

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Monday January 8, 2018

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, Accounts Clerk  
Natalie McDonough, Manager, Programs and Community Outreach  
Catherine Stollar Peters, Head of Tech Services, Circulation  
Chris McGinty, Head of Public Services  
Tracey McShane  
Cathy Brenner  
Dennis Kariious  
Nancy Benedict  
Jared King

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following people during public participation:

- Dennis Kariious: Asked for clarification about when and how often the Friends of the Library meet. G. Kirkpatrick said the Friends meet every other month.
- Nancy Benedict: Said she had recently learned that Studio Manager Janice Irwin retired and was concerned about what that would mean for studio use and training. M. Redmond said the board is moving forward with the Makerspace plans and that library staff has stepped up to fill the void.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 11 December 2017 board meeting was approved unanimously on a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by M. Kissinger.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 December 2017 (Manual Disbursements for December \$48,813.34; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for January \$43,553.97; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for December \$278,034.92; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for January \$913.10; Total: \$371,315.33).

H. Narang asked what rules regulated the options for funds in the Money Market. G. Kirkpatrick said the library was very limited in that area because all funds had to be collateralized. Some options exist to invest in CDs when interest rates are high. G. Kirkpatrick said that the town comptroller often looks at getting value-added services like Positive Pay instead of direct interest, which is typically low for municipal banking because it is an expensive service. M. Redmond noted that looking into those options would be something to put on the board treasurer's plate when that position is filled.

## BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for December 1-31, 2017.

## MANUAL INVOICES

None

## RESOLUTIONS

Because the resolutions involved the HVAC project, the board opted to vote on them later in the evening when the topic was discussed.

## PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report.

## PERSONNEL ACTION

The board chose to return to the personnel action following the BCN-TV discussion later in the evening.

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

- Library page, part-time, permanent, 13.85 hours/week at \$10.40/hour or per contract.
- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.66 hours/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract.

On a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved holding the following positions pending a staffing needs assessment once the scheduling portion of the public access channel is stabilized.

- Studio manager, part-time, permanent, \$23,775/annual or per contract.
- Television production assistant, part-time, permanent, 15/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract. (Previously approved to fill at Dec. 11, 2017 meeting.)

G. Kirkpatrick noted that the minimum wage had increased for pages.

The board agreed to put the studio manager and production assistant positions on hold for a couple of months until the library had a better idea of what is needed for staffing. G. Kirkpatrick said he would like to give IT some time to figure out if scheduling could be handled by existing staff. C. McGinty and N. McDonough are also looking at what the public services needs as far as studio staffing since it will be a team of people providing the training to studio users. H. Narang asked when the library expects to have the studio available for public use. G. Kirkpatrick said it could potentially be by summer. The scheduling equipment will be moved to the IT department.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The library only had to close early once for icing on the plaza. The bitter cold causes fewer issues than freezing water.
- The test of the Oculus Rift was a good way to see how the library can make it available for public use in the tech room. A family who recently moved here from Israel was able to visit their former home using the device and the Google Earth app.
- There are some new databases available to the library as demos. B. Sweeney asked if notification about the demos is pushed out on social media and elsewhere to make people aware of the opportunity. K. Roberts said there are notifications put out when new databases are available to demo.
- The board further discussed a patron concern that library-sponsored middle school programs on school property are not available to private or home-schooled children in the district. The board noted that outreach to schools is an important part of what the library does, but the decision to not allow the children on school property is made by the school district. G. Kirkpatrick said that the request for social activity opportunities for middle schoolers is valid, but the library has had limited success with after-school programs for that age group.
- The board discussed a second concern regarding hallway displays and a patron who took issue with the menorah set up by a local community group. The library does not put up any religious displays of its own and does not make content-based decisions about what groups share in the public display areas. M. Kissinger noted that the library policy regarding displays and exhibits is solid and fair. The next issue of the Footnotes will feature a short write-up about how people can request display space, which is available to everyone on a first-come basis.
- All of the library's financial safeguards worked recently when a person attempted to cash a fraudulent library check. G. Kirkpatrick noted that the authorities were unlikely to pursue it any further, but all of the account protections worked.
- The board discussed open meeting ramifications and that no more than three board members can meet at a time to discuss library business outside of public meetings. B. Sweeney asked if this was an issue, and M. Redmond said it was something to get clarified if the board were going to use subcommittees to tackle upcoming board topics. C. Brancatella asked if the library has received FOIL requests, and G. Kirkpatrick noted that it had not in recent memory as most documents are already available in the board packets online. C. Brancatella noted that transparency is the best defense
- G. Kirkpatrick said he would like the library to train interested staffers to administer Narcan if it is needed.

## UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons noted two upcoming dates:

- Advocacy Day will be Wednesday, Feb. 28.
- The annual UHLS meeting has changed to Tuesday, June 19, based on availability at the venue.

## NEW BUSINESS

### *Self-check proposal*

C. Stollar Peters presented a proposal for self-checkout machines at the library. The setup would include two combo stations at the circulation desk that could be used by staffers and/or the public, as well as a free-standing themed kiosk in the Children's Place for a total estimated cost of \$22,778. She noted that self-checkout could decrease patron wait time and allow for patron privacy. Self-checkout also could be the first step in a multi-phase plan to provide additional automation services, including point of service fine and fee payment, and RFID implementation.

M. Redmond asked if there would be an annual fee associated with self-checkout, and C. Stollar Peters said that the money handling phase would include a cost of \$5,000 annually after the initial investment of \$16,000. She said the library currently takes in about \$11,000 in revenue through credit cards, but a point of service system could greatly increase that number. She said it was a good idea to look at the self-check system as the starting point in where the library could go with the technology. H. Narang said it might be a steep learning curve initially, but the best strategy would be to just start somewhere and maintain the ability to work out any bugs before it could cause any interruption to service. He noted that the payoff appeared to be pretty immediate. C. Stollar Peters said the themed kiosk in the Children's Place would be fun for kids to interact with and could help harried parents looking to make a quick exit with their library goods.

G. Kirkpatrick noted that labor savings was not the primary goal of phase one, but M. Redmond asked if it would potentially allow the library to reduce the number of people working certain shifts. C. Stollar Peters said the library is already testing fewer desk employees on traditionally slow nights. Both she and G. Kirkpatrick said it would be difficult, though, to replace the knowledge of fulltime staff. H. Narang said the kiosk might create one "FTE of opportunity" that could be applied elsewhere in the library. G. Kirkpatrick said that some patrons have already expressed a desire for self-checkout and there are very good service reasons to do so.

B. Sweeney said that the interactions with his family and the people at the circulation desk are part of the positive library experience, and he does not share an eagerness for people and staff savings. He asked what the potential for materials loss would be, and C. Stollar Peters responded that the library already has a less than 2 percent shrinkage rate but staff would continue to do careful inventory in the event of implementation.

H. Narang asked that the board consider a vote on the issue in February.

### *2018 budget – preliminary discussion*

G. Kirkpatrick and staff are still in the process of finalizing the budget. The library is currently awaiting numbers from the state. There will be a draft at the February meeting to vote on to meet the May ballot deadlines.

### *Studio makerspace plan*

With J. Irwin's retirement, some of the timing of the maker for the makerspace implementation will need to be reevaluated. G. Kirkpatrick said the first priority is to stabilize the channel, which IT has already begun. The scheduling knowledge is shared by all three in the department. The goal is to get the community bulletin board up and running and the backlog of shows to air. IT will be keeping track of the time commitment these duties require over the next six weeks to see if they are tasks that can be absorbed by existing staff. They have already simplified some of the formats for submission to streamline the process. M. Redmond asked if there had been any complaints about the backlog of shows, and G. Kirkpatrick said that he has not heard anything. He said once the scheduling is stabilized, then the library will start looking at the makerspace needs, but there are already plans to order some easy-to-use digital cameras that will be put out for circulation with the Library of Things. B. Sweeney asked if it would make sense to continue loaning out the old studio equipment. G. Kirkpatrick said the old cameras create files that are not easily transferable to most platforms.

M. Redmond said the board appreciated the library staff for stepping up professionally and constructively to get the public access station and makerspace studio up and running.

### *BCN-TV policy*

The board reviewed a revision of the Public Access Television Policy that reflects the move to a self-production makerspace model and opens up studio use to anyone with a library card.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board of trustees approved the updated Public Access Television Policy.

### *Other new business*

The Friends of the Library have offered to purchase 10 new Wi-Fi hotspots and service for one year. There are currently 15 requestable hotspots, with a backlog of 20-23 requests on them. The board agreed to accept the gift and said it would go a long way in addressing the current backlog.

