

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday July 8, 2019

PRESENT: Mark Kissinger
Harmeet Narang
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons
Brian Sweeney
Michelle Walsh

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Caroline Brancatella
Robert Khalife, Treasurer

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Catherine Brenner, CSEA Local 6015 president
Jim Walsh
Kelley Walsh
Taylor Walsh

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

OATHS OF OFFICE

M. Redmond administered the oath of office to trustee-elect M. Walsh.

Ethics statements were distributed to the trustees for signing and will be filed in the public record.

BOARD OFFICER ELECTION

The following slate of officers was proposed for 2019-20:

- President: Mary Redmond
- Vice President, Policies and governance: Mark Kissinger
- Vice President, Strategic Planning: Brian Sweeney
- Secretary: Caroline Brancatella
- UHLS representative: Lisa Scoons
- Board treasurer: Robert Khalife

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously accepted the slate as presented.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There was no public participation

MINUTES

Minutes of the 10 June 2019 board meeting were approved unanimously as amended on a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by M. Kissinger.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by H. Narang the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 June 2019 (Manual Disbursements for June \$50,704.23; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for July \$117,049.31; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for June \$186,924.85; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for July \$1,520.00; Total: \$356,198.39).

M. Redmond noted that the revenue for the last fiscal year was around \$48,000, an amount above what was budgeted.

G. Kirkpatrick delivered the treasurer's report prepared earlier by R. Khalife. The main activity for the month was working on updating the Investment Policy. R. Khalife has researched the law and the OSC guidelines regarding deposits and investments for government and municipal entitites. He has drafted a PowerPoint presentation and has met with the finance committee to discuss some of the proposed changes. Additional research and meetings will take place in July to finalize the proposed revisions to the policy. The library has recorded all activity relating to the H Fund as approved by the board at the June meeting.

H. Narang asked when the Investment Policy draft would come before the board. G. Kirkpatrick said it would be reviewed in the finance committee before going to the policy committee, and would likely be ready for the board in August. M. Redmond said that R. Khalife has put a lot of research into his recommendations.

G. Kirkpatrick reported that there were a couple of larger expenses that came up in the past month that he wanted to bring to the board's attention. The first was the purchase of a new network system to resolve on ongoing network issue. The system purchase was recommended by Upper Hudson and came in just under \$9,000. IT personnel worked through the weekend and on Sunday to get the system installed. It allows for a faster Internet connection inside the building and addresses the website connectivity issues that were happening. The second expense was an \$8,929 property tax refund for a medical building that was recently granted by the town. Property tax refunds were higher than expected over the past year due to a change in the process that allows for retroactive refunds. B. Sweeney asked if there was a way to prepare for this expense in the future. G. Kirkpatrick said that the budget line has been increased for next year. M. Redmond said she expects the number of refunds to eventually drop off over the coming years.

BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for June 1-30, 2019.

MANUAL INVOICES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report.

PERSONNEL ACTION

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously approved a new hire for the following vacancies, pending Civil Service approval:

- Library page, part-time, permanent, 13.85 hours/week at \$11.10/hour or per contract.
- Library page, part-time, permanent, 13.85 hours/week at \$11.10/hour or per contract.

M/C SALARIES 2019-20

The board reviewed a chart of the proposed salaries, and G. Kirkpatrick noted that they are in line with the same increases received by the bargaining unit.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approved the management confidential salaries, effective July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

