

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday January 14, 2019

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Joyce Becker
Mark Kissinger
Harmeet Narang
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons
Brian Sweeney
Robert Khalife, treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, Accounts Clerk
Catherine Stollar Peters, Head of Tech Services, Circulation
Chris McGinty, Head of Public Services
Catherine Brenner, CSEA Local 6015 president

President M. Redmond called the meeting to order at 6pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

None

INTRODUCTION OF BOARD TREASURER

The board welcomed R. Khalife, who was hired as board treasurer for the library and whose first day was Jan. 7. R. Khalife introduced himself and provided some personal and professional background.

R. Khalife took an oath of office as the appointed Bethlehem Public Library Board Treasurer.

G. Kirkpatrick took an oath of office as Bethlehem Public Library Director.

Both oaths will be filed with the Albany County Clerk.

G. Kirkpatrick said that according to the New York State Trustee handbook, non-voting officers of the board who are appointed and not elected, such as he and R. Khalife, must take an oath of office.

B. Sweeney asked how frequently they would be required to take the oath, and G. Kirkpatrick said he was unsure and would seek further guidance on that.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 10 December 2018 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by M. Kissinger.

B. Sweeney said that, although he was not at the December meeting, he was glad to see the decision was made to move forward with the replacement of the A/V system in the Community Room.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by J. Becker, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 December 2018 (Manual Disbursements for December \$26,421.18; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for January \$52,795.67; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for December \$197,901.15; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for December \$0; Total: \$277,118.00).

In response to a question by M. Kissinger, T. Choppy noted that library has received about 96% of the property tax owed, which is expected to reach 100% sometime after April.

L. Scoons asked if the library has received PEG reimbursement for the equipment upgrades in the studio. G. Kirkpatrick said PEG money has been received for much of the equipment, and the library will be looking for additional reimbursement for the fire-resistant sound-dampening material on order.

M. Redmond said the Fund Balance Capital Projects report on Page 28 of the board packet should say 2018-19 instead of 2017-18. G. Kirkpatrick said that, as recommended by R. Khalife, the report had been integrated as part of the financial report instead of his director's report. R. Khalife said that in the coming weeks, he will be working to make the report easier to follow and provide a more accurate picture of the actual surplus.

R. Khalife asked board members to let him know if they had anything specific they wanted to look into. He asked the board if they would like him to sign the financial reports beginning in February, and they were all in favor of that change.

BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for December 1-31, 2018.

MANUAL INVOICES

None

RESOLUTIONS

G. Kirkpatrick said the board should consider any resolutions that will be needed to allow R. Khalife to conduct his job moving forward. The board asked R. Khalife to come up with a list for the next meeting.

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick noted that the library is filling the Librarian 2 position with an internal candidate but was not ready to make an announcement at the meeting. He was requesting to fill the soon-to-be-vacated Librarian 1 position.

H. Narang asked about overall staffing levels. G. Kirkpatrick said that even with some shifts in job titles over the past year, the FTE has remained flat. He noted that the positions that were previously held had been dropped off the list permanently and would not be part of the budget considerations.

The board discussed whether or not the “position held” designation was useful on the report. B. Sweeney said it seemed unnecessary to include unless the position represented an unmet need.

PERSONNEL ACTION

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND J. Becker, the board unanimously approved new hires for the following vacancies, pending Civil Service approval:

- Librarian 1, part-time, permanent, 7.66 hours/week at \$26.44/hour or per contract
- Librarian 1, full-time, permanent, 35 hours/week at \$51,682/annual or per contract

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

The board noted the director’s report. Additional items:

- The Friends of the Library will be holding a book collection and sale the weekend of April 12-14. They are still working out the details, but they will likely be collecting books on Friday and Saturday morning, with the sale taking place Saturday afternoon through Sunday. C. Brancatella said they may end up being inundated by donations in light of the current decluttering obsession. M. Kissinger said board members should consider volunteering to help. G. Kirkpatrick said the Friends are aware that book sales are something the community is interested in, so this is a way for them to test the process. The board suggested reaching out to the town to see if they could add a second book recycling bin that weekend. L. Scoons suggested reaching out to community groups such as the Scouts for volunteers. J. Becker also recommended youth court as a potential source of volunteers.
- G. Kirkpatrick reached out the Bethlehem School District, and they do have cyber liability insurance.
- The library received a thank you note from the town supervisor for participating in First Night. G. Kirkpatrick said visits to the library that night were steady, and overall attendance showed a big increase over the previous year. B. Sweeney asked whether the board would be participating in future years because discussion leading up to the event seemed to indicate it was unlikely and that the library was following through with it this year because a commitment had been made. G. Kirkpatrick said there was ultimately an agreement with the Masonic Temple for snow removal, but there are other factors that would play into future participation, including staffing needs. He noted that the community was very appreciative the library was participating. M. Kissinger asked that the board put the First Night discussion on the April agenda so trustees could have plenty of time to work out the particulars if they decide to participate next year.
- The board discussed the physical circulation stats in the report and noted that per capita numbers are some of the highest in the country.
- M. Kissinger asked how Albany’s fine free policy would work in practice. G. Kirkpatrick said some things may become clearer in a few months when the process has had a chance to work out the kinks. Ultimately, he said, the library will be looking at the small percentage of Bethlehem users that check out materials from the Albany to see if that number grows, an indication that being fine-free is enough of a motivator to change people’s behavior. H. Narang said any lost fine revenue would have to be significant enough to warrant the energy spent in trying to recover it.

