

Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes

Sean Lynn-Jones, Chair

Date: March 22, 2016

Present: Carla Benka, Clifford M. Brown, Carol Caro, Lea Cohen, Dennis Doughty, John Doggett, Harry K. Friedman, Janet Gelbart, David-Marc Goldstein, Jennifer Goldsmith, Neil Gordon, Kelly Hardebeck, Amy F. Hummel, Alisa Jonas, Janice S. Kahn, Bobbie Knable, Fred Levitan, Robert Liao, Pamela Lodish, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, Shaari S. Mittel, Michael Sandman, Lee Selwyn, Charles Swartz, Christine Westphal.

Absent: * Clifford M. Brown, Stanley Spiegel, Mariah Nobrega, Sytske Humphrey, Steve Kanen, Angela Hyatt.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

Also in attendance: Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator; Sara Slymon, Library Director, and Library Trustees, including Michael Burstein, Chair.

REVIEW OF FY2017 BUDGET: PUBLIC LIBRARY

Growth in circulation and attendance at library sponsored events. Increase in overdue fines and lost items. The libraries are doing a lot with same amount of staff. Coolidge Corner is the busiest branch in the State, and Putterham is the 3rd busiest branch in the State.

Statistics on diversity a little bit better than the Town overall and better than general membership of ALA.

Michael introduced many members of the Library Trustees – over half the Board of the Library. Also two Assistant Directors.

The Library is down 10 positions from the past years. Reviewed a priority list of staffing needs.

Level funded. In order to remain eligible must show 1.25% increase in materials budget – brings in \$90K for technology and programming. We have had a rewarding and innovative year. The Book Bike was wildly successful. Healthy partnership with the Senior Center. Hebrew Senior Living. Working on partnerships with the Brookline Housing Authority to do some programming in public housing as well as with Parks and Rec to go out to the camps during the summer.

Cake pan collection. Collaborative consumption. We buy the cake pans. Games and gaming – board games and card games, electronic games as well as books on games and gaming. Adult coloring books – circulating coloring books and coloring pencils. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Technology situation has been crazy, Hired Hank Sway away from Harvard University. Fixed our intranet. Received a 3-D printer. Complete chess set made out of fictional characters and we have enjoyed growing and deepening out ties with Town IT. Programming - a super hero program – 20-30 people who come as comic book super heroes. Brookline Reads very successful. Over 300 people came.

Play spaces – tunnels slides, kid cars – get over 100 people every time.

Q: On your wish list, 2 reference librarians. What do they do these days?

A: Google is uncurated so you can do a Google search, but you have to have training to understand how to process the information. We subscribe to over 100 databases that have curated content that are not easy to negotiate on your own. Digital Magazines that reference librarians can assist patrons use and identify scholarly vs public types. Also assisting with digitizing material, getting metadata written and the interface set up for the public to use.

Q: What percent of your materials budget is still allocated for books?

A: E-book circulation is rising but 80% of current circulation is paper based, print materials. ALA has been advocating for at least six major publishers keep costs low.

Q: What has increased teenage attendance?

A: We are fortunate to have Robin Brenner who is a rock star librarian. She is in the Children's Department. Need to serve 9-12 year olds. She is freed up to be in her room. She spends 10 hours a week in the Teen room and she can connect more directly with the kids.

Q: How did you calculate the attendance?

A: When you come through the gates, they have both a security and counting function.

Q: Over the last few years, the library has added a number of services, what does that end up costing, i.e. Consumer Reports, etc.?

A: We watch how things are circulating. Currently have a product called Zinio which is not doing very well. There is a new product called Flipster. Thinking about phasing out Zinio and implementing Flipster so there is no loss. Putting the Town's money on products library patrons want to use.

Q: Town has undergone a great deal of IT development, has the library reaped the rewards of this?

A: Oftentimes libraries were ahead of the curve and the town would actually go to the library to get help. We are now all at the same level so there is a great deal of back and forth and support. Purchasing I-pads that have special apps for people who are visually impaired using their Apple agreement.

Q: Have you talked to the Public Schools about collaborative efforts between the school libraries and the public library?

A: Yes, have made some efforts. Children Librarians work together. One initiative will have Librarian visiting the schools to get kids signed up for summer reading before they head off for vacation. Increase summer reading participation.

