



Board of Library Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Lower Hearing Room - Administration Building
149 Main Street, Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

Agenda

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, the meeting and public hearing will be conducted with remote opportunities for participation. Remote participation and access methods include:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on July 25th at 6pm. Location: Lower Hearing Room - Administration Building, 149 Main Street, Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
- B. The Public may join the virtual meeting online:
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/84400576061>
Meeting ID: 844 0057 6061

Dial by your location:
888 475 4499 US Toll-free
Meeting ID: 844 0057 6061
- C. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3>

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- 1. Call to Order / Roll Call
 - 2. Conduct Interviews of Library Director Finalists
 - A. 6:00pm - Dan Brower
 - B. 7:30pm - Kimberly Hewitt
 - 3. Discussion / Date of Next Meeting
 - 4. Adjournment



WATERTOWN
FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR
FINALISTS**

JULY 2023



COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

Dan Brower

Finalist

Watertown Free Public Library Director

DAN BROWER

[REDACTED], Grandview, MO 64030 | (816) [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]@gmail.com

To the Search Committee for Watertown Free Public Library:

I am excited at the prospect of being Watertown Free Public Library's next director. The Library's Strategic Plan Priorities are aligned with my own beliefs of what a library should be and provide, and it would be a privilege to help lead the library into the future. I look forward to the opportunity to work together.

In my current role as Library Director, I manage a budget of \$5.3 million dollars for Cass County Public Library that serves approximately 110,000 residents through 6 branches and a Bookmobile. The library has 87 staff throughout those branches. I have recent substantial experience in planning for a library, coordinating Cass County Public Library's 2020 successful tax levy increase campaign and helping create the library's last two Strategic Plans. Since the tax levy increase, the library has enhanced its services: a new Bookmobile, Library by Mail, Notary Public services, enhanced spaces, two new branches, and an expansion at the county's largest library. I enjoy the Strategic Planning process, and I appreciate the work put into Watertown's. I look forward to leading the library through the plan.

In my current community, I attend multiple events each month. I serve on the Cass County Coalition of Chambers Board, and am active in all of the county's chambers. I am active with the Missouri Library Association's Legislative Committee and led a group of delegates to Washington DC to talk about the importance of libraries and their funding. Advocacy has become a passion of mine during my 9 years on the Legislative Committee. I truly enjoy representing the library, and making connections has always been a strength of mine. I hope to continue creating and strengthening connections in Watertown. Watertown seems to be a place that is dedicated to its library, and the wide diversity of events proves that the library is dedicated to its community. The director should be dedicated to not only the library, but the community at large, and I will strive to do so as that relationship is strong in Watertown.

I am excited that the library is looking at an expansion plan. I am currently developing a capital plan for my library, and have done much community research. I will do the same for Watertown to develop the best path forward, including finding a home for the Hatch Makerspace. Thinking about what the library can and should be in the future is one of the great privileges of being the director. We will enhance the library and makerspace for everyone.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my passion with others and with you. If you would like to speak with me more about the Library Director position, I would be happy to talk further. Libraries are my passion; libraries change lives. I think we can change lives together in the next chapter of the Watertown Free Public Library.

Sincerely,

Dan Brower

DAN BROWER

[REDACTED], Grandview, MO 64030 | (816) [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]@gmail.com

15-year library professional with 12 years of management experience and 9 years of administrative experience.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

PLANNING & POLICY

- Organized community meetings & focus groups to inform the creation and assessment of previous and current Strategic Plans
- Coordinated successful 12¢ Tax Levy Increase Campaign in 2020
- Completed \$4 million building project for new library branch, while securing \$300,000 in grants for the project
- Management of library renovation and relocation projects
- 2015 MLA/KLA Joint Conference Coordinator (2012–2015)
- Compile statistics, present trends, and report Strategic Plan progress to library board
- Responsible for collection development at branch and system levels

