maureen plans to purchase a plaque if no existing recognition is found.

Action Items

1. Policy Distribution: Maureen to send policies one week prior to meetings for review. The first policy to review will be collection development.
2. Budget Advocacy: Amy to compile library usage statistics and prepare a one-pager for the Advisory Board. She will also follow up with Maureen and Jason Silva to discuss the best format and timeline to share.
3. HVAC Quotes: Maureen to obtain quotes for HVAC replacement and explore funding options (grants, donations, etc.).
4. Staff Coats: Maureen to finalize the purchase of fleece coats for staff. Jayne will look into local businesses that offer embroidery services.
5. Historical Plaque: Maureen to investigate existing recognition for the Perry family and consider purchasing a plaque if necessary.

Conclusion

- The meeting concluded with a positive outlook on community engagement and advocacy efforts for the library. The next steps involve following up on action items and preparing for the upcoming budget discussions.