



Library Board of Trustees
Donna Montgomery, Chair
George Michalec, Vice-Chair
Sarah Begg
Marguerite Cummings
John Hall
Sheri McLeish

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Clayton Cheever, Library Director

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
Minutes of March 12, 2024 Meeting

Trustees: Donna Montgomery, Chair; George Michalec, Vice-Chair; Sarah Begg; Marguerite Cummings; John Hall; Sheri McLeish
Director: Clayton Cheever
Assistant Director: Lydia Sampson (absent)
Staff representatives present: Liz Reed, Michael Roderick
Recording Secretary: Casey Argyrou

Donna Montgomery called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. The meeting was held in person in the Library's Simoni Room.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A motion was made and seconded (McLeish/Hall) to accept both the February and March consent agendas (inclement weather caused the cancellation of the February meeting). The February consent agenda included minutes from the January 9 meeting of the Board. The motion passed unanimously by a showing of hands.
- FINANCIAL REPORT: Current FY24 Budget Status, Special Funds Report, Incidentals Report, and Revolving Fund Status
- DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director's Advocacy/Marketing Report; Assistant Director Activities; Facilities Update; Departmental Reports; Publicity and News Releases

WELCOME AND INVITATION TO SPEAK

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Michael Roderick joined the Board for his first meeting as Head of Borrower Services and Reader's Advisory. Prior to joining the staff in December, Michael worked at Cohasset Public Library and the Dimond Library in Durham, New Hampshire. In his short time on staff, he has worked to create an accessibility station at the Circulation desk, curated a new DVD display so patrons can easily find new releases, and overseen 146 new library card sign-ups. Michael has also joined the tech help team where he has been doing one-on-one technology help appointments both at the library and offsite at the Norwood Senior Center. He noted that his next challenge will be taking on the Museum Pass Program and hopefully increasing the library's offerings. Over the very busy February school break, there were nearly 80 requests for museum passes that were unable to be filled due to high demand. Michael hopes in the future that the library can offer passes for more establishments, and where possible, purchase more passes to popular destinations. Additionally, he is

working with Technology Librarian James Perlman to update the Assabet booking settings to allow for patrons outside of Norwood to reserve passes online.

Michael's other focus is Reader's Advisory. He aims to ensure that every visitor leaves with an item they are happy with and excited for, even if it's not necessarily what they initially wanted. John Hall asked for more information about what readers' advisory looks like. Michael explained that reader's advisory is the process of finding similar titles based on themes, genre or author. Staff may suggest titles to a patron directly, or they will create displays with items that share a common theme, be it a holiday, current event, author spotlight, etc. Michael has been pleased to see how appreciative Norwood patrons are of the library's services, especially of its extended service hours and the one-on-one technology assistance appointments. Clayton shared that it's been a delight having Michael join the team. He comes with a friendly welcoming face and new fresh ideas. Michael thanked Joanne and Susan for their tutelage and helping him to get acclimated to the day to day routines at the library. George asked for more information about the museum passes. Michael explained that the library currently offers discounts to popular institutions such as the Museum of Science, Museum of Fine Arts and the Boston Children's Museum. He is also in the process of adding on passes to the Boston Island Harbor Ferries, which will be a free service through the summer. Marguerite said she enjoyed reading Michael's Department Report in this month's packet. She asked if the library could purchase passes to establishments in Rhode Island, which may be more accessible than Boston to some of our patrons. Michael shared that the pass to the Roger Williams Zoo was recently reinstated, and he is looking for other options in that area. Clayton thanked the The Women's Community Committee and The Norwood Women's Club for providing funding for the Museum Pass Program.