BUDGET/FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Create and manage \$5.3 million budget for Cass County Public Library and \$5.6 million budget for Scenic Regional Library
- Develop and allocate branch budgets for programming and staffing
- Managed MLA & KLA conference budgets for the 2015 joint conference

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Hire, train, supervise administrative, management, and frontline staff
- Developed Performance Evaluation System and Performance Improvement Plans, as needed, at SRL and CCPL

PUBLIC RELATIONS & OUTREACH

- Design marketing materials, send direct mailings, and email newsletters on events and special initiatives
- MCPL Liaison and Member of Northland Ethnic Festival Planning Committee (2013–2014)
- Project Coordinator for the Center School Summer School Outreach Program (2012)

EVENT PLANNING

- Coordinate, schedule, and host events at multiple locations
- Communicate with and hire presenters for programs
- Migrated in-person events to virtual sessions, videos, and interactive online events during COVID-19 closure

WORK HISTORY

<i>Cass County Public Library; Harrisonville, MO</i> Library Director (Dec 2021-Present) Assistant Director & Head of Public Services (Jan 2017-Dec 2021)	Jan 2017-Present
<i>Scenic Regional Library; Union, MO</i> Assistant Director & Head of Public Services	Dec 2014-Jan 2017
<i>Mid-Continent Public Library; Greater Kansas City, MO</i> Parkville Branch Manager (May 2013-Nov 2014) Red Bridge Branch Assistant Branch Manager (Nov 2011-May 2013) Blue Springs South Branch Library Assistant I (Aug 2008-Nov 2011)	Aug 2008-Nov 2014
<i>United States Census Bureau; Kansas City, MO</i> Non-Response Follow Up Enumerator	Jun 2020-Oct 2020

DAN BROWER

[REDACTED], Grandview, MO 64030 | (816) [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Master of Library Science **Dec 2013**
Emporia State University; Overland Park, KS

Bachelor of Arts, History **Dec 2007**
Missouri State University; Springfield, MO

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

- *Getting Started with Library Advocacy* – Nebraska Library Association (Jul 30, 2021)
- *Building Bridges: Library Advocacy in 2020 and Beyond* – Missouri Library Association (Sep 28, 2020)
- *Missouri Miracles: How Two Libraries Passed Levies with Data and Community Engagement* – OrangeBoy Webinar (Jun 10, 2020)
- *Using Customer Segmentation and Data to Increase the Impact of Your Library's Marketing Efforts* – Library Marketing and Communications Conference (Nov 15, 2018)
- *Messaging Best Practices Panel* – OrangeBoy Idea Exchange (Aug 10, 2018)
- *Reinventing Your Branch Using SWOT Analysis* – Missouri Library Association (Oct 8, 2014)
- *Outreach: Reaching Populations that Cannot Reach You* – MALA Webcast (recorded Oct 2013)
- *Making the Transition from Trainee to Trainer* – Missouri Library Association (Oct 3, 2013)

CERTIFICATIONS

- Mental Health First Aid
- Leader Effectiveness Training

AFFILIATIONS

Missouri Library Association — Member

MLA Legislative Committee — Co-Chair (2018-present), Member (2014-present)

Cass County Coalition of Chambers — Board Member (2020-present)

Missouri Evergreen — Executive Board Member (2019-2022)

Mid-America Library Alliance — Face-to-face and online trainer (2012–2014)

Blue Springs City Theatre — Productions Manager (2012–2014)

REFERENCES

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dan Brower

Dan Brower is the current Library Director of the Cass County Public Library in Harrisonville, Missouri. Mr. Brower previously served as Assistant Director and Head of Public Services at that library for five years, as Assistant Director and Head of Public Services at the Scenic Regional Library in Union, MO, and held several positions with the Mid-Continent Public Library in Greater Kansas City, MO. He holds an MLS from Emporia State University in Overland Park, Kansas, and a BA in History from Missouri State University.

For Mr. Brower's references, we spoke with the Executive Director of the Missouri Evergreen Consortium, the Library Director of the Scenic Regional Library, the Director of Employee Success for the Kansas City Public Library, and the Dean of Libraries for UMKC University Libraries. The reference comments we received include the following:

- I have known Dan Brower for about 10 years, the last four or so through the Missouri Library Association through work we do as advocates for libraries. He is a very talented and passionate library director. He is skillful in the way he works through the difficult climate we currently have in Missouri. His advocacy was a key factor in preventing the bill Parental Oversight for Libraries from passing. He did tremendous outreach to legislators, and they were not an easy sell. It will come up again and we will have to push back against it again.
- It would be devastating for many of us to lose Dan from the Missouri library world. He is fun to work with, smart, innovative, and dedicated. It would be difficult to not like Dan. He seems to connect with everyone. He can read a room and he knows what people need to feel supported. He is very good at team building and helping others to achieve their best.
- Dan has really risen to the occasion in Missouri with the tough political climate here. His staff loves him; he is thoughtful and compassionate. Staff at Scenic Regional Library were sad to see him leave when he moved on to Cass County as director. He was instrumental in bringing their technology up to standard; he designed some networks for them. Rural Missouri is on the wrong side of the digital divide, and he was so helpful in moving them technologically forward.
- In my hometown of Archie, Missouri, Dan was able to get a levy increase passed for the library and it is a very conservative community without a lot of resources. Dan connected with every community group and with residents. With the levy increase, he has a new building to open in a small town and another library to renovate, which is amazing.
- Dan does a great job in laying out what a library is and what it should be doing even when there is opposition. He strives not to let the noise get in the way of other things, such as the summer reading program. He works to keep pushing the good and the positive.
- He provides training for staff and is a strong voice for them.
- Dan is a vocal library advocate. He is very up to speed with what's happening with public libraries throughout the region, the state, and the country.
- He works hard to get people to understand the need for the freedom of individual readers to be able to choose what they want to read. This is a battle in Missouri right now.
- Dan worked at Scenic Regional for a couple of years and I have known him via library circles for about 12 years. We replaced all nine of our buildings and it was great experience for us both. It's a rare opportunity to work on projects like that. Dan did an excellent job shepherding it through. With the tax increase, we were able to replace buildings, add programs, and add staffing.
- Dan was a fantastic Assistant Director and Head of Public Services. He was innovative and really motivated the staff. They liked working for him.

- He has a strong grip on technology and could set up networks and highly complex spreadsheets that we still use today to analyze data and make decisions.
- Dan was part of the process to merge the Sullivan Library with us. Sullivan was a municipal library, and it is unusual for a municipal library to agree to merge with a regional. Dan was a big part of making that happen. We met with the Board and the Director at Sullivan for discussions and Dan was skillful at explaining the benefits.
- He was involved in budgeting, hiring, deciding on staffing levels, etc. here. He is well rounded.
- Dan gets along with everyone. He relates well to people and has a lot of colleagues and friends in the library world. He is well connected.
- He is a big proponent of DEI initiatives. It is very conservative here, but it is something Dan really wants to be involved with and that he deeply cares about.
- Dan has been on the Missouri Library Association legislative committee, and he is skilled at making informative and impactful presentations. One of his strengths is advocating for funding and making persuasive arguments for funding and programs.
- I have known Dan since he was hired at Mid-Continent library, and he has remained as enthusiastic, energetic, and dedicated as he was in 2008. He has gained knowledge, skill, and experience over the years which made him an even better hire for any library. Cass County was routinely underfunded since the 1970s and Dan took the lead in running a campaign to get the levy increased and got it passed in the middle of the pandemic. I still think it was a miracle.
- Dan took the lead with OrangeBoy, which we use for data management and data-driven decision making. It allows us to better tell our story through visualization with graphics and data. He also helped to train other staff members to use it.
- Dan is very professional and diplomatic. He knows when to push harder and fight for something and when it is smarter to step back and live to fight another day. He is pragmatic. He has experience with book challenges, funding battles, dealing with difficult personalities, you name it.
- He is a clear communicator. He consistently communicates with the Board, his staff, the community, and the media to make sure that accurate and important information is being shared.
- Dan has always been great at working with patrons. He would go out to schools, the Rotary and various community groups. He was in the community and of the community. He is good at listening to people and making sure they know he hears what they are saying. He manages relationships well. He can manage people, is good at getting funds and managing the budget, and at managing and supporting staff. I see Dan as a win-win-win. He is skilled at managing resources and he recognizes that the resources belong to the people, and he makes sure they get their money's worth.
- When Dan was at Mid-Continent as a branch manager, he worked in tandem with Missouri and Kansas to hold a joint state library conference. Getting Missourians to meet with Kansans is almost unheard of. It only happened that one time and it was an incredible feat. I am still in awe that Dan was able to make that happen. That was the result of superior diplomatic skills.
- He also did great work in the Missouri Library Association legislative committee. He has testified at the State House and worked to support the right to read and bills that support public libraries and their mission.
- I don't want to lose Dan from the Missouri area, but Dan is passionate about the mission of public libraries and will be successful wherever he goes.

