



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

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Clayton Cheever, Library Director

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Minutes of December 10, 2024 Meeting

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

George called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The meeting was held in person in the Library's Trustees Room and was recorded by Norwood Community Media.

CONSENT AGENDA

George opened the floor for discussion on this month's consent agenda. Donna requested clarification regarding the Director's report where Clayton talked about the day the library experienced a power outage. Clayton had praised the swift resolution of the issue. Donna asked for more details about what happened. Clayton explained that the library experienced a forty seven minute downtime due to a widespread power outage affecting Norwood, Dedham and Westwood. The outage occurred when a test on one power line caused another line to fail. Following this clarification, a motion was made and seconded (Hall/Montgomery) to accept the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the November 12th Board Meeting. The motion passed unanimously with a show of hands.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Current FY25 Budget Status, FY25 Special Funds Report, FY25 Incidentals Report, and FY25 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

George welcomed Kristie David, Co-Head of Literacy and Head of Homebound Delivery. She referenced [a news article](#) that stated that "At least 20,000 people [in Massachusetts] wait to learn English," which is a challenge felt deeply in the Literacy department, as they have an extensive wait list of potential ESL students

waiting to be matched with volunteers. Kirstie highlighted two ongoing offsite initiatives: one at the Four Points Sheraton and one at Norwood's emergency shelter. The General Manager of the Four Points Sheraton reached out last year with a request for English classes for their staff. The staff were allowed to attend the classes during their working time (so they were paid to attend). The students participated in an initial 12 week session, but even after the course had ended, many chose to continue their English education (unpaid). Kirstie shared her disappointment that the courses at the emergency shelter have not been going as smoothly, in part due to the transitional nature of the shelter. The other challenge was the presence of so many children at the shelter. To address this, they have partnered with CFCE and Liz Hogrell to find volunteers to provide childcare, allowing adults to attend English classes. This partnership has been successful, with Liz working with the children, a tutor (notably Sue) working with the adults, and then combining for a joint program or story time at the end of the class.

Kirstie provided some data on the recent student and volunteer numbers. In Fiscal Year 2023 (July 2022-June 2023), the Literacy team served 116 learners with the help of 68 volunteers, and in Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023-June 2024), they served 142 learners with 65 volunteers. With the addition of the shelter, their numbers for Fiscal Year 2025 (which began July 1, 2024) will be even higher, though the need for more volunteers persists.

Regarding Homebound Services, Kirstie explained that they have 13 volunteers delivering books to 20-25 patrons at home. The number of patrons fluctuates due to temporary delivery needs for those recovering from surgery or illness. John asked for more context on how the homebound delivery service works. Kirstie explained that patrons can select their own books either online or by calling to request them. She and the volunteers also curate "browse bags" to help determine patrons' preferences. Some patrons receive deliveries weekly, some monthly, and others as needed. Donna inquired if they provide materials for patrons with low vision. Kirstie confirmed that they draw from the library's extensive large print collection, which accounts for 25-35% of their patrons' requests. They also offer books on CD and can lend out CD players. Additionally, they provide Perkins talking books, although the need for these has decreased with the rise of digital apps. They also offer sheet magnifiers and have an accessibility station in the library that allows patrons to magnify documents significantly. Donna asked if donated magnifiers could be brought to patrons, and Kirstie said yes, although such donations are rare and the magnifiers can be somewhat awkward to use. George asked how potential volunteers should reach out. Kirstie mentioned that there are forms on [the homebound delivery website](#), or they can email or stop by any service desk in the library.

George thanked Kirstie for her hard work and the efforts of the volunteers. Marguerite expressed gratitude to Kirstie and the entire literacy and outreach staff for their guidance and support of the volunteers. Clayton praised the team for their ability to lead a large group of volunteers and serve a challenging population with understanding, respect, and grace.

