

Boylston Public Library  
Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees  
November 8, 2023

Attendees: Erica Hout, Prashant Bhabhalia, Azucena (Sue) Filsinger, Jean Therriault, Susan Therriault, Beth Wilson, Maria Zapp, Arlene Murphy

Materials: Minutes of November 8, 2023, Board of Trustees meeting  
October Librarian Report  
October Bill Report  
Friends MOU Draft 11.2.23  
Exhibit A to Agreement with LLB Architects-Boylston Library Architects  
Estimate\_1597\_from\_Almar\_LL.C.  
20231011 LLB Contract

Because of the state's declaration of a state of emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was held remotely through Zoom, an online technology approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' open meeting law. This meeting was recorded in its entirety and is available for viewing. In accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts open meeting law, a formal roll call of attendees was taken.

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm by Maria Zapp.

**Approval of Minutes**

Arlene reviewed the change to the spelling of Sue's name. Maria made a motion to approve modified minutes from Oct.11th and Prashant seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Correspondence – Erica**

None currently.

**Treasurer's Report – Prashant**

Prashant reported that the September 30, 2023, statement balance was \$6125.08 which includes the \$.10 interest activity during the month. The October statement has not arrived in time for our meeting tonight, but we should have the October statement in December.

Prashant explained that the Trustees usually meet before we receive the monthly bank statements. Maria moved that we accept the report for September and suggested we wait until December to approve the October report so that it is accurate. Beth seconded and was approved unanimously.

Prashant suggested that we should consider setting up an on-line account. Arlene agreed as it would simplify the reporting process to the Board and essentially eliminate the need for deferring Treasury reporting due to untimely mailing.

Prashant volunteered to investigate the details regarding an online account – and the number of people who would have access to the account. He also reported that he would be leaving the checkbook with Erica.

On a separate but somewhat aligned note Erica reported that she attended a webinar on libraries moving to creating Trustee email accounts with Gmail addresses.

### **Directors Report – Erica**

1. The foundation recorded their best attendance ever at their annual meeting in October. Many thanks to Maria for updating them on the building restoration efforts. The Foundation now funds the bulk of library programming. They will be sending out their annual appeal soon and now can receive on-line donations.
2. We've completed the data gathering stage of ALA Grant and have concluded the community conversations and are now researching feasibility and costs of new project priorities with grant funds.
  - a. Lighting in the children's room.
  - b. Demarcating spaces: spatial organization and creating different types of seating has been requested by patrons.
  - c. Making screens/ tech LESS accessibly
  - d. Sensory Friendly toys/accessories in the children's room as well as noise cancelling headphones.
3. Director of Curriculum for the Berlin Boylston Region School District (BBRSD) asked the library to participate in a Job Shadow and Internship program for junior and senior high school students. We have agreed to participate in the program.
4. Assistant Director Alexi Nix is in the application process to become a notary public. Notary services will soon be a new service available at the library which will be coordinated with the Town Hall. The goal is to offer this service free of charge, however the number of documents requested and/or frequency of use may affect the library's ability to handle the cost.

### **LPC Report – Jean**

We now have a signed contract with LLB thanks to the follow-up work of Erica who worked in coordination with Mary Bulso. The Trustees will vote tonight to reapprove the acceptance of the revised contract. LLB needed to change three of the dates for the deliverables, which was caused by delays in getting the contract verified legally. Other than this, the contract has no changes.

Once we are signed, we will want to follow up with Mary to make sure that work on the parapet gets done ASAP– and we will also want to bring the Selectmen up to speed on our plans.

Maria commented that the changes to the contract are on page 2 in the section entitled Work Sequence Breakdown and highlighted in blue type. Maria asked for a motion to vote for approval of the revised contract for LLB – Susan moved, and Prashant seconded. A roll call vote was taken and passed unanimously. Maria now needs to sign the contract and asked if it could be done by DocuSign. Erica will ask and advise on the method.

Maria did mention the parapet when she attended the Foundation meeting. She asked for a placeholder for \$20,000 from the Foundation.

### **Old Business –**

Almar's estimate for repairing the damage to the gutter and slates came in at \$16,200 – with little detail in the way of explanation.

Erica asked the town if Bob Bourassa could look at the area. He didn't feel that we would need to replace the gutter at this time...and was able to reattach the gutter for FREE. No evidence of structural damage – however there were a few slates lost and we may have to replace the gutter at some point.

Barnard Roofing (based in Worcester) was suggested by the town. They were the original company who did the work on the slate roof.

Since we have had a satisfactory business relationship with Almar – it was suggested that it would be prudent to let him know that we aren't doing the work at this time. Perhaps we should ask this company for another quote next year.

Trees – Erica and Arlene met with Dennis Bauer, owner of Tree Tech regarding the neighboring ash trees and their condition. It was Dennis' opinion that they have been in decline due to Emerald Ash borer, and that they should be removed sooner rather than later. Dennis gave a rough estimate of \$6000, which includes crane service.

- A. Erica met with the neighbors about the current tree situation – and they concluded that we should get another opinion or two. Trees Unlimited advised removing two of the ash trees closest to the library and removing some of the limbs that are problematic from other ash. They also suggested removing the large limb from the neighbor's sugar maple. Their quote is \$2700.
- B. Carlson Tree Service's quote called for removing all the ash, citing borer marks in the trees. While they are still showing some signs of life the trees will not recover from the ash borer and will be dead soon enough, hence it is more cost effective to do all the work at one time. Their quote was \$7000.

In the meantime – the plot plan has been sent to the neighbors who did express interest and concern about the tree that dropped a significant limb that damaged the library. They feel all the quotes are expensive and wonder if the companies are up charging because they assume the town is paying for it. They are going to get their own quote from a 4<sup>th</sup> company to test their theory.

On other Old Business, Arlene commented that Beth Wilson's name has been inadvertently omitted from the minutes of a previous meeting and needs to be updated for the record.

### **New Business**

Memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Boylston library and the Friends of the Boylston Library was reviewed.

Sue F. had two questions:

- A. Resources in section 3A – question about donations which may include books/computers physical materials – may include DVD's. The library and the friends do not collect large scale items, certainly no large cash donations.
- B. Section 4A - Friends are a separate entity from the Foundation – their budget is

much smaller than the Foundation and they don't operate on credit. If the Friends should dissolve for some reason – are the Trustees responsible? Erica said that the Trustees have no responsibility to pay for any obligations the Friends might incur.

- C. The MOU document does not require that the Friends have insurance, but it makes clear that the Friends are not covered by town insurance.
- D. If the Friends stop fund raising – it will be forced to dissolve. It is part of their bylaws, but it doesn't offer a huge amount of detail.

Susan also had a couple of questions:

- A. Susan explained that the Friends have an MOU with the Foundation but wanted to know if the library has an MOU with the Foundation. As of now, we do not but it will be addressed soon. Maria explained that these documents are important, they need to be in place because of the way things have evolved. They are necessary because the Foundation and Friends use the name of the library, and the point is to serve the public. These documents help prevent conflict of interest and as such they are necessary.

- B. Sue also asked about the next steps. The Friends next meeting is Dec 5<sup>th</sup>.

Sue F suggested that we call this agreement a draft –see if they agree and approve of the draft. All agreed that a draft is a good idea – Erica suggested it would be nice to get a response from them by the 8<sup>th</sup> of December so that the Trustees can vote on this at our next meeting Dec 13<sup>th</sup>.

Maria moved that we accept the current MOU with the Friends of the Library. A roll call vote was taken and was approved unanimously in its current form.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Arlene Murphy