Q: No line item in budget for advertising and promotion. There are many wonderful products that need to be explained and highlighted.

A: Communication Officer/Grant Writer is on our wish list. We should have someone to write press releases but we don't have the bandwidth to make those calls and do that outreach. A dedicated advertising budget would be awesome.

Q: Personnel Subcommittee – sick time leave for part time workers. How does your staff feel about the issue – warrant article coming? Is your staff aware of this benefit?

A: I keep them informed, and we share information from HR.

Q: \$120K Revenue – only fines?

A: Fines, lost items, and fees for room rentals. We don't fund raise but the Foundation is funding the website project and the Friends have funded the Book Bike and the Artist in Residence.

Q: Artist in Residence separate from music at the library?

A: Yes, it is a visual artist.

Q: Homeless people in the library?

A: They just want to come in and use our resources like anyone else.

Q: The website – a sorting function has become more difficult, will it become more user friendly?

A: No, it is the service that Minute Man Library Network provides. Not something we can fix with our website but we have let that vendor know our concerns.

A MOTION was made and seconded to recommend approval of the Public Library FY17 budget of \$3,977,262.

Note: With a vote of 21 in favor, 0 opposed with 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the FY2017 Library budget of \$3,977,262.

REVIEW OF FY2017 BUDGET: LIBRARY CIP

Q: New site of Coolidge Corner is Centre Street lot? Can you comment?

A: Trustees have recommended this site as the best - 10 public meetings – and have received feedback from the community about the vote. Currently slowing the process down and reaching out to neighborhood about configuration and partnerships. Presented with a range of feasible options and looking at trends, parking and flexible spaces, and one level. Process is in limbo at this time.

Q: Understood that there was a requirement to look at an alternative site in order to be eligible to receive grant money from the state.

A: In order to receive library funding you have to demonstrate that you seriously considered two locations – one can be your original location and one must be somewhere else. The branch must remain in that neighborhood; it is the heart of that community. The project that we blocked out there (Center Street parking lot site) also looked the best.

Q: What are the differences between current site and a new build?

A: A renovation of the current location would need to be multi-story with garden and two other levels which would be difficult for staffing. Downstairs basement area is locked from the basement unless there is programming. Three functioning stories to be covered by personnel would be burdensome. The new location at Centre Street meets library best practices for the next 20 years.

Comment: Give reconsideration to decision to go one level given lack of room to spread out.

A: Would be happy to outline further what is happening in design of libraries in the country; trending toward mixed use. Sara noted a few other award winning designs of libraries that are single level and she would be happy to share more information on all of this.

Nothing happening with additional outreach to businesses since the entire process has slowed down. We have had many public open meetings, and they have been attended by business leaders.

A MOTION was made and seconded to recommend approval of the two Library CIP items of \$110,000 each.

Vote: With a vote of 22 in favor, 0 opposed with 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the two FY2017 Library CIP items of \$110,000 each.

REVIEW OF FY2017 BUDGET: DEPARTMENT OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Robert Liao presented the report for the Human Services Subcommittee and gave an overview of the discussion.

Agreed that our data was not very good. Computer systems not very good. Dependent on HR department to pull numbers from MUNIS. Hard to track diversity of pools of new employees. Cannot ask people what their race is. Starting off with spotty data set, then when they get data, it goes into many different tables but it is irretrievable. No one has any idea if we are improving or getting worse. An independent third party was unable to figure out from our data what our hiring practices were.

Does this department help with Schools...working on establishing a rapport with them but they tend to do things on their own.

MLK Celebration Committee scribe.

Workforce Diversity Survey – Police and Fire Department in 2015. Slow response rate by minorities. Training, signage, etc.

Lloyd Gellineau, DICR Department Head – this isn't all negative, it is a starting point. We have EEOC data but we have no way of integrating it with our data.

Doing pretty well with some minorities, in particular Blacks. We are behind in Asians which is the highest minority in Brookline. Issues around gender – we need be able to look at how many people are transgender. But we cannot ask. Moving forward. Working with Sandra to get better data and get the numbers crunched at a quicker pace.

Positive messaging – We need to stick to established programs – parallel play – do something fun bringing people together. Staff will focus on these things – Lunar New Year, MLK Celebration, program with Greek festival, bring back Russian festival. People have fun and learn something.

