

Brooks Memorial Library Technology Committee Minutes, February 15, 2022

- Called to order at 4:00 pm in Library Community Meeting Room + Zoom
Present: Leo Schiff, Howard Burrows, John Woodward, Chloe Liotta-Jones, Matthew Wojcik, Gabriel Pofcher, Jeanne Walsh
- No agenda changes or additions
- Minutes of June 30, 2021 approved with amendment to clarify that “MRW” is the website developer from Easthampton, Massachusetts that designed the library’s current website.
- No public comment

Old Business/Status of ongoing projects and proposed projects

- Review committee charge
- Website maintenance—Assabet for room booking module

New Business

- Plan for 2022
- Update on Garden Tool Shed project, discuss our role with strategic planning tool library—Assabet for Library of Things
- Website development going forward

Discussion was wide-ranging, with all meeting attendees participating. It began with the committee charge and branched out to include most of the topics in new and old business. The rest of the minutes capture key ideas from the discussion.

Committee charge draft:

[highlights of previous year’s work, touching on website, ebikes, tools, zoom access, ebooks/audio/streaming services, then] “The Technology Committee will support the strategic planning effort by continuing to assess and recommend new and expanded technologies that promote access to current library patrons and underserved populations for whom we wish to increase library participation.”

We also referred to ideas captured in the Tech Committee minutes of 6/30/21.

Discussion of charge:

The committee charge defines the scope of our work.

Raising awareness about what the library has to offer, both technology and library services generally.

We want to see active words like “participation” and “use,” not only “access,” however, *access is important*. Other words: investigate, guide

The charge helps prospective members understand the purpose of the committee, and it guides the work of the committee.

This committee is concerned with computer technology and other technologies; for example, the ebikes and the planned Tool Library.

The charge connects to the mission/strategic plan of the library and to the technology plan. (We noted that our technology plan is out of date, partly because libraries have been waiting for the VT Dept of Libraries to update recommendations on how to write such a plan.)

Part of the purpose is to guide and support the director and the staff. We want to be sure our charge includes consideration of actual capacity.

For example, Tech Committee can be part of a feedback loop for maintenance and improvement of the website. What support does the staff want for the site?

Discussion of website/general staffing capacity, in light of discussion of Charge:

We’ve identified an unmet need. We have this new, more agile website, but we don’t have the staffing we need to use it to full advantage. We need capacity.

Maybe the Tech Committee advocates and supports Starr in putting more staff toward work on the website.

Two layers of website work: 1. keeping content fresh and current, using the skills of various front-line staff people; 2. ensuring that the website engages our public and furthers our mission and goals (analysis of use patterns, effective paths to resources, etc.), which is more the charge of full-time library staff.

The bottleneck is planned vs. unplanned time. We set goals to perform work (planned time), but we are here to serve the public, whose needs come first, and we don't have control over the timing of their requests (unplanned time).

Can the Tech Committee help with this problem of planned vs. unplanned time? Time audit? Should there be an Operations Committee?

Among the existing committees, Technology might be the most relevant.

It isn't clear, however, that a board committee or the full Board should ever be charged with overseeing work flows in this way. It's an operations need. It might be outside the Board's scope.

Another reason we need more capacity is the desire to expand services and seek new opportunities.

Working with/updating the website is connected to PR/marketing/outreach, which is another identified staffing need. Can those be rolled together to further goals and build capacity?

Could there be specific funds (endowment, grants?) for consultants/contractors to advise us on website improvements from time to time? If we got the right people, they could save us time; for example, they could evaluate use and recommend changes to better respond to patron needs, which would make the most of the time we're able to devote to maintaining the site.

Other Business from agenda:

We noted that we have contracted with Assabet Interactive of Concord, MA for two electronic library tools: 1. the Room Booking tool, which will complete an important part of the website project; 2. the Library of Things module, which will be helpful for our planned Tool Library.

- Next meeting: We agreed it was good to have an extended break since the last meeting, but now is a good time to resume monthly Technology Committee meetings. We'll decide via a doodle poll.
- Adjourned at 5:05.