Kimberly Hewitt

Finalist

Watertown Free Public Library Director

Kimberly Hewitt

[REDACTED], Waltham, MA

[REDACTED]@gmail.com 774 [REDACTED]

June 12, 2023

Dear Mr. Lynch,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the position of Library Director at Watertown Free Public Library. As the current Needham Free Public Library Director, I have been fortunate to lead and contribute to various successful initiatives, but the chance to join Watertown Free Public Library and continue making a positive impact in a vibrant and forward-thinking environment is truly compelling to me. I have always been impressed with the library's commitment to serving a diverse community and its reputation for offering dynamic programming and cutting-edge initiatives like Hatch, Project Literacy, and the Bookmobile.

In my current position I have focused on improving and diversifying our collections, empowering staff to interpret policy and operate within our mission to help patrons, and improving relationships with other town departments. I guided the completion of our new 5-year strategic plan and have led a library space planning feasibility study process. I successfully developed and defended two budgets and convinced the Finance Committee to incorporate Overdrive spending into the operating budget rather than funding from State Aid.

During my tenure, I have implemented several notable initiatives and improvements. Some of these achievements include the establishment of a comprehensive language learning collection and the expansion of our world language offerings to better serve our community. Additionally, I spearheaded the launch of a library of things collection, providing patrons with access to a wide range of non-traditional items and I took the initiative to conduct a DEI audit of our collections which will enable us to ensure inclusivity and representation across our materials. In terms of operational enhancements, I led the transition from a closed hold system to an open holds system, a change that has received positive feedback from both patrons and staff, streamlining access to library resources.

In my previous role as Circulation Department Head for the Waltham Public Library, I managed the daily operations of the largest department, developing our long-term plans, policies, and goals. I focused on providing excellent customer service and ensuring that my staff applied policies and procedures consistently. Staff from all departments frequently relied on me to resolve patron issues, handle incidents, assist with policies, and find resources. Additionally, I successfully customized and implemented Waltham's first library-wide scheduling software.

Currently, I have the honor to serve as President of the Massachusetts Library Association. Much of our work this year has been focused on preparing librarians in the state to handle challenges. I have also served as the Vice President, co-chair of the Conference Committee and founded the Leadership and Management section. Commitment to association work and professional development keeps me aware of trends and allows me to think critically about how the profession, and my organization, can respond.

One of my core professional beliefs is that continuous improvement is essential in our organizations. It is crucial to operationalize the evaluation of services, policies, and offerings in order to challenge the status quo and identify areas for improvement. I have taken the time to build trust with staff and stakeholders, demonstrated a commitment to evaluating services and staffing, and continue to clearly set expectations by conveying my big-picture vision of library services: serving the community and remaining patron-focused. Throughout my career, I've tried to connect each role in the library with the library's broader vision. Everyone's work impacts the organization's success and relationship with the community.