In response to a question by M. Walsh, G. Kirkpatrick and M. Redmond noted that the M/C salaries have a step system and follow the same COLA negotiated by the bargaining unit even though they are not covered by contract. In response to a question by H. Narang, G. Kirkpatrick said that he frequently checks Bethlehem's salaries with other similar sized libraries to see if they are comparable.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- M. Redmond encouraged fellow board members to see the Ian Boegel Memorial Patio. She said staffers went above and beyond to make it a nice space.
- M. Walsh said she knows the graduating senior who borrowed the 1934 yearbook for his speech, and he was very honored to be able to use it.
- C. Stollar Peters said the library hasn't yet seen any of the MyCards in use.
- The chickens have gone home to the farm. The Eggsperiment was very popular and drove a lot of traffic at the Children's Desk.
- Summer Reading challenge participation is already ahead of where it was this time last year. People like the new, easy-to-follow format, and 90 books have been handed out to kids so far.
- There will be two staff brainstorming sessions for long range service planning ideas, which G. Kirkpatrick, C. Stollar Peters and C. McGinty will condense for the board by September.

- Trustees have been provided with a link to a new online trustees “manual.” This page includes all of the information that was part of the paper version, as well as maps of the district, information about political representatives and more. It can be updated easily and is available to the public.
- H. Narang asked if there were schools other than Glenmont that visited the library every year. C. Brenner said that the library has had other schools in the past, but the cost associated with field trips prevents some from coming. The library does a lot of outreach and collaboration with the schools in order to reach the kids that don’t get here as part of a school outing. C. McGinty said the library continues to investigate the possibility of automatically giving every child in the schools a library card, as well as other projects that could pull in more users.
- Board members said they heard a lot of positive feedback about the library’s first pop-up event at the farmers market.
- Board members discussed whether there might be better electricity rates or alternative suppliers available. G. Kirkpatrick said that it has been investigated in the past but not looked into recently, although the G3 team did do some research on community solar.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said state construction grant money has been restored to the \$34 million received the previous year. There is a proposal to increase the amount available to more needy communities to 90 percent. She said that might spark some interest from libraries that don’t normally go for the grants. M. Walsh asked if \$34 million were typical. G. Kirkpatrick said that it generally hovered around \$10 million until it shot up to \$34 million last year. Bethlehem will not be putting in for a construction grant this year.

NEW BUSINESS

Board authorizations

There were some additions to the authorizations this year. For attorneys, the library has added Nolan Heller Kauffman, LLP, and Whiteman Osterman and Hanna, LLP to the existing Roemer Wallens, Gold & Mineaux, LLP. The list was expanded to include firms with areas of expertise outside of HR matters.

Authorized insurance brokers now include Amsure Associates, as well as Marshall and Sterling. And the library has switched auditors following an RFP and is now with Marvin and Company.

The board discussed if there was any benefit to paying bills through electronic transfers. They ultimately decided to clarify the language in the final draft of the authorizations about the payroll-related electronic transfers to note that they were only authorized for IRS, NYS Tax and NYS Deferred Comp.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously approved board authorizations for 2019-20 as amended.

2020 board meeting schedule

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board unanimously approved the 2020 meeting schedule as amended.

M. Walsh noted that if the October meeting takes place on a Tuesday that the date would be the 13th. The board opted to move the April meeting to the 20th to avoid a conflict with Spring Break.

2020 holidays and closings

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the 2020 holidays and closings schedule.

G. Kirkpatrick said he was requesting the library close at 3pm on New Year's Eve to get staff home while it was still light out. It is not a contractual holiday, but it is typically not a busy time for the library. M. Walsh asked how the number of days the library is closed compares to others in the area. G. Kirkpatrick said Bethlehem is open far more hours than any of the other libraries in the Upper Hudson system.

Committee memberships

The board discussed committee membership but decided to finalize their decisions at the following meeting due to C. Brancatella's absence.

The tentative lineup included:

Building committee: H. Narang

Finance committee: M. Redmond and R. Khalife

Personnel committee: M. Kissinger and C. Brancatella. B. Sweeney said that if C. Brancatella was not interested in serving anymore, he would be happy to.

Policy committee: C. Brancatella and M. Kissinger. L. Scoons said she would also be interested in serving on the committee.

Collections committee: B. Sweeney and M. Kissinger. H. Narang said he would also like to serve.

