

Manchester Public Library Board
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2021

Call to order at 6:36 pm, with most members attending virtually via Zoom.

Members Present: Miriam Byroade, Heather Doucette, Grace Cedrone, Joyce Hood, Karl Hasel, Ashley Odell, Jessica Scorso, Melissa Pattacini

Also present: Doug McDonough, Norma Nevers, Stephen Ristau (Manchester resident) Thomas Scheinblum (Manchester resident)

Not Present: Mary Fischer, Stephen Stephanou (Assistant General Manager)

- Move to approve the minutes from:
 - Board Meeting of 3/8/2021 - approved with change to include Melissa Pattacini as present
 - 21st Century Library Task Force Meeting of 3/29/2021 - approved with fix to Thomas Scheinblum's name
 - 21st Century Library Task Force of 4/12/2021 - approved
 - 21st Century Library Task Force of 4/19/2021 - approved with fix to Thomas Scheinblum's name
 - Committee meeting of 4/21/2021- approved
 - Committee meeting of 4/23/2021 - approved with fix to Thomas Scheinblum's name

Public comment: None

Librarians report

- Update on the summer reading program. The national theme is Tails & Tales and will operate from June 17th - August 24th, with prizes given out through September 3rd. There will be public programming, both in person including performances, as well as virtual.
- MPL is receiving \$3,000 from the American Recovery Act. Connecticut public libraries like ours that already received Covid relief funding this past winter (\$76,028 for us) will only be awarded a flat \$3,000 during this round of funding. Our new tables with chairs, new children's furniture, and PPE/Personal Protective Equipment were all purchased with grant money.
- Last week there was an interview with Librarian 2 Jenn Bartlett on WFSB television promoting our 'bookmarked' subscription boxes/kits and board games, none of which are common in Connecticut public libraries.
- As of today, we began allowing limited seating inside both buildings and stopped the quarantine of books. All full-time staff have been vaccinated against Covid-19/Coronavirus except for two who have opted out while only one part-timer has chosen to not be vaccinated. During the pandemic, there have been only 5 public access stand-

up/limited time computers in the Cheney reference area; that is increasing to six machines and we will see if it is sufficient. Whiton will increase from one computer for public internet access to two.

- Checkouts as of the end of April are up to 88% of the total volume compared to same time last year.
- Waiting to hear what the library budget will look like in the final FY 2022 town budget.
- Since the Covid pandemic began there have been three retirements: a Librarian 1 in children's, Mona Elson; Library Technician 1 Terry Carter (both Mona and Terry retired in the winter and stayed on the payroll as part-time substitutes); and Technician 1 Debbie Dascanio will be retiring at the end of June. Both Terry and Debbie had worked for the library over 30 years each. Interviews will begin soon to replace these positions.

Old Business:

21st Century Manchester Library Task Force

- Site visits were made to West Hartford and Wallingford
 - Wallingford: The building was mostly empty of people due to COVID restrictions/enter by reservation only and most furniture and displays were put away as well; ample and flexible spacing; dedicated spaces for different age groups and functions was most notable; Director would like more private study areas; the Collaboratory maker space was great; the children's area is one of the best in the state. If we can visit only one library in the area, this one was recommended.
 - West Hartford's current square footage is a bit less than Wallingford's, and didn't feel as spacious; didn't flow as well; there is ample parking with validation in garage; Children's area well organized around age, including performance area and dedicated spaces for infant, toddler, preschool, school aged, etc. Public restrooms still an issue according to Director, and still could use more community room spaces/private study areas; teen room too small for needs. Also the library is a series of extensions/additions over the decades so there was not as much control over design and use of space; they are planning on repurposing a former computer lab space to create a recording studio.
 - Ashley and Stephen sent around links and attachments to various docs/photos detailing history of the library.
- Public Information Gathering/Communication Strategies/updates & future tasks
 - Engagement strategies--there has already been considerable public polling over the years, and the public has been saying the same basic things for a long time
 - Survey will ask about new ideas/concepts, but will still ask about physical plant and parking
 - Your Voice Matters Manchester website and other outlets will be used

- Sharing of the timeline and maybe some other not-widely-known information about the history of the library; try to tell the story of how far past due we are on a new library facility.
- Brianna Smith, Town Communications, will be getting together this week to talk communication strategy, promotion of online survey and other mechanisms for distribution (e.g. events where information/surveys can be distributed)
- Press release should be getting developed soon. Many in town and other officials/committees may not even be aware so we need some sort of update for the town and public. Press release should coincide with Your Voice Matters Manchester launch of survey.
- Some 21st C. Task Force members went to the repurposing schools press conference; task force invited to tour Nathan Hale, Robertson and Community Y tours from Chris Silver; community Y may be going off-line as well. Chris would like to give tours before end of May; the repurposing schools group has never considered what library needs
- Will propose May 18th and 19th to Chris that representatives can tour the schools
- Stephen R. met with Angela Bellas on repurposing schools committee, who committed to bringing up library and determining a time for two committees to meet
- Information to be gathered from May 28th library staff meeting
 - Stephen would appreciate support with communicating with the staff
 - Survey results to be shared; clarify their input/feedback
 - Guided conversation around competing priorities, ask for staff assistance in shaping the priorities for new library, possibly using “Cheney bucks” activity so staff can vote on their priorities
- Stephen R. met with Ellen Dougan and Dennis Schain
 - When they asked what they can do to help; Stephen asked them to be ambassadors and advocates with their colleagues on the board & other town officials
 - They suggested we wait until after budget passed to go back to the BoD
- June 7 at 7:00 pm for next task force meeting
- Community engagement committee TBD depending on tours with Chris Silver, either May 18th/19th
- The next regular library Board meeting is scheduled for June 21 at 6:30 pm.

New Business: None

Move to adjourn: 8:03 pm

Respectfully submitted

Heather L. Doucette