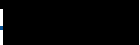
I love being a library director, particularly with the Needham Library and its staff. However, Needham is a very affluent community and I have realized that I am most fulfilled and energized when serving a community with more socio-economic diversity. Because I grew up relying on libraries for access to information and materials, it is deeply personal to be of service to our most vulnerable populations.

The combination of my leadership experience, skills, and interests would be a great addition to the Watertown team. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Hewitt

KIMBERLY HEWITT

@GMAIL.COM
774- - Waltham, MA

EXPERIENCE

Needham Free Public Library

Library Director, Nov 2021-Present

Under the Town Manager and with an advisory Board of Library Trustees, directs day-to-day operations and facility management of the Needham Free Public Library, including all human resource matters, policies, procedures, reviews, budgets, annual goals and objectives. Lead, mentor and support a staff of approximately 15 FT and 35 PT staff and a budget of \$2,235,734 serving a community of 30,000 residents. The NFPL is a top 10 circulating library in the Minuteman Library Network.

- Completed a new Strategic Plan (2023-2027)
- Delegate tasks to managers and staff to meet goals and objectives of our Strategic Plan
- Oversee feasibility study for library space planning
- Prepare and defend operational budgets and Capital Improvement Plan requests
- Build strong working relationships with peers in the Town, Board of Trustees, Friends, and Foundation
- Developed a Trustee orientation plan and materials
- Encourage productive, meaningful relationships with library staff with consistent communication
- Develop culture in relation to the library's mission
- Established inter-departmental teams to reduce silos and encourage greater collaboration
- Planned the first ever Staff Development Day (now regularly scheduled 2x a year)
- Launched several new collections: Library of Things, language learning, video games, graphic novels for adults, and expanded World Languages
- Transitioned to Open Holds and a new wireless printing service to ease barriers to use of services
- Completed a Wi-Fi infrastructure overhaul project
- Initiated a DEI Audit of print collections which identified 24,915 titles to review and mark
- Plan and oversee several large-scale weeding and shifting projects to create a more welcoming and browsable collection.
- Report statistics for Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS)
- Evaluate staffing priorities and efficiencies

Waltham Public Library

Circulation Department Head, Mar 2018-Nov 2021

- Managed a department of 11 permanent employees at 3 public desks in a busy urban library
- Ensured excellent customer service and consistent application of policies, procedures, and exceptions
- Wrote and implemented COVID reopening plans
- Participated on Equity Committee
- Developed the first Bus Pass Program in a MA public library to provide access to services for vulnerable populations during COVID
- Implemented 1st library-wide scheduling software
- Created and ran the library's Instagram account
- Responded to problem behaviors and handled patron complaints

Newton Free Library

Acting Asst. Supervisor of Public Services, Nov 2017-Mar 2018

- Contributed to the management of 40+ employees in the busiest public library in the state
- Trained staff on patron engagement and departmental procedures

Public Services Librarian, Mar 2016-Nov 2017

- Managed city's oral history project, Newton Talks
- Secured grant funding for Newton Talks
- Instructed over 76 technology classes
- Managed Special Collections- cataloged and preserved materials, and developed policies
- Assisted with Homebound delivery services
- Selected materials for General Fiction, Science Fiction, Mystery, and Travel

Senior Library Assistant, Feb 2013-Mar 2016

- Created lists for circulation needs in Sierra ILS
- Developed monthly Sci-Fi book group

EDUCATION

M.S. Library & Information Science, Simmons College, Boston, MA

B.A. American Studies, UMASS Boston, Boston, MA

COMMITTEES

President, Mass Library Association, 2022-23

Vice President, Mass Library Association, 2021-22

Co-chair, MLA Conference Committee, 2018-21

Founder & Chair, MLA Leadership and Management Section, 2019-20

PRESENTATIONS

Panelist: "First Year Directors," MLA 2023

Panelist: "Transitioning into Middle Management,"
MLA 2019

Speaker: "Listening to Citizens: Launching a
City-Wide Oral History Project," MLA 2017 &
NELA 2017

