

**Wellesley Free Library  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday September 13, 2021  
9:15 AM  
Retreat: Hills Branch Library**

**Present:** Marla Robinson, Chair; Ann Howley, Vice Chair; Ann Rappaport, Secretary; Diane Savage, Linshi Li, Trustees; Jamie Jurgensen, Library Director; Cara Rothman, Assistant Director; Carol Richards, IT Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 9:26 A.M.

**CITIZEN COMMENT**

None

**ITEMS**

**1. Minutes**

- Diane moved (Ann R. seconded) to approve the minutes of July 12, 2021. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the minutes with minor revisions.

**2. Director's Report**

- The Fells Garden project will receive its story time chair and archway in October.
- In August, the staff participated in an all-staff meeting and training with Marc Wey. Staff discussed the library as a mission-driven organization, and how this applies to the transition to a 'one-desk model' of service.
- All staff are transitioning to a town email address (wellesley.ma.gov) and will use Outlook moving forward. The Trustees are also invited to get a town email address to use for library business and should communicate with Carol if they would like one.
- The 11 open positions have been filled with new employees and we are looking forward to welcoming them to our team.
- We introduced a new museum pass management software, Assabett, to replace Library Insight.
- Outdoor story time will continue weather permitting into the fall.

**3. Gift Acceptance**

The Trustees are very grateful for the following generous donations to the renovation project:

- Ann R. moved (Linshi seconded) to accept the donation from Maura Murphy and Michael Racette to help fund the murals in the Children’s Room. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.
- Ann R. moved (Ann H. seconded) to accept the donation from the Foundation for Metrowest’s Pattillo Magpie Fund for library renovations. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.

#### **4. Sculpture Gift Proposal**

The Trustees discussed a potential gift of a sculpture honoring Sylvia Plath and Katherine Lee Bates which was proposed by a small Working Group consisting of Beth Hinchliffe, Gig Babson, Beth Sullivan Woods, Jeanie Goddard with Trustees Ann H and Ann R acting as liaisons. A summary of this discussion, shared on September 13 with the Working Group, is attached to these minutes.

#### **5. Covid Plans**

- The Main Library expects to reopen in late October and will return to normal operating hours. The WFL does not intend to host large meeting and programs until 2022. However, the conference and study rooms will be open and able to be reserved by patrons. Public computers will be separated by one chair width to ensure social distancing. With the relaxation of library capacity guidelines, greater numbers of seats will be available for patrons. However, no food or drink will be allowed anywhere in the library and patrons must wear masks inside the library at this time.
- The Branches will not accept cash. Staff members are looking into adding a multifunction printer at the Hills Branch with a coin machine for patron use.

#### **6. Policies**

- Covid
  - Ann R. moved (Diane seconded) to approve the Wellesley Free Library Covid Policy as revised. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.
- Rules of Conduct
  - Ann R. moved (Diane seconded) to approve the amended Wellesley Free Library Rules of Conduct. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.
- Meeting Room – Tabled until next meeting.
- Conference Room – Tabled until next meeting.

#### **7. Renovation Update**

- Flooring and millwork delays are pushing the reopening date back to late October; however, all other aspects of the renovation are moving forward. The public reopening celebration’s target date is in late October as outlined in Document 10.

**8. Annual Funds Request**

- Ann R. moved (Diane seconded) to approve the requested \$41,500 from State Aid as amended in Document 11. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.
- Ann R. moved (Diane seconded) to approve the request to move \$15,150 from the Director’s Fund to be expended as amended in Document 11. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.

**9. Annual Goals**

- Tabled until next meeting.

**10. Election of Officers**

- Diane moved (Linshi seconded) to reinstate the current officers in their respective roles. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.

**11. Committee Board Appointments**

- Tabled until next meeting.

**12. Board of Library Trustee Meeting Schedule**

- Meetings will be virtual through December 2021.

