

## Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees, Public Library of Brookline

A hybrid meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library was convened on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 6:17 PM.

Present: Burstein; Chanyasulkit; Fredkin; Goleman; Hung; Livingston; Lohe; Margolis; Martin-Page; Vanderkay; Vogt; Zelkha

Also present: Library Director, A. Hirst; Assistant Director for Administration, D. Savin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director, C. Hesslein

Trustees voted to convene the meeting. Burstein votes yes; Chanyasulkit votes yes; Fredkin votes yes; Goleman votes yes; Hung votes yes; Livingston votes yes; Lohe votes yes; Margolis abstains; Vanderkay votes yes; Vogt votes yes; No vote from Martin-Page and Zelka as both were absent at this point in the meeting

All votes were conducted by roll call vote.

### I. Comments from the Chair

- A. Hung mentions that everyone is concerned about letter the Board of Trustees received on September 19, 2024; informs Board and members of the public that the letter will be discussed during the 'New Business' section of the meeting's agenda; Hung welcomes members of the public and staff who are on the call

### II. Comments from the Public (3 minute limit)

- A. Philip Steigman describes his interest in fostering a coordinated youth development strategy for Brookline; states that without an Office of Youth Development, Brookline lacks a centralized hub to devote attention and resources to the Town's youth; expresses interest in collaborating with the Public Library of Brookline to work on this initiative; informs Board that he will keep them updated on actions taken moving forward

### III. Secretary's Report

- A. Minutes

1. Lohe makes a motion to approve the September 2024 meeting minutes; Livingston seconds; Board votes unanimously to approve the minutes
  - a) Burstein votes yes; Chanyasulkit votes yes; Fredkin votes yes; Goleman votes yes; Hung votes yes; Livingston votes yes; Lohe votes yes; Margolis abstains; Vanderkay votes yes; Vogt votes yes; Zelka votes yes; No vote from Martin-Page as she was absent at this point in the meeting

B. Correspondence

1. No correspondence received

C. Other items

1. No discussion

IV. Treasurer's Report

A. Other

1. Nothing to report; Lohe will circulate to Board members the September endowment report upon receipt

V. Library Director's Report

- A. Hirst informs Board that the Library added two new resources: Language Line, a translation service Library staff can use with patrons and LOTE2Kids, an e-book service that provides children's e-books in over 65 languages
- B. Hirst informs Board that she was not able to find a suitable vehicle for the bookmobile; due to this, the grant funding for the bookmobile was ceded back to the Town of Brookline
- C. Hirst informs Board that the Brookline Village library will get a new HVAC system installed in February 2025; informs Board of recent expenditures related to new meeting room furniture and new self-check outs and RFID pads

- D. Hirst informs Board of new metrics that will be part of her Director's Reports moving forward: retention rate and turnover rate
- E. Hirst informs Board of FOIA request received
- F. Hirst informs Board of two capital improvement requests made: releveling the bricks outside of Brookline Village and regular building upgrades (painting, carpeting, tiling)
- G. Vogt asks about getting gender neutral bathrooms in our Libraries, Hirst explains she hasn't yet had the capacity to work on this; Hung mentions that this can be part of the Library Functions committee's purview this year

VI. Trustee Committee Reports

A. Trustee Committee assignments

- 1. The new committees for 2024-2025 are finalized; Hung asks committee chairs to reach out to members to begin work
- 2. Hung reminds Board that each committee has a DEI point person; these DEI ambassadors will work with Rick in his capacity as CDIECR Liaison; Rick will coordinate meeting with each committee's DEI point person to establish consistency and expectations

B. Other

- 1. Vanderkay informs Board that the Friends of the Brookline Public Library's book sale is postponed to December 2024

VII. Old Business

- A. No discussion

VIII. New Business

- A. Staff Feedback and Morale

1. Hung, in her capacity as Chair, shares her thoughts on the letter sent by a former PLB staff member to the Board and Select Board on September 19, 2024; Hung shares that she is confident in Hirst's leadership, commitment to staff wellbeing, and commitment to library system; Hung outlines goals for this conversation: to hear Hirst's response to letter and to hear Board member's thoughts / perspectives; Hung reminds Board that the Trustees' roles and responsibilities are related to library governance, which does not include personnel matters; asks Board to refrain from discussing individual staff members to ensure confidentiality
2. Hirst acknowledges the concerns sent to the Board and assures the Board that the Library is committed to conducting a thorough review of staff, morale, and workplace satisfaction; Hirst informs Board that she will use this feedback to identify any underlying issues and take appropriate action

#### B. Department Staffing Overview

1. Hirst presents to Board an overview of PLB's staffing, from her initial assessment of organizational structure in August 2022 to its current configuration; Hirst provides rationales for position changes made
2. Lohe asks how Hirst communicated these changes to staff; Hirst answers that she had individual conversations with staff members and with Department Heads and that the communication might not have been as comprehensive as staff would have desired
3. Vogt asks about how staff feel like they are progressing if there aren't promotion opportunities readily available; Hirst answers that staff development opportunities are available

C. Review of Overtime Spending

1. Hirst presents to Board an overview of staff schedules as it relates to working on Sundays and what the collective bargaining agreement dictates about Sunday work; Hirst informs Board that she plans to work with the Union to balance financial responsibility with supporting staff wellbeing without relying on overtime pay

D. Hung asks members of the public present if they would like to speak about the letter received on September 19, 2024; no one contributes

E. Lohe expresses concerns related to staff morale; Vogt asks Hirst if she was surprised by the letter; Burstein suggests that the Board determine a way to source and receive staff feedback in their evaluation of the Director; Hung responds with United for Libraries suggestions for evaluation metrics; Livingston voices concerns with how far Trustees can get involved in this type of work; Goleman provides guidance to Hirst; Vogt asks what Trustees' next steps are; Hung clarifies that this will be an ongoing process

IX. Remarks for the Good of the Order

- A. Hung thanks Board for having meaningful discussion in a respectful, graceful, and humble manner; Hung informs Board that Board's charge is to support Hirst in addressing the concerns raised in the letter received on September 19, 2024

X. Adjourn

- A. Livingston makes a motion to adjourn the meeting; Vanderkay seconds; Board votes unanimously to adjourn meeting
  1. Burstein votes yes; Chanyasulkit votes yes; Fredkin votes yes; Goleman votes yes; Hung votes yes; Livingston votes yes; Lohe votes yes; Margolis

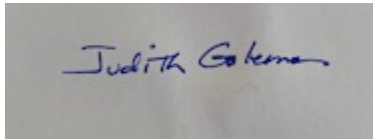
abstains; Martin-Page votes yes; Vanderkay votes yes; Vogt votes yes;

Zelka votes yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Minutes drafted by Courtney Hesslein

Attested

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith Goleman".

Judith Goleman, Secretary  
2024-2025