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS)

Library Director Bootcamp (ALA)

Finding Common Ground (MBLC)

Women Leading Government (MMA)

Basic Library Techniques: Administration (MLS)

PRESS

"Care to Borrow a Uke?" *The Needham Channel*, 1
June 2023,
<https://www.needhamchannel.org/2023/06/care-to-borrow-a-uke/>

Wishner Segel, Mimi. "You Can Check out Much
More than Books from Many Local Libraries." *NBC
Boston*, 26 Oct. 2022,
www.nbcboston.com/news/local/you-can-check-out-much-more-than-books-from-many-local-libraries/2874577/.

"Starting a New Chapter." *The Needham Channel*, 26
May 2022,
www.needhamchannel.org/2022/05/starting-a-new-chapter/

Driscoll, Taylor. "Needham Public Library names new
Library Director." *Wicked Local*, 10 Nov. 2021,
www.wickedlocal.com/story/needham-times/2021/11/10/needham-public-library-names-new-library-director-kim-hewitt/6369745001

Cantrell, Cindy. "Newton Talks turns stories into
history," *The Boston Globe*, 18 Aug. 2017,
www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/west/2017/08/15/newton-talks-turns-stories-into-history/ybRLw9tXGEuCKKFPGrM00K/story.html

Kimberly Hewitt

Kimberly Hewitt is the current Library Director of the Needham Free Public Library. Ms. Hewitt previously served as the Circulation Department Head of the Waltham Public Library, and as the Acting Assistant Supervisor of Public Services and Public Services Librarian at the Newton Free Public Library. She holds an MLIS from Simmons College, and a BA in American Studies from the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

For her references we spoke with the Waltham Public Library Director who is also a Watertown resident, the Newton Free Public Library Director, the Assistant Director of the Cary Memorial Library who was previously the Head of Reference at the Waltham Public Library, the Head of Technical Services at the Needham Free Library, and the Assistant Town Manager of Needham. The reference comments we received include the following:

- Kim Hewitt worked for me for a few years in Waltham, and I consider her a unicorn in the library world. She is a star. She sees the big picture and can visualize the steps needed to make that picture a reality. She takes the initiative to solve problems, is organized and detail oriented, and has an innate sense as to when to solicit feedback and input. Kim has phenomenal customer service skills. Anytime I saw Kim working at a desk, she made it a point to look up and talk to everyone coming into the library. She is friendly, helpful, kind, and empathetic. She sets a great example to the staff.
- She is innovative with operations and services. Her plans and feedback for when we started reopening during COVID were thoughtful, well done, and designed to make a difference in the lives of our patrons while being supportive of staff. She had developed the first bus pass program in the state's public libraries to give access to libraries and other services for vulnerable populations. She wrote the proposal and managed the program. It was hugely popular and helpful. Kim also introduced us to the WhenToWork scheduling software and got everyone trained on it. It made a big difference in the time and effort it takes to do staff scheduling, which had been very time intensive given the number of part-time employees and volunteers.
- When she was in Newton, Kim managed the city's oral history project, which was a large undertaking and started with WWII veterans but under Kim's guidance morphed into a much bigger, ongoing project with diverse voices and experiences, collaborating with other agencies, and pulling in students and volunteers.
- Circulation is a hard department to manage. They don't get the fun stuff – it's dealing with late fees, missing holds, etc. Kim made things easier; she was great with the staff and patrons, and it made a big difference. She has great relationships in the Minuteman network and library world.
- She has a strong sense of integrity regarding the quality of service provided to all users. The Waltham library sees a lot of people who are in need of services, are unhoused, who are struggling in various ways. Kim brought a real humanness and empathy to any situation in the library.
- Kim was part of our equity team; she did management training and brought in staff for training. She revitalized the world language offerings in Needham and coordinated programming for children, as well as for the nannies and au pairs coming in with them, to learn and practice English.
- She has been very vocal in her work with the Massachusetts Library Association in promoting anti-censorship, right to read, etc. Kim has had a lot of interactions with disgruntled patrons, patrons with mental health struggles, with substance use disorder. She can connect well with patrons, including those who are initially unwilling to hear what she has to say. She is empathetic while also clarifying policies or even asking people to leave for the day when necessary.
- Kim was the department head most often praised by her own staff and she did the best job of setting boundaries and holding staff accountable. She does everything with grace and finesse. She

