

EAST LONGMEADOW PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
Meeting Minutes for June 19, 2019

The East Longmeadow Board of Library Trustees held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 19, 2019 at the East Longmeadow Public Library, 60 Center Square, East Longmeadow, MA. Trustees present were: Diane Tiago, Melanie Mannheim, Cindy MacNaught, Michael Gray, David Boucher and Kendra Levesque. Layla Johnston, Library Director, was also present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson, Diane Tiago called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

This meeting was audio and videotaped for future broadcast on ELCAT.

Chairperson, Diane Tiago, introduced our newest Trustee, Kendra Levesque. Kendra Levesque resides in East Longmeadow and is a Springfield Public School teacher. She is excited to be on the Board. The Board welcomed Kendra and we are fortunate to have her serve on our Board.

II. MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for the May 15, 2019 meeting needed approval. Michael Gray motioned to accept the minutes. Cindy MacNaught seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. GUESTS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Narrative:

*Director Layla Johnston reported this year's Summer Reading theme is "A Universe of Stories". The Summer Reading Kick Off event will be held Thursday, June 20th at 5:30 pm in the west parking lot of the library. The event will feature space-themed games, music and refreshments.

*At the Trustees meeting in May, there was a request for training for the Board of Library Trustees. Trustees need to be familiar with their bylaws as well as local and state laws in order to correctly interpret and apply Board of Library Commissioner guidelines. For The East Longmeadow Public Library, responsibilities of the Board of Library Trustees are delineated in the Town Charter and all Trustees should read the entire Town Charter. The Charter is local law and supersedes most guidelines in the Massachusetts Public Library Trustee Handbook 2018 edition and Massachusetts General Laws. The legal requirements in the Town Charter are to clarify the role of the Trustees as only a policy advisory Board, rather than governing body.

*The Town Charter gives the authority to direct the administration of the library to the Town Manager, therefore, the Library is removed from the supervision, administration, and governing authority of the Board of Library Trustees and transferred to the Town Manager under Article 3, Town Manager, Section 2, Subset 4. "(The Town Manager) shall supervise and direct the administration of all departments, agencies and offices unless otherwise provided for in this charter." Administration would include hiring, evaluation, and supervision of the administrator, the library director. The library director's employment contract is negotiated with the Town Manager.

*Procedures are currently in place to fill Board vacancies and the Town Manager is responsible for advertising the vacancies. The Town Manager will advertise vacancies on town boards and committees through various sources of media and will actively recruit candidates for all appointments to be made by either the Town Manager or the Town Council.

*The composition of the Board of Library Trustees is addressed in the Town Charter on page 25, Section 10, Uniform Procedures Applicable to Multiple Member Bodies, subset (d): "Composition of Multiple-Member Bodies – All multiple-member bodies when established with the exception of the Library Trustees, shall be composed of an odd number of members, of not less than three."

*The Board of Library Trustees is prohibited from supervising town employees on pages 28 - 29, Section 9, Appointed Boards. (c) Library Trustees – “There shall be six Library Trustees each serving staggered three year terms, with two members appointed annually. The Library Trustees shall perform any state or federally mandated functions or those established by town bylaw, but shall not supervise town employees.” Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, section 33, requires each library’s Board of Trustees to establish a written policy for the selection of library materials and the use of materials and facilities in accordance with standards adopted by the American Library Association; this is the only state-mandated policy requirement. There are no federally mandated functions for library trustees.

*Budget processes and procedures are addressed in the Charter under Article 6 and Financial and Fiscal Procedures are located on page 15. The Board will review Article 6 at a future meeting.

*Layla informed the Board that she will no longer distribute monthly financial information or financial reports to the Board of Library Trustees. As stipulated in the Town Charter, Layla noted that the Board of Library Trustees no longer has budgetary oversight authority, however, any pertinent financial news, such as information about State Aid to Public Libraries, will be included in her director’s report. Layla added that the library appropriation from the town for FY20 is \$789,135, which meets our Municipal Appropriation Requirement for certification for the State Aid grant. The FY2020 begins July 1, 2019.

*Layla provided us with some information about the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that operates independently of the Town of East Longmeadow and serves as a fundraising organization for the East Longmeadow Public Library. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a formal agreement to provide space, services, or other mutually beneficial arrangements between two or more organizations, reached through negotiations. As stipulated in the Town Charter, the Board of Library Trustees does not have the authority to negotiate contracts, agreements, or memorandums of understanding on behalf of the Town of East Longmeadow. Negotiating a memorandum of understanding with a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization is not the Board of Library Trustees responsibilities.

*In order for the Board to be in compliance with Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Laws, the Chairperson will need to choose one organization to serve, either the Board of Library Trustees or the Board of Directors of the Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library.

*The Town of East Longmeadow is potentially violating the Massachusetts Anti-Aid Amendment by providing town resources, such as dedicated building space and staff support, to support the fundraising efforts of a non-profit organization. (Note: the article in its original form was adopted by the legislatures of the political years 1854 and 1855) The Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library relies on town employees as well as the space provided in the library building to support the ongoing used book sale. The library may need to discontinue the ongoing used book sale and return to one large book sale annually, as was past practice. The library may need to discontinue hosting the Friends’ seasonal fundraisers, which are also supported by town employees and require the use of town resources.

*Layla suggested the Trustees read the following for further reading. The Massachusetts Public Library Trustee Handbook Chapter 3 covers town and city charters as well as the Open Meeting Act and Conflict of Interest Law.

<https://mblc.state.ma.us/for/2018-handbook.pdf>

The Massachusetts Anti-Aid Amendment: <https://www.masslive.com/news/2019/03/longmeadow-voters-take-no-action-on-senior-center-article-officials-offer-project-updates.html>

In response to the Director’s statement that the Board of Trustees do not have the authority of negotiating a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the Friends, the Chair explained that no steps have been taken by any entity’s part. The Board discussed with the Director that there are simply no negotiations taking place by the two boards and to imply this was incorrect. The only action that has taken place is the sharing of a “sample” MOU with both Boards produced by a subdivision of the American Library Association (ALA). An MOU is recommended in the MBLC Trustees Handbook to avoid any conflicts within the Library community. All Trustees are required to read this handbook. An MOU averts one entity from reaching over an imaginary authoritative line into another entity. The topic was just one for consideration and of course some healthy discussion. If need be, the possibility of a sub-committee was the only purpose for the introduction and for healthy conversation. The purpose of a MOU is to provide clarity to their (the Friends and the Library) cooperative relationship and working towards the same goal, a better Library. It’s good business practice to have a MOU and it’s recommended by the MBLC. A MOU is not a contract, instead it’s a simple document that outlines role responsibilities and includes healthy guidelines. The Board wants to make this the best library it can possibly be. Layla Johnston explained that all contract negotiations must go through the Town Manager. The Board further explained that the MOU is not a contract but instead a simple chart outlining roles and responsibilities.

The Board discussed the Director's Report and her points of concern in great length. The approximate one and one-half hour of questions and answers covered her statement that there is a conflict of interest due to the Chair's positions as a Trustee and Director on the Friend's Board, which is a non-profit organization. The Chairperson explained to the entire Board that she has abstained from voting on all action items presented on the Friends Board while serving as Trustee. There was no conflict of interest involved. She also acts as liaison between the two Boards. The Board spoke highly of Diane and her role as a leader. The Board also discussed how there is sometimes such a small pool of volunteers.

The Massachusetts Anti-Aid Amendment was questioned. Melanie Mannheim stated that there are over 300 individual Friends Of The Library organizations in the state of Massachusetts that raise funds for their respective libraries. The Friends generate funds that go towards all library programs and services. The Friends Of The East Longmeadow Public Library provide "gifts" to the Library for all library patrons to use. Michael Gray stated that the removal of the Friend's Corner and its fundraising projects would significantly decrease the ability for the Friends to fund the staff requests. These are items and programs that our library patrons have come to accept as the norm. The Board agreed that Massachusetts libraries do exactly what we do when holding Friends Of The Library fundraising events and book sales. Layla explained that we cannot use town employees to conduct fundraising for any group or organization such as the Friends. The Board discussed the Director's concern and how the staff handles cash transactions at the front desk for some Friends fundraising events.

Michael stated that the Friends basket fundraising events are held at the library since it's the best place to be where people go who value the library. It's always been that the Friends have their Friends fundraising events here for that reason and all Massachusetts libraries have that in practice. The Board had some discussion on the topic.

Layla stated we still have a conflict of interest problem and the Board will discuss this issue in July or August.

For additional details, see the Director's report of June 19, 2019.

B. Financial Report: See Director's Report.

Michael Gray made the motion to accept the Director's Report except for the part that Diane votes but she does abstain from voting and Melanie Mannheim seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

V NEW BUSINESS

A. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Layla recommended to the Board to table the MOU. The Board agreed.

Michael Gray made a motion to table the MOU and Cindy MacNaught seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. BOLT bylaws

Diane Tiago suggested we look at the library bylaws and the term limits and attendance.

The Board had some discussion about the various term limits, officer term limits, missed meetings and absences also came into discussion and how we would want to revise the bylaws. Michael Gray and Melanie Mannheim have volunteered and accepted to be on the sub-committee.

Michael Gray made the motion to have the bylaws committee and Melanie Mannheim seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Library Friends News

*On Monday, June 3, 2019, the Friends held their monthly meeting. The Friends meetings will resume again in September. Maggie Tucker is the newest director on the Friends Board.

*The Friends President will be on a rotation basis since they will share the duty as President of The Friends. Another individual will join the Friends Board in September.

*The Friends Spring Newsletter was sent out.

*There are 340 plus current Friends memberships.

*Erika Petrosky is the liaison between the library staff and the Friends. Erika and three other staff members attended the MLA conference and Erika described and explained to the Friends Board what she experienced at the conference.

*The Library is asking the Friends for 11 museum passes in addition to what they already have. Erika will prioritize the passes for the Friends Board according to what the library patrons recommended to the staff.

*The Friends were pleased to financially support the incentives for the summer reading program.

*The Trustee Institute program slides will be sent to all Trustees

*Diane handed out annual calendars to all Trustees with exact dates circled for all our monthly Trustee meetings.

*Diane explained that the MBLC website had an item of what she thought would be of great interest to the Board of Library Trustees. On May 23, 2019 the Massachusetts State Senate passed its version of FY2020 budget and 6 out of 7 line items received the amounts they requested. This is the Senate side of the budget and this is wonderful news.

*MBLC website - Arlington Library now has a Fine Free Library. Fines go into a general fund account.

B. Trustee Updates

See above.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Library Trustees will be held on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 6 pm.

IX. ADJOURN

Diane Tiago requested a motion to adjourn. Cindy MacNaught made the motion and Michael Gray seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Mannheim, Secretary

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