



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger
Date: January 12, 2017
Re: Appointment of Fletcher Free Library Director

I respectfully submit for your consideration and approval Mary Danko as the next Fletcher Free Library Director for the City of Burlington. Mary emerged as an outstanding candidate during an extensive national search that involved over 40 applicants from Vermont and many other states across the country. I am requesting City Council approval of this appointment at your January 23, 2017 meeting.

Search process for the new Library Director

My Administration began its search for a new Library Director in September of 2016. The extensive process included:

- Posting the position locally, state-wide, and nationally in August of 2016. The extensive process included targeting diverse communities and supplemental recruitment efforts by my office.
- Review of resumes and initial interviews of both in-state and out-of-state candidates by the following eight-person search committee led by my Chief of Staff, Brian Lowe:
 - Ed Adrian, Library Commission Chair
 - Beth Anderson, Chief Innovation Officer, City of Burlington
 - Selene Colburn, City Councilor, East District
 - Robert Coleburn, Acting Director of the Fletcher Free Library
 - Ali Dieng, Burlington School District
 - Susan Leonard, Director of Human Resources, City of Burlington
 - Cate MacLachlan, Library Commissioner
 - Brian Lowe, Chief of Staff, City of Burlington
- My interviews of finalist candidates presented to me for consideration by the search committee.
- Hosting two finalists in Burlington for additional meetings with members of the Library Commission, City Department Heads, members of the City's Diversity and Equity Core Team, and in one instance the President of the Friends of Fletcher Free Library.

At the conclusion of the search, Mary's passion for libraries and their ability to unlock potential in all members of our community, her demonstrated creativity in establishing new partnerships, her

record of collaboration with stakeholders and staff, and her reputation for managing her budget and projects effectively made her an exceptional candidate to lead Fletcher Free Library into its next chapter.

A passion for and deep understanding of librarianship

Mary grew up outside of Cleveland, Ohio, the granddaughter of immigrants from Czechoslovakia and Ireland. Neither of her parents attained a college degree, but they fostered in Mary a love of reading and a lifelong intellectual curiosity, as well as introducing her to regular visits to the local library.

Mary will bring over 14 years of library experience to the Fletcher Free Library, including three years as director of the Weathersfield Proctor Library and four years as director of the Hartland Public Library in Vermont. She currently runs the Abbott Library in Sunapee, New Hampshire, where she has served as Library Director for over four years. The Abbott Library was named Library of the Year by the New Hampshire Library Trustee Association in the fall of 2015.

Since 2015, Mary has served as Vice President and now President of the New England Library Association, where she has been leading an effort to help make the Association's leadership more diverse. She is in the planning stages for a Diversity Summit in the summer of 2017 that will bring librarians and change leaders together to help identify methods to diversify the organization's leadership, to address institutional barriers to aspiring librarians of diverse backgrounds, and to consider how libraries can better serve diverse populations. In 2016, as Vice President, she served as conference chair for the conference "Imagining Tomorrow," a conference that explored innovative future thinking for libraries in the twenty-first century, which was attended by librarians from the six New England states over three days.

Prior to her service on the New England Library Association, she served as Green Mountain Library Consortium Board Member & President from 2010-2012. The Green Mountain Library Consortium was the first organization in Vermont to offer a platform and content to public libraries for downloadable audio books and eBooks while also starting and expanding an Open Source ILS (Integrated Library System) project, VOKAL (Vermont Organization of Koha Automated Libraries).

Mary has an academic grounding in the profession, having secured a Master of Science in Library & Information Science at Syracuse University.

A community-oriented and collaborative approach

Mary's management style has fostered strong teamwork within her library staff, supporting new ideas and initiatives to grow and adapt the library to a changing world in the communities she has worked. She has sought and fostered new partnerships with schools and other outside groups, finding opportunities for collaboration that increase the library's positive impact for people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds.

For example, the Abbott Library has partnered with the local schools to put on technology programs, superintendent forums, student art exhibits and meet-the-teacher nights. Over the past summer, the library began a new initiative to be a testing center for students' summer reading books. Under her leadership, the Abbott Library has also offered various other programs, such as a community forum on substance abuse and a series on meditation and mindfulness.

Mary also partnered with different town departments to offer programs, such as a Making Cents Finance Series with the Town of Sunapee Welfare Office and a Junior Officer Morning event with the

Sunapee Police Department. Past programs for senior members in the community include outreach to Senior Living Communities for discussion programs and partnerships with the Council on Aging for community lunches and Mahjongg classes. Recently the Abbott Library has begun new efforts to encourage students and adults with intellectual and physical disabilities to volunteer at the library, in certain cases to provide an opportunity for individuals to learn skills for future employment.

While in Hartland, Vermont, Mary worked on grassroots organizations such as Aging in Hartland, a group formed to research innovative options for seniors to remain in place in the community, and Farm Fest, a celebration of local farming. She was also active with Hartland Community Connections, which in partnership with the library held a first-ever Hartland Non-Profit Roundtable. A Hartland Community Garden was located next to the library, and Mary worked with the organizers to give library support, including special support for a teaching herb garden. The library also participated in the initiative "Edible Hartland," which included planting blueberries and raspberries on the library's grounds.

Strong fiscal stewardship and fundraising ability

Mary has also shown a consistent commitment to fiscal responsibility, managing budget and strategic planning for the Abbott Library in cooperation with the Library Board of Trustees, overseeing the library's finances and operating budget, and writing grant proposals. Some of her former supervisors praised her ability to effectively manage a budget and keep a library working effectively.

She has also shown leadership around successful fundraising efforts. While at the Abbott Library, she collaborated with the Abbott Library Foundation to complete the new Abbott Library Project Fundraising campaign for \$1.3 million to build a new library in Sunapee, NH.

Mary oversaw the construction of the new building, which was thoughtfully designed to be a warm, inviting community and information center with meeting rooms, comfortable seating, a fireplace, cafe, and more public computers for both adults and youth. The completion of the new building has meaningfully increased library resources and made the facility more accessible during Mary's service as Director.

The Abbott Library Foundation fundraising continues its efforts to support the library with yearly galas and annual appeals, along with various fun events throughout the year. The library also enjoys robust support from the Friends of the Abbott Library for programming, museum passes, summer reading programming and other special projects.

Going forward

Further details of Mary's career can be found in her attached resume. Following your confirmation of her appointment, I intend to place Mary at Step 5 of the Library Director pay scale for an annual compensation of \$83,408. Following confirmation, Mary, who currently lives in New Hampshire, hopes to relocate to Burlington and begin work on February 6, 2017.

Mary is passionate, creative, collaborative, and forward-thinking. She has a strong understanding of the role of public libraries in a time of changing technology and culture. I am confident she is the right person to lead the reinvigorated Fletcher Free Library as we finalize and implement a new strategic plan for this beloved institution, and that she will be a great addition to the City's leadership team.

Thank you for your consideration.