can give a staff member negative feedback and have them leave the conversation saying, “you’re right; thank you for telling me.” Kim is an amazing leader in the public library world.

- Kim and I were colleagues at the Waltham library and first knew each other when we both served on the conference committee at the Massachusetts Library Association about seven years ago. She organized things in a way they hadn’t been before and did it in a diplomatic, thoughtful way. She hired great staff in Waltham, and they respected her a lot. Waltham has a diverse population, including socio-economically. During COVID, Kim came up with the plan to give out Charlie Cards that those in the lower-economic population could use to go to libraries that were still open or to go wherever they needed. It was hugely helpful to people. We also did contactless pick up. She is skilled at working in an urban environment. As a department head in Waltham, she had some staff members who went through real trauma, and she showed a lot of empathy and compassion while remaining cognizant of needing to get things done for patrons. The staff was so upset when Kim was leaving for Needham. They loved working for her and respected her.
- She is very good at writing policy and is very much up to the challenge of being a director in today’s library world. She can hold her own in tense situations. Kim was president of the MLA and the voice of librarians throughout the state. She is quick to step up and quick to give credit to others.
- Kim was a wonderful hire for Needham. She is incredibly knowledgeable in the library services field. She is mission driven and has a strong philosophy on the role of libraries in the community. She took on the role after the retirement of a director who had worked in the library for 65 years and she has excelled. There was a lot of anxiety amongst the staff about this transition and she handled it so well. She had a new strategic plan to shepherd, which charts our course for the next five years and reflects the community, staff, herself, the Town Manager, and the Trustees. Kim has a vision, and she knows how to create and take the steps necessary to get there. The staff has responded well to her. They are comfortable sharing ideas with her and asking questions. She has empowered the department heads to manage their own divisions and empowered staff to address things that are happening in the library. She backs them up in enforcing policy, etc.
- We trusted her to bring the library to the next phase and she has done that. She started and sustained a culture change over the past two years. She has built great relationships with colleagues and other departments. She started an initiative with Youth and Family Services regarding mental health. She is passionate, dedicated, and a true public servant. Kim’s a unicorn in that she is so skilled, talented, and dedicated; she is a truly excellent public librarian.
- We are working together on a DEI audit of our collection. She is adamant that patrons see themselves reflected here. She ensures the display books represent our different communities.
- Kim created and publicized the Library of Things in Needham, which they hadn’t had before. When it comes to the promotion of the library, she is not afraid to step up and stand out. She had local TV come for tours of the library and showed what we have to offer. She surveyed the staff to see what people had requested and has a suggestion box via Google Form; she got the funding and organized the purchases. She has us do regular surveys via the town newsletter.
- Kim has provided a vision for what the library should look like and how to get there. She’s a leader.
- Being a library director is in Kim’s DNA. She started in Newton as a library assistant, progressed to librarian and then supervisor. She was always looking to increase her knowledge and skills. She is supportive of the team and a big proponent of professional development. Kim looks to partner with colleagues, other departments, and other agencies. With the oral history project, she obtained grants for special recording equipment, got interns involved, and trained other staff on how to do it so it could continue after she left Newton. Kim cares about what’s she’s doing; she cares about library work and about the community.