

Thomas Crane Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2022 via Zoom

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:19 a.m. by Ms. Costagliola.

Trustees Present

Diane Costagliola, Arthur Foley, William Griffin, May Mayyasi, Corinne Mitchell, and Peter Tam

Staff Present

Director Megan Allen, Assistant Director Kristy Lockhart

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Mayyasi moved and Mr. Foley seconded that the December 13, 2021 minutes be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Foley moved and Ms. Mayyasi seconded that the January Treasurer's Report of trust fund income and expenditures be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Director's Report

Facilities

The Main Library door access upgrade project was substantially completed and staff are now using access cards (that double as ID cards) instead of the old keypad system. This project turned out to be more involved than expected, and took much longer than expected, but the end result is very satisfactory and the Public Buildings Department was instrumental in making it happen and keeping it on track.

At North Quincy, the furniture was brought back into the building from storage, and staff continued to work on preparing the collections and the IT systems for reopening. Work was slowed due to staff outages (holidays, vacations, Covid) but is expected to pick up speed in January for the February 1 opening.

Programs & Services

Circulation of physical materials dipped slightly in December, which is typical. However, visits dipped by 7%, likely due in part to holiday closings but also to the Covid Omicron wave that began just after Thanksgiving. We also saw a 53% increase in holds placed (on physical items) and a 5% increase in Overdrive ebook use compared to November, which suggests people are reverting back to pre-selecting and picking up their materials rather than spending time in the buildings browsing the collections, and/or taking advantage of online materials to avoid visiting the buildings at all.

Program attendance was average for December, at a mix of in-person and online programs. The month was bookended by two very successful in-person programs: the After-Hours event for adults on December 3rd and the annual December 31st Noon Year's Eve event, which attracted 100 people (57 children with their caregivers), despite the pandemic conditions. Fall English Talk Time classes continued through December both in-person and online, with about 75 individual students and 18 volunteers.

With the Omicron wave, Covid is for the first time impacting library staffing levels. Since Thanksgiving, four employees have tested positive and had to isolate at home, and more than a half dozen more have been close contacts. Due to unexpectedly low staffing, Adams Shore and Wollaston had to be closed on December 29 and 30th in order to keep the Main Library fully staffed and open.

New early literacy workstations were deployed at all locations, including desktop versions instead of tablets for Adams Shore and Wollaston, funded by the TCPL Foundation.

In our continuing quest to expand accessibility options, a new accessible computer workstation was put out for the public at the Main Library after a period of research, setup, testing, and staff training. The workstation includes a magnifier, narrator, over-sized monitor, large print keyboard, and mouse with trackball and tilt plate. A similar workstation will be provided at the North Quincy Branch when it reopens.

Four new online resources for all Old Colony Library Network patrons have been added: HeritageHub (a genealogy tool), Black Life in America (news coverage of the African American experience from the early 18th century to date), New York Times Cooking, and New York Times Games.

The Book Share outreach program has been extended beyond the city's food pantries to selected Quincy Housing Authority locations.

Other

The Boston Globe published an article on January 2 about how public libraries have been coping during the pandemic. One of the featured libraries was TCPL, including several photos of the library's December After-Hours event.

Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Lockhart reported on activities and projects since she was appointed in April 2021.

Highlights include: interviewing and selecting several new employees; assisting with the launch of the new public website; leading the adult program planning team; supporting safety efforts, including the introduction of two-way radios and the orientation/coaching of a new safety officer; meeting with community partners; compiling statistics for the library's annual reports; creating an employee handbook; and working with staff to build a new Chinese language ebook service.

TCPL Foundation Liaison's Report

Ms. Costagliola reported that the Board of Directors will meet again in February, and she is working with the Foundation's accountant regarding annual report filings.

Old Business

Investment Committee Report

Ms. Mitchell reported that the investments are holding steady despite a slight dip last month.

Director Search Committee Report

Ms. Costagliola reported that four candidates have been selected for preliminary interviews, which will take place in the last two weeks of January. A survey of library staff elicited information that will be helpful in crafting interview questions and assessing the candidates. The search committee hopes to have final candidates to present to the full board by the beginning of February.

Proposed Revision to Video Surveillance Policy

Ms. Mayyasi proposed a small revision to the draft policy. Ms. Mayyasi moved and Mr. Tam seconded that the Video Surveillance Policy be approved as submitted but with the revision proposed by Mr. Mayyasi. The motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Revision to Meeting Room Use Policy

Mr. Griffin moved and Ms. Mayyasi seconded that the Meeting Room Use Policy be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m. The next scheduled meeting will be held on Monday, February 14, 2022 at the North Quincy Branch Library.

Documents Distributed

- Draft Minutes from the December 13, 2021 Trustees Meeting
- January 10, 2022 Treasurer's Report
- December 2021 Building Traffic Report