

Trustee Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Leominster Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, November 9, 2020, via Go To Meeting teleconference. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

In attendance were: Chairperson Mark Bodanza, Vice Chairperson Susan Chalifoux Zephir, Secretary Lawrence Nfor, Susan Shelton, Joanne D'Onfro, and James Despo. Others present included Acting Interim Director Nicole Piermarini.

Minutes

The minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting were approved as corrected. The minutes of the September 14, 2020 minutes were approved.

Director's Report

The new statistics format for the circulation section was met with approval.

Old Business

Reopening and Hours

The Chairperson explained that the Board was looking at approving the plan and when to advance to Phase One as two different issues. He relayed that though he hadn't met with the Mayor, the Mayor was aware the trustees were meeting to discuss reopening. The Mayor is very motivated to get the library to advance and wants to see a copy of the plan.

Trustee Shelton thanked the Acting Interim Director and the Staff for putting the plan together and thanked all those who spoke through a statement made by May Lee at the special meeting. She suggested exploring an option that is a little more modest but still opens the library more without going up to the full 40% capacity.

The Acting Interim Director suggested adopting a Phase 0.5 in which current curbside services would remain as is, the Dr. Martin T. Feldman Children's Room would open for browsing, the number of patrons allowed in the building would increase, an extra hour of browsing would be added in the afternoon, and the staff would test a no appointment needed browsing model. Patrons would have access to the card catalogs and self-checkout. Due to the Governor's guidelines activities such as reading, lounging, and teleworking would not be permitted at this time.

She explained that in the new phase, while staff would still require an off-hour at noon to deep clean, run a pull list, and send most of the staff to lunch, patrons could browse for a two-hour window in the morning and a three-hour window in the afternoon, staying as long as they'd like. Patrons would be allowed in on a first-come, first-served basis until occupancy was reached. A greeter would still be required to contact trace and manage the occupancy count. The Acting Interim Director suggested a maximum capacity of 70, a number just under the 40% total capacity dictated by square footage.

Trustee Despo asked if there was anything of concern that would prevent the library from moving to Phase 1. The Acting Interim Director relayed that case numbers in Leominster are rising, and staff are concerned about the greatly increased exposure in Phase 1 as written. In addition, the new occupancy counting and contact tracing systems are untested and may require adjustment.

The trustees thanked the Acting Interim Director and staff for looking for an option between Phase 0 and Phase 1.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephier moved “that we adopt Nicole’s Phase 0.5” (SS). The motion was adopted. Vote 6-0.

The Acting Interim Director inquired if the Board needed to vote on closing at 5:00 pm the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, or if it was a moot point as the library is not currently open evenings. No vote was taken.

Art Audit

This item was moved out of order and discussed before *Reopening and Hours*.

The Acting Interim Director relayed that she had spoken with Travelers and that the library policy has \$25,000 built in for fine arts coverage. Any unscheduled art is covered under this amount as long as its value does not exceed the total. She further clarified that items do not need an appraisal to be added to the policy.

Social Media

This item was moved out of order and discussed before *Reopening and Hours*.

Trustee Despo moved “we keep [the social media policy] on the agenda but move it to next meeting” (SCZ). The motion was adopted. Vote 6-0

User’s Council – Fine Free Discussion

This item was moved out of order and discussed before *Reopening and Hours* as well as *Social Media*.

The Acting Interim Director detailed factors affecting the Library Revenue Report including the addition of faxing services in 2015 as well as the introduction of autorenewal in 2019. She relayed concerns that as larger libraries in the CWMARS system go fine free, the Leominster Library will face pressure to do so as well.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephier referenced the fine amnesty period in September and suggested it makes sense to continue this while the building is closed.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephir moved “that we extend the no fine period through the end of 2020” (LN). The motion was adopted. Vote 6-0

Personnel Subcommittee Update

This item was added to the agenda after the *User’s Council - Fine Free Discussion*.

The Chairperson asked Trustee Chalifoux Zephir, head of the Personnel Subcommittee to update the board regarding the ongoing Director’s search.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephir relayed that the committee has narrowed down the application pool to seven people. The committee has interviewed six candidates and has one more to interview before completing the first round. After this, the committee will decide who to bring back for second interviews. She shared that the committee feels there are some very strong candidates.

Trustees Nfor and Despo concurred and shared their excitement over the candidates.

The Chairperson explained that the second round of interviews must be open to the public. He asked for suggestions on how best to conduct the interviews given the Governor's new guidelines, expressing a preference for an in-person component given the importance of the decision. The trustees discussed a variety of in-person, hybrid, and online models.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephir stated she would explore the options discussed and select the one that would maximize the opportunity for people to participate.

New Business

Building Fund Entity Requirement

The Chairperson explained that during one of the city’s audits, the auditors looked at the Building Fund and determined there is a problem. The account is not formally within the city’s control even though the city’s tax ID number is being used and has been on the fund since the beginning.

The Chairperson relayed he met with then Treasurer/Collector David Laplante and investment advisor Rich Rogers to discuss options to rectify the situation. There are three possible options:

1. Allow the city to have formal control of the money, similar to the trust funds, subject to the clarification or confirmation that the funds are managed and dispersed by the Board of Trustees and not the city in general.
2. Relocate the monies under another group like the Friends of the Library
3. Create an entity associated with the Board of Trustees and create a separate tax ID for that entity

Trustee Shelton relayed that unless things have changed, the Friends of the Library do not want to get involved in handling that much money.

The Chairperson elaborated that option three would create additional annual responsibilities. He suggested pursuing option one. He felt a memorandum of understanding with the city that the money, though formally under the custody of the Treasurer/Collector, is managed and dispersed by the Board of Trustees is the option that would make the most sense. Trustee Nfor echoed this sentiment.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephir suggested creating the Leominster Public Library Building Renovation Trust Fund as the city has been holding library trust funds since the mid 19th century without issue. The Chairperson voiced concerns over this option as there are potential legal issues over who could settle the trust.

Trustee Shelton clarified that the fundraising committee worked with the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, a 501c3, when the building fund was first established. She asked for clarification as it was her belief that the city's TIN was added when the funds were moved from the Community Foundation. The Chairperson said he would verify this with the Treasurer/Collector and report back.

Trustee Nfor moved "to table this" (JD). The motion was adopted. Vote 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.

Nicole Piermarini, Acting Interim Director