Head of Adult Services Liz Reed included a slide presentation as part of her report. She shared the staff tree for the Reference team which has grown steadily over the past few years. She thanked the part time members of the department for stepping up to staff the desk during the extended open hours last summer, stating that it takes a village to staff the desk seven days a week, twelve months a year. She also explained that the door counts and patron interactions are up nearly 25% over what they were last year. At the Reference desk, the majority of patron questions are about computers and printers, which she said makes sense considering the new copy and print machines that were recently implemented. Single interactions with patrons lasting longer than thirty minutes have gone down significantly, showing that patrons are utilizing the technology help appointment service rather than asking for help at the desk. Study Room and Room Space requests continue to climb as more and more people work and attend school remotely. Liz said she hopes to see this need alleviated slightly by the addition of a single room private study pod that will be added to the second floor sometime next month. Liz also shared that program attendance has increased since last year. Attendance numbers are still slightly lower than pre-pandemic, but Adult Services is offering more programs now than they were back in FY19. Staff have seen a change to many patron's social comfort level, and many patrons don't like driving at night anymore, so they have shifted program times and attendance caps to accommodate. John asked if the library still offers virtual programming via Zoom. Liz said that attendance for virtual programs has dropped, so more effort has been put toward in person programming. As an exception to the rule, we recently hosted a virtual program with Erin Reed on Trans Individuals in Sports which garnered thirty Norwood attendees and hundreds across the network. Liz added that the Adult Services team has made a conscious effort to offer more programs to reach the library's DEI goals (diversity, equity and inclusion) to make sure all patrons feel like they belong at this library. Darshana Merchant, the library's Outreach and Adult Services Librarian has spearheaded many new programs around town, and has worked to make sure adults with sensory needs and disabilities such as autism feel welcome at the library and have programs offered specifically to them (sensory friendly movies, lego club, art therapy, etc.) Library staff also recently

participated in a training by The Lark Center, in which they learned how to be even more understanding and welcoming to neurodiverse patrons. Liz concluded by sharing some upcoming programs she's excited about, including on site technology help for asylum seekers, a circulating seed library, a town wide library card drive, a return of the Halloween Scavenger Hunt, and a new Artist in Residence featuring drag artist Miz Diamond Wigfall. Adult Services staff are also excited to attend and speak at this year's PLA and MLA professional conferences.

Clayton noted that Liz took on the role of Head of Adult Services just three years ago. She's worked so hard to develop the department and make meaningful connections with the library's patrons, and he is very grateful and impressed with her leadership. Marguerite thanked Liz for her commitment to collaboration both with staff as well as with organizations around town, noting that the Annual Report which was included in this month's packet, is chock full of the wonderful things that the library staff are doing for the community, and that it is really something to be proud of. John also complimented Liz on her presentation and communication skills, adding that she is a vital resource to the library staff and patrons alike.

REPORTS

- (a) Personnel Report & Contract Updates- Clayton reported that there have been no personnel changes since the last Board meeting. Contract negotiations have begun between Town leadership and the Union. Clayton requested the Personnel Subcommittee meet soon to discuss that.
- (b) Programming Report – Many patrons have expressed an interest in learning about how to spot scams, especially those targeting seniors, so the library will be hosting the Norwood Anti Scam Task Force on March 18 to address these concerns. There is a program coming up for patrons caring for parents with dementia, and a program on domestic abuse with DOVE. Norwood 101 returns on April 8, and Clayton will be offering his program on Artificial Intelligence at the Senior Center soon. The full events calendar can be found on [the library website](#).
- (c) Maintenance & Repair- The library finally had some HVAC repairs done. The thermostats appear to be working better now, which will be beneficial when it comes time to switch off the heat for the summer. No new updates on the building assessment.
- (d) Friends of the Library- George reported that the Friends will be meeting tomorrow. Michael Roderick will be joining as well. The Friends are exploring new fundraising opportunities, such as new merchandise to be sold at the Circulation desk. They will also be having their bi-annual book sale in May. Membership numbers are increasing, and they're doing a good job reaching out to folks and staying in touch and engaging them at the library. Martha Colamaria has her Women's History month doll display in the lobby this month.

CORRESPONDENCE- This week's packet included more patron praise for the library staff and our services. Clayton also included some articles on intellectual freedom.

OLD BUSINESS

- (a) Trustees Committees (Ad Hoc, Finance, Personnel)- Just prior to this BoLT meeting the Finance Subcommittee met to review the FY25 proposed budget. Clayton will bring their ideas to Tony. Donna expressed that she would like to see each committee meet at least one time a year. Personnel already met regarding the Director evaluation, but the Ad Hoc Committee has not yet met this fiscal year.

- (b) Patrons in the Library- As Liz explained, the library is seeing 25% more than average patrons coming in daily, and this has been a consistent trend over the last five weeks. Clayton expects this will increase even more as the weather gets warmer. He noted the parking lot is nearly always full, especially on story time days.

NEW BUSINESS – none.

SEARCH WARRANTS- none.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVISORIES- none.

STAFF AND TRUSTEES REMARKS- Donna urged everyone to get out and vote on April 1 as George and Sarah are both up for re-election to the Library Board of Trustees.

ADJOURNMENT- The next meeting will be held on April 23, 2024 at 6:30pm with Head of Literacy Norma Logan. A motion was made and seconded (Hall/Begg) to adjourn. All approved by roll call and Donna called the meeting to an end at 7:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary