

EAST LONGMEADOW PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
Meeting Minutes for November 18, 2020

The East Longmeadow Board of Library Trustees held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 via Zoom video conferencing. Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 19, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible.

Trustees present were: Michael Gray, David Boucher, Melanie Mannheim and Christina Cooper. Kendra Levesque and Cynthia MacNaught were absent. Layla Johnston, Library Director, was also present. Guest, Eric Bascom IV, was also present. Don Maki, Director at ELCAT for the Town of East Longmeadow, was also present to host the Zoom meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Michael Gray, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

This meeting was audio and videotaped via Zoom for future broadcast on ELCAT as well as provided live streaming to Facebook.

II. MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for the October 21, 2020 meeting needed approval. Christina Cooper motioned to accept the minutes. David Boucher seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. GUESTS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Eric Bascom IV, a resident of East Longmeadow, addressed the Board with his concerns for the Library and its patrons since the Library is not opened at this time. Eric expressed his opinion and would like the library to re-open. He provided the Board with some social-distancing examples for the re-opening such as timed appointments, use of the proper PPE, 15 or 30 minute appointments and self-check-out kiosks. Eric reiterated that these examples would allow the public to safely utilize the library. Currently, Eric commutes to Agawam and Longmeadow to utilize their Library services. He wrote a letter to the Town Manager in East Longmeadow and also contacted the Library Director who explained that its up to the Town Manager to make the decision. Eric thanked us for our time and consideration. Michael Gray thanked him for his time as well.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Narrative:

*Director Layla Johnston reported that the library lost power on November 2 due to a mechanical failure and National Grid resolved the issue.

* The Fall Virtual Reading Challenge was a great success and enrolled the library 187 registered readers.

*The East Longmeadow Public Library will once again sponsor the annual Giving Tree, with all donations benefiting children from birth to age 18. Donations will be distributed to gift recipients by New Beginnings, a shelter in Holyoke, for families in transition. There are currently 125 children in need this year. There will be a new procedure for donations this year. A request for donations will now be sent out via the library's email newsletter on November 20. Recipients will receive a registration form that includes donor recipient information categorized by gender and age. The form will take the place of gift tags. Gifts can be dropped off at the curbside pickup area in a clearly labeled box labeled "GIVING TREE". The Library will also be requesting donations of toiletries such as soap, shampoo, lotion, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Information about the "GIVING TREE" can be provided by contacting the Children's Department at 413-525-5400 ext. 1506.

*Virtual Children's Programs – Thursday, November 19 at 6:30 pm, the Children's Department will host a virtual program on Speech and Play with Samantha Bernier, M.A. CCC-SLP. This program will cover supporting the parent's understanding of their child's communication skill level and how to support the next stages of development.

And on Monday, November 30 at 6:00 pm, the library will offer a Zoom program for parents and caregivers on the topic of helping our children cope with anxiety. The “How to Help Kids with Anxiety” program will be presented by Madison Bull, LMHC. This training will include defining and discussing anxiety, worry and stress in children. Recommendations will also be offered on various parenting techniques, resources, tips and skills to help navigate parenting a child with anxiety. Patrons can register for this program on the library website.

*Virtual Adult Programs - On Tuesday, December 1 at 6:30 pm, New York Times bestselling author, Michael Tougias, will present a narrated slide presentation based on his book “Quabbin: A History and Explorers Guide”. The program features the demise of the “lost towns” flooded to create the Quabbin, the construction of the massive reservoir, and how the Quabbin works today. Patrons may register for this virtual program by visiting the library’s website at eastlongmeadowlibrary.org. A Zoom link will be emailed to all participants the day of the program.

* Wi-Fi Connectivity - To help Massachusetts residents having difficulty with internet access, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) is gathering more detailed information about public library Wi-Fi offerings. The MBLC will create a map of locations throughout Massachusetts that provide free, public access to the internet and are accessible from the outdoor seating area, parking lot or road. The East Longmeadow Public Library will be included in the state-wide map.

For additional details, see the Director’s Report of November 18, 2020.

Christina Cooper motioned to accept the Directors Report. Melanie Mannheim seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Melanie reported that since our last meeting, she did hear from Town and the Library Trustee By-Laws are considered an internal document of the Library Trustees and not included in the Town General By-Laws. And since they have been formally approved and voted on by the Trustees, they are official. Tomorrow, Melanie will email the Library Director the Trustee By-Laws that were approved by the Trustees in February 2020. The Library Director may now post them to our Library website as discussed at an earlier meeting. Melanie will also forward the Trustee By-Laws to the MBLC for them to possibly use on their website to provide another resource for other libraries to follow. She reiterated the fact that examples and research are certainly a vital part in any policy development.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

a. Gift Policy – Michael Gray asked Christina Cooper to serve on this committee and later in the week, he will ask Cynthia MacNaught to join her. The committee will design a proposal for The Giving Wall. The Trustees agreed that The Giving Wall be designed so that there is room for expansion. The Trustees will incorporate the donors on the Giving Wall. Library Director, Layla Johnston, explained that past donor names and dollar amounts contributed are recorded in the Library’s files. Layla can provide that information to the Trustees. Both the Library Trustees and the Library Director will collaborate and contribute their ideas for The Giving Wall.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Cell Phone Policy
- b. Safe Child Policy
- c. Reciprocal Borrowing Policy

Chairperson, Michael Gray suggested that since the Library is closed at this time, it would be a great time to review the three oldest existing policies first. Michael suggested that Melanie research the Cell Phone Policy, Christina research the Safe Child Policy and David research the Reciprocal Borrowing Policy. The Trustees will initiate their research and contact Layla to listen to her ideas if there is something that needs to be considered to add or change in these policies. He would like the Trustees to initiate research and forward the other Trustees the links to examples of what they found for other library policies.

VIII. FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY REPORT

The Friends held their monthly meeting on Monday, November 2 at 7pm via Zoom meeting. Erica Petrosky, the library liaison to the Friends, explained to the Friends at their last meeting that the staff is as busy as ever while the library building remains closed to the public.

Upon receiving a museum renewal, the Friends Treasurer wondered whether or not to pay it. Erica Petroski assured the Friends Directors that all Museum Passes are being circulated. With that confirmation, all museum renewal notices in the future will be paid.

The Friends continue to work on their Friends By-Laws during each and every meeting.

Earlier this year, the Friends Board was notified that it was one of many recipients mentioned in the Bernard Vinick Trust. Although the Friends have been working intermittently with an attorney's office and a local investment firm, all legal requirements and transactions reached completion last week.

The Friends Board discussed a variety of ideas as to how funds earned on the investment should be spent. First, and foremost, the Friends will honor the wishes of Mr. and Mrs. Vinick who requested that public donations be given to the Food Bank Of Western Massachusetts.

Other suggestions discussed were: an increase to the Friends budget for the library staff's continuing education account; scholarships for students; guest speaker programs; funds for the Library's Gift Account to help supplement the library's collection budget and have bookplates placed in memory of Friends who have died during the previous year. Dollar amounts were not discussed, only ideas.

There are currently 2 vacancies on the Friends Board. Please feel free to let others know of the vacancies. The Friends welcome new faces and new ideas. An introduction to the Friends is a great place to gain knowledge about libraries and possibly become a new Trustee in the future.

Currently, there are 260 members of the Friends.

The next Friends meeting will be held on Monday, December 7 at 7pm.

Please email the Friends at FOELPL@gmail.com if you would like to join their meeting.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

The Massachusetts Library Trustee Association (MLTA) held their annual meeting and program with special guest speaker, Sally Reed, on November 14. Melanie attended this event and provided the Trustees with some information about this particular program. The subject was "Putting your stamp on the Future" and creating diverse and sustainable Boards. Sally Reed explained where Boards can get the volunteers needed to fulfill vacancies. Many Boards are also adding teenagers to their Board to listen, share ideas and learn Board procedure.

Sally Reed also stressed the importance of having a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between the Friends and the Library. She referred to a sample MOU on the United For Libraries website that she felt all parties involved would be receptive to. An MOU is an agreement with signatures and it is not a contract. An MOU is simply an understanding between the parties involved and this understanding is for the present time and for the future. MOU's can always be edited and modified along the road. The Library Director would be included in the language development as well as meet the needs of the Library. The MOU is non-controversial, standard and simple. It's basically a clear-cut document about the roles and responsibilities of the Friends and the Library.

X. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Library Trustees will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2020 at 6 pm.

XI. ADJOURN

Michael Gray requested a motion to adjourn. Christina Cooper made the motion, Melanie Mannheim seconded and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Mannheim,

Secretary

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