T. Choppy said that library in-house cash funds have been strained a couple of times recently when people asked to pay for smaller charges with \$50 bills. G. Kirkpatrick asked if the library could increase the morning setups for the register by \$40. The board said it was unreasonable to think the library could change larger bills. Board members said the library should post that they cannot accept bills larger than \$20, without exceptions. They noted that there could be some flexibility in letting people check out materials despite being over the fine limit if they are trying to pay with a \$50 and have nothing else. The board said they could revisit the issue if there is patron backlash.

## OLD BUSINESS

### *Fire alarm and security update*

There has been no change on the project status. The plan has been reviewed and approved by SED. H. Narang asked what the next step was. M. Redmond said the board is waiting to see where the funding stands following the HVAC project. M/E Engineering said it was not a project the library would

want to act as their own construction manager on due to the asbestos abatement. H. Narang asked if there was an optimal time of year for the project. G. Kirkpatrick noted that all of it was inside work and could happen at any time, but if it required closing the library for any amount of time, he would prefer the month of December.

*HVAC project update*

Wilkins, the apparent low bidder for the construction portion of the project submitted a number that is very close to what was received from Gilbane last fall. Project costs are overall slightly higher but not too far from what was originally projected when the project began. The total planned cost, including design work that has already been paid for comes in at just under \$900,000.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney, with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board authorized the library director to advance the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York \$691,790 for the contracted amount for the HVAC project construction, which includes the bid amount, the 10 percent contingency, and asbestos monitoring.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger, with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board authorized the transfer of \$150,000 from the unreserved fund balance to the Capital Projects (H Fund) account to pay invoices in relation to the HVAC renovation project, effectively increasing the project budget to \$900,000.

The board said that when the state grant money arrives, they can discuss what the next projects are. M. Redmond said it might be time to start prioritizing upcoming projects.

M. Redmond asked that DASNY's report be included in the monthly board packet to show how the money is being spent.

*Other old business*

An election packet notice will be in the upcoming Footnotes, which is currently in production. The wording typically includes whether or not the incumbents are seeking re-election, so G. Kirkpatrick asked the three board members whose seats are up to let him know, if possible.

**FUTURE BUSINESS**

*Board treasurer*

M. Redmond noted that the board will need to move forward with a job description.

*Policy updates/schedule*

M. Redmond asked if staff could prepare policy drafts to be reviewed in advance of the meetings to move the process along. G. Kirkpatrick said there was one that would be ready for review soon.

*Resource sharing*

B. Sweeney said that after discussing the issues surrounding reciprocal sharing of materials with other libraries in the system, the general sense was that pushing hard was not the best use of our library's time, considering the small number of materials affected. G. Kirkpatrick said that if there is a resource at another library that is not available to Bethlehem patrons that the easiest route would be for BPL to just acquire the item.

### *Fines and fees*

G. Kirkpatrick said that going fine free is a trending topic that the board she be aware of, with some area libraries making that move for children's materials and with varying stipulations. Part of what Bethlehem has always done in an effort to not be punitive to taxpayers is to keep the fines for materials low. G. Kirkpatrick speculated that the library spent more in staff time collecting the fines than they bring in. He noted that people's behavior will change if there isn't a fine, so the question becomes how do you handle collection development when people don't feel pressure to bring back materials. B. Sweeney said the unexpected consequences may include longer wait times and the need to purchase more copies of popular materials. He said that it is his sense that a fine-free future is happening and it will be up to staff and trustees to figure out how to make it work. G. Kirkpatrick said the library could further reduce overdue materials if items were automatically renewed in the absence of a hold.

The board agreed that it was a topic to discuss further.

### *Board committees*

The board noted that they may need to consider tackling some topics in committee to maximize meeting time and get out from the backlog of agenda items.

### *Director evaluation*

B. Sweeney and M. Kissinger, who served on the committee last year encouraged other board members to take the reins for the upcoming evaluation. H. Narang volunteered.

### *Other*

- M. Kissinger said he would like to add a line in new business to talk about music collection and policy and what it is going to look like in the coming years.
- The board said they would like to put on the agenda for February a review of the lessons learned from BCN-TV discussion.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following people spoke:

- Dennis: Asked if it would be possible to partner with students working in the field to help run the studio. H. Narang said the library is committed to keeping that space there and usable.

On a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:28pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
M. Redmond, board president