

Cambridge Public Library
Board of Library Trustees
March 2, 2021
Minutes

The Board of Library Trustees met virtually via Zoom on March 2nd at 5:00pm. The following members of the Board of Library Trustees were present:

- Janet Axelrod, Karen Kosko, Kaija Langley, Omowale Moses, James Roosevelt, Nancy Woods. *Also present:* Maria McCauley, Director of Libraries
- Guests: Shira Gubb (Assistant Director of HR), Jason Yee (Assistant Director), Kathy Penny (Manager of Collection Services), Julie Roach (Manager of Youth Services)

Public Comment & Minutes

- There was no public comment.
- Minutes from the November 4th meeting were approved.

New Business

- After 6 years, Ms. Gubb is leaving the Library as of March 19 to pursue another job opportunity. Ms. Axelrod noted the amazing work Ms. Gubb has contributed to the Library during her time here and all Trustees wished her best of luck in her future pursuits.
- **Black Voices Proposal:** Mr. Yee informed the Trustees about the Library's initiative to replace its outdated Black Studies Collection with a vibrant, living collection of currently relevant works. The objective of the Black Voices Collection will be to collect print materials across age ranges with a focus on popular materials, browsable collections, and circulation including a mix of fiction, genre, memoir, biography, and popular non-fiction. Mr. Yee notified the Trustees about the background of the existing collection, the scale of the new collection, and plans for staff engagement and community outreach.
 - This project may include exploration of cross-promotion with CPL accessible databases and relevant Cambridge Room collections as appropriate.
 - Administration to decide if the collection will reside at the Main Library or the Central Square Branch, as specialty collections typically reside where they will be most used. We also expect collection items to be available at branch locations as we are mindful of the need to spread our initiatives across all CPL locations. Ms. Axelrod expressed she feels it's important for CRLS kids to have access.
 - Mr. Yee noted these items will be available and circulated in the Minuteman system, beyond the CPL system.
 - We hope our BIPOC staff and community partners will help widen the definition of "Black voices" to reflect the perspectives, interests, and people they want represented and feel represented by.
 - Mr. Roosevelt suggested that we may wish to include some local Black academics as part of our community outreach as well.
 - Ms. Kosko and Ms. Woods suggested there may be interest in sharing a bibliography as a model for other libraries and curatorial book lists.
 - Mr. Yee will update Trustees again as the project progresses towards anticipated cross-promotion during Black History Month 2022.

- **Updated Collection Development Policy:** Ms. Penny shared that the previous policy was approved in 2006 and there was a great need to revisit and refresh!
 - The recently completed update was a Strategic Planning action item to perform a re-write with the intention of updating terminology, demographics, mission/vision/values, formats and supplementary appendices.
 - Selection criteria was also modernized and made relevant. We also included our book donation policy, added the Cambridge Room, Express materials, and non-traditional materials (e.g. STEAM kits and Takeout Tech).
 - We added Commonwealth & ILL resources, as well as updating the Request for Reconsideration form.
 - This update was performed with limited staff input and did not include any major policy changes.
 - In 2023, there is an action item to overhaul the policy, which will involve more staff input and consider the philosophical approach of our collection development.
 - The Trustees voted to approve the updated Collection Development Policy.
- **Library Update:** Ms. McCauley notified the Trustees that a historical letter from Oliver Wendell Holmes declining to join the CPL Trustees has been privately purchased by Donna Davis for the Cambridge Room. The Library will publicize this addition to our collection once it is official.
- Ms. McCauley shared that three new Library staff started orientation this week including a new manager for The Hive, new STEAM Assistant and our new social worker Marie Mathieu!
- Book distribution continued in February with an additional 450 books sent out to three locations, including two new food pantry sites.
- The Library has performed checkouts of **209,225** physical materials for all Cambridge locations and processed **236,214** returned items since staff came back on-site mid-June to the end of February. We have also responded to **3000** Ask Us requests.
- Ms. McCauley shared her fascinating experience at the recent virtual event from the Cambridge Room about Boston's Rainsford Island, where impoverished men, women and children were sent, and many died.
- Youth Services librarians recently converted their Baby Lapsit in-person infant programming to virtual for 6 sessions- we had **76** attendees. Youth librarians also used their weekly teen/tween virtual hangout time through February to host a four-week workshop on visual storytelling, which was incredibly popular. Family Night with the New England Aquarium had almost **170** participants and specialty programming hosted for Vacation Week had great attendance.
- Virtual STEAM programs continue from The Hive. We hosted some excellent Black History Month programs which were very well attended. They included a panel about Hip-Hop & The Media, poet Nate Marshall, authors Danielle Evans and Kim McLarin, and several cooking programs, which were very popular and we plan on continuing.
- Ms. McCauley also mentioned we recently kicked off our 6-part Career series with a Resume Writing workshop and that the Senior Wellness Zumba Gold series continues to be well-liked.

Library Upcoming Events

Ms. McCauley informed Trustees about upcoming CPL programs including:

- **Mar 9:** Ruby Hamad presents *White Tears/Brown Scars: How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color*. Funded by the Friends of the Cambridge Public Library.
- **Mar 11:** Screenwise Parenting: Support & Solutions for Parents in the Age of COVID-19
- **Mar 17:** Career Skills: Online Job Searches and & Resume Submission
- **Mar 18:** Alice North Towne Lincoln: Boston's Selfless Advocate for the Poor

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Woods, Secretary