



**Library Board of Trustees**

*George Michalec, Chair*

*Sheri McLeish, Vice-Chair*

*Sarah Begg*

*Marguerite Cummings*

*John Hall*

*Donna Montgomery*

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of January 14, 2025 Meeting**

Trustees: George Michalec, Chair; Sheri McLeish, Vice-Chair; Sarah Begg (absent); Marguerite Cummings; John Hall; Donna Montgomery

Director: Clayton Cheever

Assistant Director: Lydia Sampson

Staff representative present: Kirstie David

Recording Secretary: Casey Argyrou

George called the meeting to order at 6:35 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 asked why the Trustees no longer sign a copy of the consent agenda. It used to include all paid material invoices for the month. This practice was discontinued over COVID when the majority of the board meetings moved to a virtual format. A motion was made and seconded (Montgomery/Hall) to accept the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the Board Meeting on December 10. The motion passed unanimously.

**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 James Perlman, Head of Information Technology Services. James presented a comprehensive overview of his recent projects, with a primary focus on the library's website redesign and technology upgrades. The website transformation was a collaborative effort involving the website task force, resulting in a more user-friendly and accessible online platform. The redesign included new pages for

library departments and services, including CFCE, the Children's Department, the Seed Library, and a robust Community Resources section. James enhanced the website's security through multifactor authentication and improved accessibility features, allowing users to customize language, font, and color settings. He also relocated the catalog and account search field to improve user navigation.

The technology upgrades implemented by James were equally impressive. He introduced new public-use laptops equipped with the latest Office and Windows 11, installed a new library server for staff, and updated the self-checkout stations in Circulation and the Children's Department. Additional improvements included Kurzweil software for the Literacy department, an environmental monitoring system for temperature and humidity in three areas of the building to especially be aware of adverse environmental conditions for precious items, and accessibility enhancements like a reconfigured information desk and high-visibility step markers on the main stairwell. James also relocated accessibility machines to the second floor, further improving the library's inclusive technology infrastructure.

Among his most innovative initiatives, James is working with Adult Services to offer an audio and visual makers program featuring high-end AV equipment and podcast creation capabilities. Continuing his commitment to technological support, James provides personalized one-on-one tech assistance, and helps patrons navigate various digital services and devices. The board members were enthusiastic in their praise, highlighting the significant cost savings of the in-house website redesign and James's exceptional ability to meet patrons on their level when discussing technology.

## REPORTS

- (a) Personnel Report & Contract Updates- Clayton reported that there are currently some circulation staff out with some health challenges. He praised Michael and the circulation staff for doing their best to support department morale and filling in the gaps in scheduling.
- (b) Programming Report – There is a program tonight on Combating Hate and Prejudice with local author Janet Applefield who tells the story of her experience during the Holocaust. The library has been receiving lots of positive feedback on the sensory friendly series for adults, which includes movie matinees, art classes, lego club, and tech help classes for adults with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. Many participants are traveling from other towns to attend these programs. In the Children's Department, the winter and spring programming session has begun. Families can enjoy weekly story time and programming during the cold months. The full event calendar can be found online: <https://www.norwoodlibrary.org/morrillcalendar>.
- (c) Maintenance & Repair- Clayton recently conducted a walk-through of the library with the architects who will most likely conduct the building study. The architects are currently preparing a formal proposal, which will include cost estimates for specialized work required for the project. As part of the preparation process, Clayton is researching any and all available information about previous hazardous material assessment and remediation efforts. It is likely this will need to be incorporated into the final proposal - his research is not discovering concrete documentation. The final proposal is expected to be submitted within the next few weeks. Donna asked if the stained glass windows will be returned to the library as part of the renovation. Clayton said that the windows were shown to the architects, and further discussions about their incorporation into the project will occur as plans develop.
- (d) Friends of the Library- The Friends are in discussion about some new events and fundraisers. The Fall book sale will take place in the last weekend of September. Membership is going well. Anyone who is interested in joining the Friends should join their facebook group and sign up at the desk or mail in a membership form.

CORRESPONDENCE- The packet included a compilation of the 5-star book recommendations that the staff enjoyed over the past year, which was conveniently organized by genre. This digital resource allows users to directly access the catalog and place holds on recommended titles. Clayton highlighted the ability to freeze

your holds through the minuteman website, so you can hold your place in line and release the freeze when you are ready for the item, eliminating the risk of all of your holds coming in at once. John asked if third-party science fiction and mystery "best of" and awards lists were referenced for collection acquisition. Clayton confirmed that library selectors regularly use these lists, along with analyzing patron hold patterns, to make informed purchasing decisions.

The meeting packet also included positive comments about the library and staff, and several staff members are slated to present at upcoming conferences. Additionally, Clayton shared a postcard detailing the new legislative agenda for the state, which includes budget requests for fiscal year 2026. He emphasized the importance of library funding advocacy, noting this is a critical time for budget planning. Clayton also reported on his first meeting serving on the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) board, expressing enthusiasm about the support the library and the Commonwealth receive through this organization.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### (a) Trustees Committees (Ad Hoc, Personnel & Finance)

Clayton met with Marguerite this week to discuss Trustee fiduciary responsibilities and a potential review of the Trustees bylaws. They have a request for a bylaw amendment for the ad hoc committee to review. George will reach out to schedule a meeting of this subcommittee in the coming weeks. John and Sheri are the members of this committee. Clayton also asked for a meeting with the Finance subcommittee to review the FY26 draft budget. The Finance committee is Marguerite and Donna. George, as Chair of the Board is automatically part of each committee.

##### (b) Patrons in the Library- Clayton plans to attend a training on library signage tomorrow and he will be working with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Facilities to replace the current parking lot signs, which have become significantly faded over time. While the library will maintain an open parking policy, there are some basic guidelines. Extended parking for non-library purposes—such as leaving a vehicle for days or using the lot as a commuter train parking area—is not permitted. However, given the current parking capacity, this is not expected to be a significant issue. Patrons will continue to be able to use the parking lot to access the library's WiFi at every hour of the day.

NEW BUSINESS - None.

SEARCH WARRANTS-None.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVISORIES None.

STAFF AND TRUSTEES REMARKS-None.

ADJOURNMENT- A motion was made and seconded (Montgomery/Hall) to adjourn. All approved by a show of hands, and George called the meeting to an end at 7:30pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February January 11, 2025 with Kate Tigue, Head of Youth Services.

Respectfully submitted,



Recording Secretary