- G. Kirkpatrick noted that C. Stollar Peters' stats indicate an unmet service need in Glenmont. J. Becker said that people have mentioned in the past that a drop box would be useful. G. Kirkpatrick said it was something to keep in mind as the library starts talking about the long-range plan. H. Narang asked if it was something they had to wait to address if there was an inexpensive solution, and asked that the board put it on the agenda for the March discussion. J. Becker suggested the Elsmere Fire Department as a potential drop-off point. M. Redmond said that the board is meeting with library architect Paul Mays later this month to start to get an idea of how to address those kinds of issues.
- G. Kirkpatrick is still waiting for tax levy limits from the comptroller and PILOT numbers from the town before he can finalize the budget draft for review. The board is working with a March deadline for the final decision.
- E-content is more than 10% in total circulation, indicating a significant shift in usage patterns in recent years. Demand is still high but it is starting to flatten out. Despite their cost, investment in eBooks and other e-content has a service impact because there still is unmet need. B. Sweeney asked what G. Kirkpatrick would expect e-content use to look like in 5-10 years. G. Kirkpatrick said he would guess that it would eventually even out near 25% of total checkouts, with some genres seeing higher electronic use than others.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said there will likely be a big push for more library funding at Advocacy Day with the Democrats winning the majority in the state Senate. She said she would be happy to provide dates and times to any trustee who would like to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Board committee schedule/rotation

M. Kissinger suggested that each committee work to meet in the next six months to see if it is feasible. Committee members can decide which times work best for them. G. Kirkpatrick said that while the meetings did not represent a quorum, he would seek additional information about how to best satisfy open meeting obligations.

UHLS System-wide My Card

The Directors Association is considering a universal fine-free library card for youths 18 and under, similar to the My Cards issued by some libraries like Albany and Ravena. G. Kirkpatrick asked the board to allow Bethlehem library to accept My Cards from other libraries in the system. He said the number was pretty low with the biggest number of people it would affect coming from Ravena. C. Brancatella said there seemed to be no good reason to not accept them, and the board agreed.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella and a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimous agreed to allow My Card library cards issued at other Upper Hudson libraries to be used at Bethlehem.

The board wanted the minutes to reflect that this decision ONLY refers to My Cards issued by other libraries and does not authorize BPL to issue its own My Card, as that would be a larger discussion for another time.

NYS library smoking prohibition law

The ban goes into effect after June 18, and refers only to smoking and not other tobacco use. The library will put up signs informing patrons of the new rules.

School district veterans credit

The school district is considering offering Cold War veterans a tax exemption, and if they do, it would automatically apply to library taxes. It would have no effect on total library income as it would redistribute the tax among area households.

Board treasurer – resolutions needed

R. Khalife said that he would need a board resolution if he will be signing financial reports in the future. The board asked him to provide a list of requested resolutions to act on the following month.

Other new business

K. Roberts noted the petition requirements for board candidates and said that packets would be available for pickup beginning Feb. 25. J. Becker said she would not be seeking re-election. Board members said they would get the word out to those who might be interested in running.

OLD BUSINESS

Long-range capital plan

G. Kirkpatrick reminded the board that library architect Paul Mays would make a presentation Jan. 24 in the Storyhour Room at 6pm. Trustees will be able to ask questions following the approximately one-hour presentation covering space and service needs to kick off the long-range planning process. H. Narang said he spent some time with G. Kirkpatrick touring the building in December so he will be interested in hearing P. Mays' ideas.

Bethlehem First Night Report

Covered in an earlier discussion during the director's report.

HVAC update

The library is still waiting for some reports from DASNY, and an engineer is scheduled to be brought in at some point to evaluate why the HVAC system is not running properly. H. Narang said he would like to attend the upcoming meeting of those involved with the installation of the system.

BCN-TV/studio makerspace update

G. Kirkpatrick said there is one small technical issue with the one-button system, but the studio is nearly ready with new podcasting equipment and furniture. M. Kissinger asked if there would be a ribbon cutting and noted that the Chamber of Commerce loans out giant scissors for such events.

Other old business

No other old business at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

Background checks

No further discussion at this time.

Plaza feasibility

No further discussion at this time.

Policy updates/schedule

No further discussion at this time.

Resource sharing

No further discussion at this time.

Fines and fees

No further discussion at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

On a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:48pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Redmond, board president