The board noted that the nominating committee would be formed as needed. G Kirkpatrick said that the Building, Finance and Personnel committees were required standing committees. M. Redmond said that M. Walsh might want to learn more about what the committees do to see where she might want to help out.

B. Sweeney said the nominating committee submitted the slate of officers that was voted on earlier in the meeting and also had the two following motions:

Whereas descriptions of officer duties in the bylaws do not in all cases reflect the duties performed by those officers, and in some cases include duties delegated to staff, on a MOTION by B. Sweeney and a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously agreed that the vice president for policies and governance and the policy committee draft updated descriptions of duties for president, vice president, and secretary in the bylaws and present these updated descriptions for board vote before the end of the calendar year.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney and a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously agreed that the vice president for policies and governance and the policy committee draft revisions to the bylaws explicitly conferring on future nominating committees authority to modify the list of officers in a given year so as to align a slate to the strengths, abilities, and willingness to serve of members of particular boards. These revisions will be presented for board vote before the end of the calendar year.

Alternative e-content platforms

Staff is looking at ways to fulfill unmet need regarding the electronic collection and to balance whether the introduction of a new platform would better serve Bethlehem patrons versus spending more to purchase materials through Overdrive. B. Sweeney noted the New York Public just dropped Kanopy, and G. Kirkpatrick said many libraries find that the pay-per-use model becomes unsustainable, even with limits placed on borrowing. He said the question is how libraries can provide something like Netflix for people who can't afford it. B. Sweeney said he is concerned that there isn't a lot of space in the library for classic titles. He said he sees the library as fulfilling a curatorial role by putting important works on the shelves that people may not even know they want. G. Kirkpatrick noted that the library's footprint and shelf space creates certain limits. M. Redmond said these questions could be expanded on in committee discussions.

Other new business

M. Redmond reminded the board that the current union contract expires next July, so negotiations would be coming up soon. G. Kirkpatrick is working with staff to put together some type of presentation about what the contract covers so board members can be well-informed prior to discussions.

G. Kirkpatrick said there is a verbal agreement with Paul Mays, who is finalizing the document to include the agreed-upon wording regarding indemnification. He is preparing a building needs plan that will be part of the long-range planning process. G. Kirkpatrick said he hopes to come back with a finalized timeline by the August meeting. M. Redmond encouraged M. Walsh to sit down with G. Kirkpatrick to get some background on board discussion regarding prioritizing of long-range projects.

OLD BUSINESS

HVAC update

Anticipated project timeline

M/E had done a first round of design work of re-heats following a project meeting with them, the library, DASNY, Wilkins, Trane and Johnson Controls. DASNY is asking for some additional changes to the design, and M/E is currently looking into it. Any additional work to correct the issues with the HVAC system will be part of the same project under a change order. G. Kirkpatrick and the board are hoping to have the work done by the beginning of the heating season in September/October. An estimated cost will not be available until an agreed-upon design is ready. M. Redmond said she has stressed to DASNY that the library wants the work done correctly and is not looking to cut any corners. Once a cost estimate is available, the library can move forward with making funding decisions and whether or not to pursue remuneration.

Overall, G. Kirkpatrick said he is more hopeful after the project meeting that the affected rooms can be made comfortable. H. Narang said he was glad that everyone showed up and admitted there was a problem with the HVAC system.

Library mini-golf

G. Kirkpatrick reminded the board about the upcoming event. K. Roberts said that the Friends were opening up the opportunity to decorate a hole to the public.

Other old business

The board noted the schedule of upcoming events.

M. Redmond said the issue with the hallway furniture would need to be addressed soon. She said G. Kikrpatrick should ask P. Mays for his opinion about whether it constituted a fire hazard. H. Narang asked if there was someone who might be able to research some precedents and standards that show a more reasonable interpretation of the fire code.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board adjourned to executive session at 8:27pm to discuss the employment history of a specific individual.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned executive session at 8:47pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:48pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Redmond, board president