The complaint process and online complaint form is nearly finished. Diversity and Inclusion policy is nearly done, going to HR to get their feedback. EO statement is on all job postings.

Staff of two people, we do a lot in our office; a third person coming in will be a life saver for us. Someone savvy with ADA compliance. Many of our buildings need corrections. Also managing data base for us and generating reports. All staff will write grant requests and participate in meetings and policy development.

Maintain friendly and collaborative relationships with many Town Departments. Good rapport with Sandra Debow and worked very closely with her on policies. Would like to have input and people have been very responsive.

We are gearing up, what types of committees we need to have, juggling all of these things. Feel strongly that our complaint group is called a working group whereas our other groups are committees. Emerson Park – have a meeting there...Brookline Town Day handing out flyers. Educating the public about our work and initiatives. We want to deal with all protected classes in Brookline. Data collection is a hard issue. We don't want people fighting over a piece of pie.

There is a lack of understanding of what diversity and inclusion means.

Met with Ruthann Dobek from the Senior Center and we are planning a training on transgender issues for them; had a housing meeting and working collaboratively with housing issues – preventive and educational work. It is fun, enjoyable and informative.

Q: Why is the ADA position not in the Building Department?

A: Our end is if we receive a complaint, investigate and then bring it to the Building Department or if nothing is done, move it up to MCAD and onward. A gateway to the Building Department.

Q: Chief of Police noted that white people make comments to minorities that they consider jokes but are taken differently by those minorities. Employees don't understand the issue; the fact that minority police and fire did not respond to the survey, that is telling. What kinds of practical things are you doing to address this?

A: We have to work on customer service – no one should be leaving any department feeling worse than when they came in after a day at work because of interaction with staff. Can't always change minds, but we can help change behavior.

Q: How are you letting people know that their behavior is not appropriate>

A: Through on-going training, by sharing personal stories – not something in general terms, but something real. Also training people, making it ok for people to be assertive in the face of inappropriate behavior. The messages should be posted – clear do's and don'ts – and where to go for help.

Need to have the person at the top committed to doing the right thing. What do you do about bystanders? People will overhear something and they will know that a person shouldn't have said something and they need to know how to intervene. People need to be empowered. Not prescribed, nuanced. It takes ongoing training, practice and assessment.

Q: This department was created with great optimism. Think you are going to do great things and you have a great staff. As part of your role in the Town, frustration that there are two towns – school town and town ; how involved are you in hiring and vetting candidates.

A: Town side if high level position, I am involved. On the School side they are doing more outreach to me and I will make a concerted effort with the new Superintendent to insure it grows stronger. Dr. Gellineau will be participating and assisting them with their Courageous Conversations program for the **World Café**.

Q: No reason to think we are any worse than any other town because the data is collected is all volunteer-based so you shouldn't get beat up over that. Personal stories are important to get impressions of how things are going but not wholly quantitative.

A: Hard everywhere – perceptions. How are people treated because of how they are perceived, how much are they misperceived,

Comment: Narrowly inadequate – Fire/Police Survey – went beyond questions of race, to include gender and all its expression and sexual orientation, data on all of these things. Important to be reminded that there is more than one protected class here.

Diversity Training Budget is for outreach, not necessarily for employee training. Training comes out of individual departments. How much is the Town spending on Diversity Training in all areas and is it sufficient, insufficient, etc. Would like to capture that? Also, what are they doing for training? Need more beyond MCAD programs.

A MOTION was made and seconded to recommend approval of the Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations budget of \$201,144.

Vote: With a vote of 19 in favor, 0 opposed with 3 abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the FY2017 Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations budget of \$201,144.

REVIEW OF FY2017 BUDGET: ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A MOTION was made and seconded to recommend approval of the Advisory Committee FY17 budget of \$25,230.

Vote: With a vote of 22 in favor, 0 opposed with 0 abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the FY2017 Advisory Committee budget of \$25,230.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be on March 29th.

Upon a MOTION made and seconded and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Documents Presented at Advisory Committee Meeting:

1. CAPITAL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON LIBRARY CIP
2. HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET
3. HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS
4. ADMIN & FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON ADVISORY COMMITTEE BUDGET