

Draft of Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting of February 22, 2024

Salem, Massachusetts

February 22, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held via Zoom on this date at 4:02pm with Trustees April, Lutts, Morin, Rourke, and Trustee Buckley present and presiding. Mayor Pangallo and Trustee Austin were absent. Miss Mansfield was present.

Approval of draft minutes from January 18, 2024 UNANIMOUS.

Current Library Use and Financial reports were distributed. Salem was fourth highest in NOBLE for circulation of physical items in January and remained in first place with highest circulation in January for Overdrive/Libby. Miss Mansfield noted that the library was spending more than ever trying to keep up with holds and reduce wait times.

Financial reports were distributed. Miss Mansfield noted that each January an accounting is completed for the John Bertram fund that supports the digitization and reprinting of the historic City Directories collection. A transfer of \$700 from the investments will be initiated to cover the estimated shortfall for the digitization and reprinting of four more directories this year. Miss Mansfield highlighted the private funds expenditure for the 4th Grade Author visit books.

Trustee Morin reported that the fountain restoration was in the final phase and that he had reached out to all three contractors about the spring work. He noted that the irrigation system would need to be repaired, but was not sure if that would need to happen before or after the lawn repairs were completed. Trustee Morin noted that the concrete under the basin would need to be treated and water proofed, and he was looking into whether that could be done by a volunteer or would need to be completed by a professional. Possibilities for repairing the landscaping were also discussed.

Miss Mansfield reported that Patty Starfield visited the library on February 9th and inspected the grounds and the mulch around the trees. Ms. Starfield noted that she had removed a half truckload of mulch last spring, and was able to demonstrate that the tree root systems had risen to the top of the existing mulch by gently brushing aside the top layer. Removing more mulch would expose the root system and jeopardize the health of the trees. Ms. Starfield noted that she did not plant the trees in the yard and that the mounds of mulch had been in place when she took over.

Miss Mansfield reported that she had not heard back from the boiler company after three phone calls, and had asked the ATCO to look at the boiler during the February scheduled maintenance. The technician was able to identify the issue and will send a quote for repair.

Miss Mansfield requested to continue the discussion of the program policy at the next meeting, as she was awaiting guidance on inclusive language from North Shore ARC. She noted that

Kerry from North Shore ARC had visited the library and donated a large collection of sensory and adaptive tools and toys.

Miss Mansfield reported that Darleen Melis from the Tree Commission had asked to do a presentation at the next meeting about over mulching. The Trustees decided that there was no actionable measure to be taken, as the mulch was inspected by Ms. Starfield last spring and the excess had been removed. Trustee Morin volunteered to meet with Ms. Melis and give her a tour of the grounds so that she can inspect the mulch and underlying root structures. Trustee Lutts volunteered to attend as well. Miss Mansfield will contact Ms. Melis and set up a meeting time.

An email from Mary Ellen Halliwell was distributed. Ms. Halliwell made suggestions for making the library more welcoming by adding comfortable chairs, removing the DVD collection in the wire racks, and rearranging the periodicals. Miss Mansfield reported that the library had received capital funds to replace some furniture and noted that quotes for padded wooden chairs were being solicited. She noted that the teal paneling on furniture surfaces throughout the building is difficult to match, and that she was reluctant to invest in more teal colored furniture. Trustee Rourke agreed that another color would be better.

Furnishings at other libraries was discussed. Trustee Rourke and Trustee Lutts offered to visit some libraries with similar demographics to look at what they have for furniture and how they create welcoming spaces. Trustee April searched through online photos of local libraries and noted that he was mostly seeing wooden chairs.

Miss Mansfield reported that Maureen from Grace Church requested that the library sponsor the church's anti-racist book club and provide a space to meet and show a movie. Miss Mansfield noted that the library had requested copies of the book and had them available at the circulation desk, and had suggested other places for the book group to meet. She noted that the meeting was listed on the Salem Athenaeum's calendar of events.

Adjourned 4:55pm.