

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting for October 8, 2024

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Karen Kosko, Maria McCauley, Michael Baenen, Irene Monroe, Diana Fendler, Jim Roosevelt, Laura Schinn

1. Public Comment: None

2. Approval of Minutes: The group gave informal introductions of themselves to new Trustee, Rev. Irene Monroe. Jim opened the floor for corrections or comments to the minutes from September 10, 2024. No corrections were made, and the minutes passed unanimously.

3. Summer Reading Overview with Diana Fendler:

Manager of Adult Services, Diana Fendler, shared information about the recent Summer Reading Program. The 9-week program took place from June 24 – Aug 23, 2024. Based on feedback from staff and patrons, they wanted to do something where one could track their accomplishments. They created two bingo boards, with one for Adults and one for Youth. Input from all staff was solicited for the reading prompts on the board. At the end, there were almost 8,000 bingos.

Age Group	Number of Participants
0 – 5 years	706
6 – 11 years	5,709
12 – 18 years	429
Adults 19 & Older	1,103

When a young person finishes the whole board, they were entered into a drawing for a \$50 Porter Square Books gift card. When an adult completed a Bingo line, they were entered into a drawing to win either a kindle or \$100 Porter Square Books gift card. In total, the Library gave out 50 Youth gift cards, 10 kindles, and 10 of the \$100 gift cards.

Diana stated they wanted to make sure that staff were engaged as well, so they made a giant board in the staff area for them to include their books they read. Branches had a similar smaller version for their staff. All staff were able to write down what they were reading throughout the summer.

Diana then discussed the programs through the summer. The Youth Services team had a really well planned out list of programs – Diana showed a flyer prepared in May, which listed about 100 or so different summer programs that took place throughout the summer all locations. Some examples for youth were bilingual story time, preschool dance party, and a bubble party. An example of an Adult event was literary trivia night.

Diana then shared several testimonials from patrons:

- “Thank you for giving me something to look forward to this summer aside from full time work... I haven’t read much since I fell out of love with reading, and this gave me back my love of reading.”
- “Love the categories you chose this year. Thank you for running such an engaging summer activity.”
- A youth won a prize with their mom – the winner was very excited to claim the prize and she said that their child had so much fun participating in Bingo, that their family has made their own Bingo board. If their family finishes their Bingo board at the end of the year they will get a family vacation.

Trustee Michael asked: Were any themes or trends in content noticed? Or do you know what they liked?

Answer: The bingo lines were tracked by completion; content themes across participants were not noted. We received a lot of positive feedback and comments of “thank you” from the program.

Trustee Irene comment: I hope you bring it back next summer. It was exciting to read outside my standard genre.

Trustee Irene question: The Boston Book fair is coming up, do we engage with that?

Answer: We have participated in various ways, some years we’ve tabled, this particular year we are not tabling.

4. Library Updates:

Director Maria McCauley opened with discussing an upcoming talk that she will be giving at Simmons University. The topic is Future of Libraries, and with a focus on the following question: *What is one thing you believe has had the biggest impact on Libraries over the last decade?*

Maria discussed her thoughts on this question which are listed below.

- Central question is about equity and access.

- Especially since pandemic and murder of George Floyd, the visibility of social injustices and inequities has been raised greatly. This also raises a question for libraries and communities about who gets library services and who does not.
- Confluence of these visibilities over the past decade that have compelled communities to respond in different ways.
- Some have leaned into equity – diverse speakers, authors, hiring social workers, creating digital equity specialists, all gender restrooms.
- Some libraries have been forced to limit services to specific communities (marginalized groups like LGBTQ+, black and brown, the unhoused)
- Importance of making sure we invite everyone to the table and level the playing field.
- How have we seen this in action – pride displays being taken away, black and brown authors pulled from shelves. Different communities have reacted in different ways.
- The question about equity and inclusion is about this raised visibility – this has had the biggest impact on libraries in the last decade.

Maria then asked the Trustees for their thoughts and input.

- Would love for you to mention banned books
- Discussion of the bravery it takes to be a librarian these days, and creativity in finding ways to deal with threats
- First Amendment Auditors
- Equity – thinking about the ways libraries have tried to provide objective, up-to-date, and comprehensive information on the most divisive and difficult issues of our time.
- The consensus was that it is a great framing and matches their experiences.

Logistics of the speech were then discussed, of the audience being graduate students and format being hybrid. An action item was noted for Laura to send Weekly staff update to all Trustees.

Maria then moved into Library Updates. Information on two new hires were shared – Jo Percell (Collins Branch Manager) and Raissa Kamariza (Digital Equity Coordinator). Jo will temporarily be stationed at Central Square branch while Collins is closed. Estrellita Reyes-Contreras was also recently promoted to Library Assistant – Youth Services.

Maria shared highlights from recent Adult Service programming and a Mental Health first aid training by Social Worker Taylor Morris. She shared that the Lewis Room at Central Square has been seeing a lot of use after it's reopening. Maria then shared about the Collins Branch closure. The project had to go out to bid again, and CPL has made a recommendation to award a contract. It is currently being reviewed by the City for MBE requirements. Maria shared that across branches, there have been a wide variety of programming, including classroom outreach visits. The Collection Services team recently processed the RMV manual in 13 languages and launched a new STEAM kit. The Digital Navigator pilot program is receiving requests now and device distribution underway. This is a project with Mass Broadband Institute and includes federal digital equity funding. Through this program, people can receive free laptops and hotspots. The digital navigator Dana Grotenstein has started providing support across locations. Cambridge Science Festival wrapped up and The

Hive also welcomed a new hire, Allison Moore as a Library Associate. The Youth Services department held 40 programs with 1400 attendees. Maria shared that the Election Commission visited the Teen Room and helped teens register to vote. Ellen Kaluza is a new Tween librarian at Main. Maria shared that the All-gender restroom project at Main is underway. Currently, there are 2 All Gender restrooms at the Main Library in Administration and The Hive, but they are only open the hours those departments are open. Based on community and staff feedback, CPL is building an additional All-gender restroom that will be open all the hours the Library is open. The Mamava has been moved to under the red staircase and the restroom is estimated to be completed by January 2025. Maria shared that IT recently upgraded all self checkout devices to Windows 10 operating system. The Library recently hosted the author Carmen Maria Machado which was a full and popular program.

The Trustees noted that Trustees Liz and Risa were not able to attend the meeting tonight. Jim raised a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was unanimously agreed upon.