

DIGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
January 24, 2023
5:01 PM
Old Town Hall

Due to the increasing concern surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was open to the public through the Zoom Conferencing platform.

Call to Order Trustee Meeting Started at 5:01.

This was a hybrid meeting with adequate and accessible access through Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call – In-person participants: Ron O’Connor, Chair; Rita Araujo, trustee; Ann Meitzen, trustee; Jocelyn Tavares, library director

With a virtual meeting, a roll call vote should be taken, so that it is absolutely clear what the outcome of the vote is. The meeting must be completely audible. The meeting is recorded.

Rita moved to accept the minutes of December 6, 2022. Ann was not present. Ron stepped down as Chair and seconded.

Ron O’Connor: Aye

Rita Araujo: Aye

Ann Meitzen: Abstained

Motion passes.

Ron began the meeting by stating recent public concerns have been made regarding the Collection Development policy, which was revised in January 2022. He acknowledged it is rare to have public comment at Board of Trustees meetings, and because of this, the Board of Trustees does not have a formal public input or comment policy. A draft is in process, but the following parameters have been established at the Chair’s discretion per *M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(g); OML 2013-64*:

- Chair can define parameters of public comment.
- Comments are limited to two minutes.
- Time may not be given to another speaker.
- Comments must be related to an agenda item or topic under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees.

The proposed policy addresses procedure for public comment and will govern the public comment at the beginning of this meeting. This includes:

- Chair may ask for a show of hands to determine how many people wish to speak.
- Public Comment concludes when everyone who wishes to speak has done so.
- Chair will call on speakers
- Speakers identify themselves with full name and address
- Comments are limited to two minutes.
- Unused time for one speaker may not be granted to another
- Comments are to be directed to entire board
- Discussion is directed to the board, not audience members

- Speakers are to be courteous and respectful, no personal attacks

The only opportunity for public comment is at this point in the meeting. Ron asked speakers to go to the podium for speaking in person; and by using the raised hand feature on Zoom.

Public Comment

Paul Reynolds discussed his family's use of the library. He acknowledged the closure of the Carnegie library and its associated challenges for the collection. He hopes that in the new library, there will be a proper separation of materials for teens and children. He has no problem with books being in the library, but that books be merchandised in a way to respect those age boundaries.

Andrew Horton thanked the board for their work. He is speaking as a concerned resident. He sent an email to the library director as he didn't have contact emails for the Board. He is concerned about protecting his grandchildren. He is not asking for banning of books, but a segregation of books by age so young children don't have access to inappropriate books.

Jessica Beerman thanked the board for the forum. She is a teacher and reading tutor and wants all to hear that children's books have certain themes. She was active with her children's reading. Parents play a huge role in helping children gather their reading materials. She feels there is not a reason to be concerned. Children do not deserve to be politicized.

Pat Gailes is concerned in restricting books. Families are the only people who have the choice in selecting what kinds of books to read for themselves. Each family has that right. If you begin to restrict books, she has concerns over what the next book to be restricted will be.

Tom Gallucci wants people to understand that he does not want book banning. He is concerned with the mix of certain titles and displays. He is concerned about the youth services room used for Banned Book Group. He would like the policy to show both sides of the political spectrum and that minors are not allowed to access those materials without a parent. Does not want to see law enforcement characterized as criminals. He would like more from both sides of the political spectrum.

Joann Petersen said she is a newer resident in Dighton and has grandchildren living here. She would like to see the library open to everyone. She mentioned she does not like all books. Control belongs in the parent's hands, not the library's hands. She thought people relied on the Internet for more information. Parents should be coming to the library with their kids to see what the library has to offer.

Lauren Peterson gave a definition of the library. She said she is a frequent library user with her children. She said it is her job as a parent to supervise her kids in the library and on the Internet. We all have subjects we are more uncomfortable with and perhaps that could be a teaching moment. She does not wish to restrict the books on topics she dislikes. She said she could choose not to read them. A library is a place for all members of the community. We control our private library.

Bill Moore said he didn't hear disagreement amongst the speakers. He said no one wishes to ban or restrict books. He is concerned that there are certain subjects, mostly sexual or political in nature, that should not be openly promoted. He was concerned that materials were from a single point of view that did not match some family's values.

Bill Mello, on Zoom, discussed the meeting about the collection development policy. He reiterated that no one suggested books to be banned. It was discovered that there were some politically inflammatory books promoted online alongside children's titles. He said it may be unintentional, but he did not want inflammatory books concealed with non-controversial topics. Some of the subject matters of concern that are inappropriate for children are gender identity, attribution of blame or tendency to oppress others based on race. Bill was stopped by Ron at the 2 minute mark. Everything mentioned has been submitted in the meeting.

Ron asked if there were any other speakers on Zoom or in the room.

Rafa Delfin appreciated the opportunity to share differences of opinion. He agrees that we should not ban books. Rafa is aware of the intricacies of language that young children can absorb. He didn't see a difference between minors accessing tobacco or alcohol and having access to sexually explicit materials. He would like to see segregation of subject matter by age.

Ron concluded public comment.

Ron felt gratified to see so many people in attendance and interested in this important topic. He trusted that everyone in the room wished to make the library and the town a better place. He discussed Smith Memorial Hall and how the children's services would be located on the stage. The Young Adult section would be on the opposite end of the building. He likes the idea that those sections are bookending the library.

Recess to rearrange the table to better interact with the audience.

Old Business

- Proposed Policy Reviews - Review/Discuss/Act
 - Public Comment Policy: Portion of the discussion is inaudible due to technical issues. Ron thought two minutes may not be enough for adequate comment. Rita acknowledged the desire to keep the discussion on track. Rita thought it was good to have the policy now. Ron suggests taking out the sign up sheet. Ron thought this public comment went smoothly. Rita thought it may be helpful to have the signup sheet if there were many people who wished to speak. Discussion will continue at a later meeting.
 - Laptop Borrowing Policy: Ann thought it was comprehensive and Ron thought last meeting's discussion was pretty thorough. Jocelyn asked about defining the library card in good standing. Referenced Acceptable Use policy to take on next.

Ann moved to approve the Laptop Borrowing policy as is. Rita seconded.

Ron O'Connor: Aye

Ann Meitzen: Aye

Rita Araujo: Aye

Motion passes.

- Collection Development Policy:

Ron described meeting with Mr. Gallucci, Mr. Mello and Mr. Woods. Ron read the memo drafted by Mr. Mello with the proposed changes to the collection development policy. Ron acknowledged some concerns with a couple of the proposed changes. He requested a legal

opinion from Town Counsel, which was received on January 20, 2023. Ron read the legal opinion in its entirety.

Ron also read the *American Library Association's (ALA'S) Library Bill of Rights*. He cited the *Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and Interpretation of Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors*. Ron read the *Interpretation of Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors*. He next read a letter from the *Massachusetts Library Association's Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibility Committee* letter dated January 20, 2023. Ron acknowledged banning books was not in play as heard from public comment. Ron read a piece from the *Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) Trustees Handbook*. Ron mentioned other documents for the record. He thanked Rita and Ann for their partnership.

He believed the key message is that the board is bound by law and standards listed in statute. It is the framework for doing the job of the trustee.

Ron was pleased by comments that showed common ground.

Ann moved that documents read are included in the record of the meeting. Rita seconded the motion.

Ron O'Connor: Aye
Ann Meitzen: Aye
Rita Araujo: Aye
Motion passes.

Ron suggested the trustees take on training and education for a meeting in February. He cited a list of resources on Intellectual Freedom to start, including some video training and MBLC consultant Maura Deedy.

Ron is hoping to find common ground. Rita suggested setting the next meeting date with the expectation of going through the resources. The week of February 23rd was highlighted as a potential time for scheduling the meeting. Ron thought a challenge to the library resources will strengthen the library, as well as take a deeper dive into the driving principles of what we do.

Ann discussed her belief in First Amendment rights with regard to the library. She discussed the reasons why books may be in the library, choice and the role of parents in selecting library materials with their children.

