

Montague Public Libraries Trustees

November Minutes

Date: Monday, November 23, 2020

Time: 6:30pm

Place: Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/99750469331?pwd=MFBWUUEE2WEVRMUI2SG1naWxXc3ozQT09>

Attendees: Nancy Crowell, David Harmon, Margot Malachowski, Jim Martineau, Tricia Perham, Gretchen Wetherby

Library Director: Linda Hickman

Absent: Karen Latka, Polly Billiel

Library Staff: Angela Rovatti-Leonard

Public: Catherine Dodds, Michael Westort, Frances Ludington, Lydia levins

6:46 Call to order.

6:49 Minutes from 10-26-2020 —approved with amendments.

6:58 Secretary's Report—Margot reported that the Zoom meeting link is included within the Agenda pdf that posted on the Town's Calendar page (<https://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar>). She tried to add a files module to the Town Committee page but could not figure out how to name the module (<https://www.montague-ma.gov/g/66/Library-Trustees>). She will contact Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz for guidance. The Trustees discussed eliminating the files module from the Montague Public Libraries Trustees page and simply linking to the Town Committee's page for access to all files. (<https://montaguepubliclibraries.org/p/5/Library-Trustees>).

7:18 Personnel— We have a vacancy for one Trustee. Four Montague residents attended the meeting to learn more about the responsibilities of the Trustees and the pressing needs of the Libraries. Several Trustees offered their perspectives on participation. The maintenance of the buildings is a major concern, as is the need to provide library branch services.

Linda reported that the Town is interested in centralizing hiring practices. She asked the Trustees to consider what that might mean for the Libraries. This would include expanding the Town Executive Assistant's position to include Human Resources responsibilities, centralizing recruitment and hiring practices, and creating a consistent onboarding process. The HR Review from the Collins Center, shared at the Selectboard Meeting on Nov 16th, is located within their meeting material at (https://www.montague-ma.gov/files/Meeting_Material_2020-11-16.pdf)

Linda reported that she has a staff person helping her to organize her workspace.

7:22 Building and Maintenance— \$9000 that was allocated for the Library Buildings Study will be spent on a contract with Greg Walsh from Potomac Capital Advisors. The study will look at short- and long-term repairs for all three libraries. Greg previously did a study of the Gill-Montague Schools. Town Administrator Steve Ellis wants to give a head's up that the Capital Improvement Committee and Selectboard are concerned about the upcoming budget.

Horace Moody (Town IT Consultant) gave an estimate for the electrician's work to put in the new wifi and phone systems. The costs exceeded expectations. Steve Ellis wants to know which service is needed most—wifi or phone? The Carnegie is having a lot of issues with the phones. We would like wifi access to reach outside of the building for community use. Linda mentioned the possibility of tapping into State Aid to cover the expenses, but she is concerned about the future stability of financial support. Several Trustees asked if it was too late to switch to wifi/phone services and support from CW/MARS. Linda will talk with Steve about our options.

Jim asked if we are interested in having cameras installed along with the rewiring for phone and internet. Linda said we needed to focus on projects funded by the CARES Act.

Jamrog has not followed up on Montague Center repairs. All area contractors are very busy with CARES Act projects. The energy recovery ventilation was installed at the Carnegie several weeks ago.

- 7:45 Reopening the branches—Linda talked about balancing the risk of rising numbers of COVID-19 infections with wanting to increase services at the branches. Linda said that the branch assistants are comfortable with opening for appointments. The Trustees were cautious and suggested revisiting the idea at our January meeting. Linda said that February is a peak month for circulation as library patrons experience cabin fever.

Dave suggested that we separate discussions of library services from the library buildings. Margot agreed.

- 7:56 Budget—Linda was told to give a level budget proposal and to plan for a 3-6% budget cut. She talked about the importance of keeping town funding to a level that the library still qualifies for State Aid. (See <https://mbic.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aric/index.php>) The Budget Subcommittee needs to meet as soon as possible.

- 8:00 Special Services—Special Services Subcommittee will meet in January to discuss updating the By-Laws section on election of officers. Current statement to be revised: *Election of officers shall be held annually at the first meeting following the town election. No officer may serve more than two consecutive years in the same office. All Trustees including those newly elected are eligible to hold an office except that of Chairperson. In order to be elected Chairperson, a Trustee must have served as a member of the Board for at least one year prior to the May meeting.*

- 8:03 Programming—Angela shared her programming report (separate document). Angela told us that posting children's Facebook events in the early morning is very effective. The fairy house make-and-take bags were a huge hit. The Library will host Winter Reading programs for all ages. Science-at-Home activities will be offered at curbside.

Tricia asked if we could build an email list to promote library services and programs. Linda said that patrons can sign up for notification of events on the Library webpage (see <https://montaguepubliclibraries.org/contact>)

- 8:24 Public Relations—There was an article about Andrew Carnegie in Montague Reporter.

8:25 Upcoming Meetings:

Budget Subcommittee
Mon, Dec 7, 2020 at 6:30pm

Monthly Trustees Meeting
Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 6:30pm

Monthly Trustees Meeting
Mon, Jan 11, 2021 at 6:30pm

Special Services Subcommittee
Mon, Jan 25, 2021 at 6:30pm

8:29 Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Margot Malachowski
Corresponding Secretary
Montague Public Libraries Trustees