**13. Foundation Request**

- The Foundation requested permission to use the main library on Friday, November 5 for a major donor reception at which food and drink will be served in compliance with the Board of Health COVID policy.
- Ann R. moved (Diane seconded) to approve the donor event at the Main Library pending the Select Board approval of the liquor license. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ann R. moved (Ann H. seconded) to adjourn. The Trustees, polled individually, unanimously approved the motion. The meeting adjourned at 1:23 P.M. The next regular meeting is October 18, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Rappaport, Secretary, WFL Board of Trustees

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **LIST of DOCUMENTS**

- 1: Minutes of July 12, 2021
- 2: Gift from Maura Murphy & Michael Racette
- 3: Gift from The Pattillo Magpie Fund
- 4: Bates & Plath Sculpture Gift Proposal
- 5: Covid Policy
- 6: Rules of Conduct
- 7: Meeting Room Rental Policy
- 8: Meeting Room Advance Reservation Form
- 9: Conference Room Advance Reservation Form
- 10: Reopening Celebration: A New Season for WFL
- 11: Annual Funds Request
- 12: Wellesley Free Library Action Plan FY2022
- 13: Committee Board Appointments
- 14: Trustee Meeting Schedule
- 15: Report to the Wellesley Free Library Foundation FY21
- 16: Report to the Wellesley Free Library Foundation Centennial Funds FY21
- 17: Foundation Memo: November 5, 2021 Donor Event

*CMR 9/14/2021, AWR 9/23/2021, Approved 10/18/2021*

**Trustee Liaison Summary of Sylvia Plath/Katherine Lee Bates Sculpture Discussion**  
**Ann Rappaport and Ann Howley**  
**September 13, 2021**

The Library Trustees met on September 13, 2021 to discuss the proposed sculpture and consider whether we could reach consensus on whether the Trustees would ultimately consider accepting such a sculpture, a prerequisite for the Working Group to move forward with its next steps. After significant discussion, the consensus was to support the Working Group's request to move forward to phase 2 and develop the concept model. The Trustees thank the Group for its efforts to date and found the document submitted for Trustee review to be very helpful.

There was general agreement that a non-representational sculpture aimed at celebrating the strength, resiliency, and creativity of Wellesley's artistic women would be a desirable addition to the Library. The Trustees expressed a strong preference for locating the sculpture on the patio outside the Children's Room, taking advantage of the remarkable vistas existing both inside and outside the building. The Trustees also would like the concept developed to be of interest to both children and adults. The Trustees viewed the addition of the sculptor, Nancy Schon, very favorably. We appreciate the Working Group's intention to give this significant work public art to the Library and expect to continue working closely with the Group until the point at which final Trustee approval for the project is requested.

The Trustees, however, have some significant concerns about Sylvia Plath, namely over the already-surfaced issue of Sylvia Plath's depictions of black and Asian people in the *Bell Jar* (and possibly some of her poetry). We felt the bar was higher, so to speak, in considering a new work of art celebrating Plath (as opposed to retaining something that had been commissioned twenty or thirty years ago, when many people were less aware of and sensitive to racial issues). With significant criticism of Plath easily available to anyone with an internet connection, the Trustees are concerned that the Library could be construed as participating in a project that conflicts with its values of diversity, equity and inclusion. These concerns are serious and need to be addressed, because a celebration of Plath may generate opposition once residents become acquainted (or re-acquainted) with her life. One way to handle potential criticism may simply be to acknowledge her flaws and provide context for her writing. The Trustees ask that the Working Group (maybe with the help of the focus groups) develop ways to address this issue, as it does have the potential to become a roadblock to move the project past phase 2. We would also suggest that the focus groups include some younger residents, who may have different and valuable perspectives on the sculpture.

There was also strong interest from the Trustees in potentially broadening the project to include other Wellesley women artists, which might have the effect of diluting the Plath spotlight and moving the focus to a more general celebration of creative and inspiring Wellesley women. One suggestion was the portrait artist Mary Brewster Hazelton, who graduated from Wellesley High School and lived at 319 Washington Street for most of her life.