

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting for May 6, 2025

Location: Hybrid

Attendees: Karen Kosko, Maria McCauley, Carson McGrath, Liz Werby, Michael Baenen, Irene Monroe, Risa Mednick, Jim Roosevelt, Alyssa Pacy, and Brett Dixon

1. **Public Comment:** None

2. **Social Work Overview with Brett Dixon**

Cambridge Public Library Social Worker Brett Dixon shared an overview of his background and current role at the Library. Brett has been working in human services for 12 years with the last eight as a licensed mental health clinician. Before his role at the Library, Brett was a member of the Cambridge Community Safety Department Community Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) Team, which provides residents with an alternative police response that prioritizes issues of mental and behavioral health.

Next, Brett outlined the three elements of his role as a social worker at the Library: patron support, community outreach, and staff training and support. The majority of Brett's work includes supporting patrons through 1-1 meetings, whether this is through scheduled appointments or during his drop-in hours. He connects patrons to resources such as housing needs, SNAP, MassHealth, immigration support, etc. Brett also assists through crisis intervention when needed by coaching individuals through de-escalation.

By partnering with other organizations in the City of Cambridge, Brett participates in community outreach initiatives to embrace a patron-centered approach to services. Partnerships include ACCESS (Fenway Health), the CASPAR First Step Outreach Program, DHM Homeless Outreach and more. Lastly, Brett offers various supports and training for Library staff including drop-in hours for processing challenging events, Mental Health First Aid and Self-Care Basics trainings, and offering a staff self-care resource director. Looking ahead Brett hopes to improve the process of streamlining referrals to minimize waitlists and make it easier for staff to schedule appointments as needed, offer various library support groups and oversee an internship program.

He closed out the presentation by answering a few questions from the Trustees.

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

Chair Jim Roosevelt opened the floor for corrections or comments to the minutes from April 15, 2025. No corrections were made, and the minutes passed unanimously.

4. **Tiedemann Collection Update**

Archivist Alyssa Pacy provided an update on the status of the Tiedemann Collection.

5. **Library Updates:**

Director Maria McCauley opened by stating the discussions between the Cambridge Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Cambridge Public Library on a possible merger have ended. Through meeting with representatives of the Library and an outside consultant, the two groups have finalized a two-lane approach to their work in support of the Cambridge Public Library. The Trustees reviewed the two-lane document and approved of the new approach after Maria outlined the new structure and responsibilities of the groups.

Director McCauley provided national and regional updates on the current state of libraries. Maria provided national and regional updates on current state of libraries, including the American Library Association's current temporary restraining order to block the dismantling of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. She reiterated that libraries are for everyone and loved by everyone, regardless of politics.

Lastly, she shared a few Library centered updates including the recent hiring of six new library pages. The VITA Tax assistance program was popular this year with patrons. O'Neill held a ukulele class for 19 kids and caregivers, and the Valente team welcomed 50 patrons to hear stories and meet Mama Duck from Lands Sakes Farm. The Paint Party at O'Connell was completely full and even had a long waiting list, while the Communications team held a create your own terrarium workshop in celebration of Earth Day. Lastly, the Youth Services team held special vacation week events included puppetry, storytelling, and a Japanese folktales/origami program due to funding support from the Foundation.

Jim raised a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was unanimously agreed upon.