

Board of Library Trustees Minutes  
April 20, 2021  
Ashland Public Library-Zoom Call

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. Roll call was taken, minutes of February 18, March 16 and emended minutes of April 13 were unanimously approved.

Present: Chair Bonnie Mitchell; Trustees: Carolyn Bell, Lornie Bullerwell, Kab Rabinowitz, Carol Ambacher; Library Director Meena Jain; Children's Librarian Lois McAuliffe; Select Board member Steven Mitchell; Guests Clare Goss and Linda Weene

Note: Due to Town elections on May 18, the next Board meeting will be moved up one week to May 11.

Bonnie Mitchell conveyed an official Board welcome to Meena Jain, who began her Library Director position on April 12. Meena brings an extensive background of library experience with the Bacon Free Library in Natick and the Medfield Public Library.

Some Covid protocols have been discontinued. No longer will it be necessary for a 24 hour quarantine of browsed items. These can be returned to the shelf. Material requiring quarantining will be reduced to one day. The medical questions requirement is no longer necessary.

Meena and the Staff, in collaboration with Ed Burman, are in the process of developing a reopening plan which will be presented to the Board at the May 11 meeting. A move to unlock doors will allow curbside pickup to change to more of a self-serve process where items requested will be bagged and made available for pickup in the Concord Street foyer. The foyer door will be open to the public.

A five year Strategic Plan is due in October 2021. Meena will be requesting a one year extension and will develop an action plan toward meeting that 2022 commitment.

An assessment of needed building repairs is under way. Fall Town Meeting expects to be requesting \$20,000 for the work.

Also in the planning stage is a new intercom system with a video door monitor for the Library, Town Hall and Community Center. Although we do not have an exact installation date, the dollars for this project are committed.

Meena will be meeting with Brittany Iacaponi, Finance Director, to discuss the operating budget, state aid and gift accounts. If there is excess budget available for the current fiscal year, there is a serious need for technology upgrades and Meena will be requesting a technology line be created in the budget going forward. She hopes to report back to the Board on this at the May 11 meeting.

The 14 hour position can now be posted. There remains a question of the exact hours and how they will be targeted. Saturday coverage is on the light side and the Farmers Market opening always increases library patronage. Additional evening coverage may also be needed, especially if there are more programs after 6 P.M.

Some libraries in the Minuteman Library Network will resume collection of fines and fees beginning May 17. Of note is the Boston Public Library which will be eliminating fines. When asked about the effect on borrowing and returning, Mena stated that libraries which ceased collecting fines had an increase in use and more materials were returned that had been long overdue. Both the Staff and the Board favor eliminating overdue fines in the interest of encouraging greater participation in library usage. Meena will address this issue with Town Manager, Michael Herbert, since this money is returned to the town and not the library. She will also be requesting a high capacity Zoom account in anticipation of programs that would include the public.

Meena addressed the subject of potential programs and shared her ideas for outdoor and virtual events be they initiated by the Friends, Staff or community. Kanopy could become the vehicle for a group virtual viewing of movies. She envisions incorporating her Lexington Book Club with Ashland and has many ideas that portend an active public participation in library events.

Lois McAuliffe reviewed the plans for the YMCA's "virtual rooms" event planned for early May.

Both Clare Goss and Linda Weene, guests for this meeting, are running unopposed for the two vacant trustee positions created by Lornie Bullerwell and Carol Ambacher leaving the Board. Steven Mitchell thanked them for their service to the Town of Ashland.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M. The next Board meeting is May 11, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Ambacher  
Secretary