Rita agreed with Ann's statement. She discussed her experience as a teacher at the middle school level. She agreed that parents should be guarding their children. Ron recognized the challenge that can be for some parents. He discussed his experience at Dighton PTO and trying to recruit parents to be involved. He summed up that parent engagement is critical, as discussed this evening, and the library can be a partner to this.

Ron noted a few comments received by email. The lack of the ways to communicate with the trustees has been resolved and available on the town website. The instagram page is all inclusive and not targeted to age.

Rita moved to continue collection development policy discussion to the next meeting. Ann seconded.

Ron O'Connor: Aye
Ann Meitzen: Aye

Rita Araujo: Aye
Motion passes.

- Update on 207 Main Street: The Historical Commission wrote a letter that described Smith Memorial Hall's historical significance to Dighton. Granite City Partners gave a presentation to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Jocelyn is working on a few additional grants to try to get funding for certain aspects of the building, a Cultural Council Facilities Fund grant and Accessibility Grant from ALA. Jocelyn is also looking for other funding sources. Current work being done on the building includes replacing siding, working on windows and adding insulation. Ron asked if the cedar shingles could be repurposed. Jocelyn mentioned they may be original to the building and was not sure of their condition. Ron pointed out the original library located in Old Town Hall. Ron thanked staff and the Friends of the Dighton Public Library for their support.

New Business

- Town of Dighton email addresses were set up for the Board of Trustees. They are posted on the town website. Jocelyn needs to update the library's website as well. Ron recommended language for an automatic reply. He requests Jocelyn to be a part of the email chain as a copy. The automatic reply asks the sender to include her in the correspondence.
- Statistics were discussed. Jocelyn pointed out the Weiss Financial Ratings resource usage in December. Streaming video also saw increases.
- Payroll and bills will be handled later in the week. This meeting is early in the week.
- Jocelyn explained the Fiscal Year 24 budget process and new approach of zero based budgeting. She explained how she approached it for the library. Jocelyn presented the numbers for the board. Jocelyn discussed that this presented budget is in compliance with the MBLC's metrics for the town's contribution and the percentage of the budget required for library materials for a town Dighton's size. There is an acknowledgement of contract negotiations going on for the clerical union. Jocelyn looked to Selectman Hull, in the audience, for guidance on how to handle this scenario, and he offered his input. First draft of the budget is due to the Town Administrator and Town Accountant on February 1, signed by the Board of Trustees.
Rita asked if any increase to the clerical union was included in this budget. Jocelyn explained that it was not in this presentation. In the past it was not included.

Ann moved to approve the FY24 library budget. Rita seconded.

Ron O'Connor: Aye

Ann Meitzen: Aye

Rita Araujo: Aye

Motion passes.

The Board signed the budget.

- Jocelyn mentioned the staff training and acknowledgement form regarding Ethics Training. Jocelyn confirmed that the Board is also required to do this. Jocelyn referenced training for Open Meeting Law and that a signed acknowledgement of receipt of the Open Meeting Law is another requirement of the Town Clerk's office. Ron mentioned the Trustee Deeper Dive training series from the MBLC.
- The meeting date was discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Zach Lapointe, President of the Friends, was in the audience. There was no update.

Friends

Personnel

- Procedure for Department Heads/Non-Union Evaluations was discussed. Memo drafted by the Town Administrator's Office and packet was distributed.

Upcoming Programs

- Jocelyn discussed upcoming programs. Lorie Van Hook added to the discussion.

Adjournment

Rita moved to adjourn the meeting. Ann seconded.

Ron O'Connor: Aye

Ann Meitzen: Aye

Rita Araujo: Aye

Meeting adjourned at 6:56.

Documents Referenced:

12-6-2022 Minutes

Collection Development Policy

Public Comment Policy

Memo from Bill Mello

Legal Opinion from Gay & Gay, dated January 20, 2023

ALA's Library Bill of Rights

Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Interpretation of Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors

Mass Library Association Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibilities Letter, January 20, 2023

MBLC Trustees Handbook

List of training resources on Intellectual Freedom

Dighton Historical Commission letter

Town Memo and TA Documentation for FY24 Budget

FY24 Budget and the Zero budget rationale

Department Head/Non-Union Performance Review packet