REPORTS

- (a) Personnel Report & Contract Updates- Part time Circ Assistant Sarah Widberg had her last day this month. We will miss her, and we hope she continues to visit. Jackie Jurss, our new full time Circulation member has started, and she's fantastic. Clayton is working with Michael to fill another part time opening. He hopes to have someone in the role by the new year. Town Management continues to promise a fully executed contract soon.
- (b) Programming Report – Last Friday we lit the 11th annual Book Tree. Clayton thanked Katherine Sheehan and Nicole Dana who constructed the tree the last two years. Prior to that, Irene Gotovitch

and Alli Palmgren were the lead architects. At the tree lighting celebration Kirstie ran a craft table where children and adults could make holiday cards for homebound patrons and other Norwood residents in need of cheer. She collected over 70 cards. As in years past, we are accepting guesses for how many books are in the tree. Historically it has been between 200-500 books. The person who provides the closest guess will win a lovely gift basket. Staff are allowed to guess but are not eligible to win. This Friday, December 13, we're having a "Share your Joy with the library director" program. Clayton will be meeting with the public over tea and refreshments and giving an exclusive tour of the library to the first 10 that sign up. The CFCE Story Walk will also be changed next week to *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* and decorative reindeer have been hidden along the trail for children to find as they follow the story. The full event calendar can be found [here](#).

- (c) Maintenance & Repair- Clayton received clearance to move forward with some architects who provided a plan and quote for the building study. They will be coming tomorrow to do a walk through. Funding for the study was already approved from capital outlay. Sarah asked if this expense or its funding will affect the MAR. Clayton said it will not affect our MAR as it will be funded by capital outlay money and will never be transferred into library accounts.
- (d) Friends of the Library- Clayton will be attending tomorrow's meeting in Lydia's place. The Friends are working on their 2025 programming donation. They are planning some new fundraisers for next year, including some offsite events and more merch items to sell.

CORRESPONDENCE- Clayton shared some staff praise which is always nice to receive.

OLD BUSINESS

- (a) Trustees Committees (Ad Hoc, Personnel & Finance)- The finance committee met on December 2 to review the Women's Community Committee's request to donate \$5,000 for museum passes. The committee approved the request and now seeks the full board's approval. Sheri inquired about the usual funding sources for museum passes. Clayton explained that prior to COVID-19, the WCC directly paid for the passes, however, since the pandemic, the library has been covering the costs through its gift fund, with the WCC and the Norwood Woman's Club contributing lump sums on a yearly basis. This year, the WCC has agreed to cover all current pass expenses with some extra left over to purchase an additional pass for one of our high traffic destinations (most likely The Museum of Science or the New England Aquarium). A motion to approve the proposal was made and seconded (Hall/Begg) and unanimously approved by a show of hands. The board is enthusiastic and plans to issue a press release and organize a photo opportunity. Clayton will email everyone to schedule the event and determine who can be present to accept the donation.

During the finance committee meeting, Marguerite expressed a desire for more notice about large purchases made by the library, including whenever bids are put out and how they are selected. She wants the trustees to be informed about the source of funds and the handling of such purchases. According to the bylaws, the chair of the finance committee should meet with the library director at least every six months. Donna agreed that while the trustees receive monthly financial reports, they would like a more detailed narrative. Marguerite questioned the \$5,000 allocated for a tree in front of the library, but Clayton clarified that the tree did not cost that much, and there was a miscommunication in the

interpretation of the financial report. Sheri suggested narrowing down the criteria for what Marguerite considered a large purchase to avoid placing an undue burden on library staff. John agreed with Marguerite's desire for transparency but noted that the staff and director need protection from second-guessing after decisions are made. It was decided that Marguerite would meet with Clayton directly and then a meeting of the Finance Committee would be held (if needed) to further discuss the topic.

- (b) Patrons in the Library- A patron was found sleeping in the library and they were unresponsive when a staff member tried to wake them. Police were called, and the patron was found to have illegal drugs on their person. They were arrested and issued a 90 day notice of disinvite.

NEW BUSINESS - None.

SEARCH WARRANTS- Clayton is still in conversation with the town's legal representative and the person who submitted a FOIA request last month. There have been no new updates.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVISORIES None.

STAFF AND TRUSTEES REMARKS- Clayton reminded those present about the wealth of seasonal items in the library's Library of Things collection, from cake pans to holiday cookie making kits. Sampling from this catalog is also a great way to try things out before purchasing large ticket items like an induction cooktop, pressure washer, steam cleaner, etc. The full list of items can be searched [in the catalog](#) or browsed in person on the second floor.

ADJOURNMENT- A motion was made and seconded (Hall/Montgomery) to adjourn. All approved by a show of hands, and George called the meeting to an end at 7:36pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 with James Perlman, Head of Information Technology Services.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary