

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday March 9, 2020

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

Robert Khalife, treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Caroline Brancatella

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Nicole Salinas, guest

President M. Redmond called the meeting to order at 5:59 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Nicole Salinas introduced herself and said she was interested in observing the meeting.

MINUTES

M. Walsh said she surprised and pleased to see the high response rate of the in-house dot survey regarding library spaces and services

Minutes of the 10 February 2020 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by M. Kissinger.

K. Roberts noted there was a correction to the list of attendees at the Long-Range Planning Committee meeting.

Minutes of the 6 March 2020 Long-Range Planning Committee were approved with correction unanimously on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by L. Scoons.

FINANCIAL REPORT

R. Khalife said the financial report included nothing unusual in terms of revenue and spending. He said he was proposing a resolution to open an account at Key Bank, which has a local branch. He noted that after the deposits at Key Bank exceed a certain amount, the plan would be to transfer the funds to the library's account at TD Bank. H. Narang asked that the Finance Committee come up with rule regarding the parameters of how much would be allowed to accumulate in the account before transfer.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 29 February 2020 (Manual Disbursements for \$12,511.13; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for March \$58,725.73; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for February \$193,960.25; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for February \$0.00).

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the opening of a new bank account at Key Bank, subject to the guidelines contained in the investment policy adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 12, 2019.

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said the library is seeking approval to fill the position of a senior library clerk. M. Kissinger asked about whether the library was still trying to fill the IT Assistant position. G. Kirkpatrick said that those on the available list have been canvassed but declined. T. McShane has reached out the Hudson Valley to see if any new graduates might be interested, but if there is no response, the library may move forward with filling the position as a full-time clerk.

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

- Sr. Library Clerk, 35 hours/week, full-time permanent, \$34,714/annual or per contract

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The Seed Library has returned and is already seeing a lot of use.
- The library is moving closer to automatic renewals, but there have been some setbacks in the rollout, and it has been postponed a month to see if there can be better coordination with the other libraries in the system. In response to a question by M. Walsh, G. Kirkpatrick said automatic renewals have been discussed in the past, especially in regard to the impact they will have on fines. He said it is meant primarily as a service to patrons, similar to the renewal reminders currently in place. The automatic renewal will happen on the last day the item can be renewed. Board members asked if having materials out longer would impact the browsing experience. G. Kirkpatrick said the idea was to have more items circulating in order to open up more shelf space for materials, so staff would keep an eye on genres like cookbooks, art books and travel books that tend to be bigger with browsers to make sure the shelves are sufficiently full. B. Sweeney asked if there was an option to include a reminder a couple days earlier if there are materials that can't be renewed. H. Narang asked if there were any other actions that the library might take with checkout periods of non-requested items essentially changing to 12 weeks. G. Kirkpatrick said the library would be looking at beefing up the new and popular fiction collection.

- Collections are still being shifted to make space for more movies and audiobooks. This means the library is now using some bottom shelf space, which is not ideal for browsing and accessibility. There is a plan to use angled bottom shelves in the future, but a number of size and cost logistics must be figured out first.
- Library staff have made a number of presentations in the community recently to get out the word about the Long Range Planning process.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the board is gearing up to review applications for construction grants among other tasks.

NEW BUSINESS

Insurance payment policy

G. Kirkpatrick said this policy applies to a limited number of people who pay the library for healthcare through COBRA or as retirees. He noted that the language clarifies who to pay and how, and removes a specific address in the event that it changes. The board discussed allowable payment methods, and suggested the wording include “other library-approved payment methods” in the event that someone would want to pay via cash or credit card.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously approved as amended the updates to the Insurance payment policy as presented.

Laptop lab

G. Kirkpatrick said that the 5-year-old laptops used for public tech training and programs are very slow even with hardware updates, so he is proposing the purchase of 10 new laptop computers. M. Walsh said that she took an Intro to Excel class and was very happy to find out that it included actual hands-on instruction.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a second by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously approved payment of \$14,886.90 to Dell for the purchase of 10 laptop computers.

Other new business

M. Walsh said she was interested in C. Stollar Peters’ PLA report about a library that has started doing curbside book pickups.

The board discussed the need for a new outdoor book drop. G. Kirkpatrick said staffers are currently looking into the options available.

G. Kirkpatrick presented a list of off-cycle checks that he was requesting preapproval for as the April board meeting would be taking place a week later than usual. The checks represent the renewal of a number of museum passes and payment for spring break program presenters.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger and a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approve the payment of off cycle checks prior to the April 20 board meeting in the amount of \$1,190.

OLD BUSINESS

Draft budget

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously approved the 2020-21 draft budget as written for public presentation. The budget proposes a levy of \$4,172,563, an increase of 2.64% or \$107,411.

Long range plan steering committee report

B. Sweeney reported that at the Friday, March 6, long range plan meeting, Paul Mays presented the existing conditions reports. He said there was some discussion of the timing and strategy of various long range planning tasks. He noted that the rest of the board have received copies of the documents and could pass on their comments or concerns to G. Kirkpatrick. M. Redmond said she did not see a report on the Borthwick property. G. Kirkpatrick said he was told that would be forthcoming. B. Sweeney said there was also some discussion of whether various funding options had been looked into.

At the committee meeting, P. Mays asked if anyone had looked into creating a library foundation that could fundraise on a large scale. R. Khalife said that it was his impression that the suggestion of a foundation was more as a concept as opposed to being related to the long range plan. G. Kirkpatrick said the library cannot ask the public for donations, but foundations can. L. Scoons said P. Mays was suggesting that the community of Bethlehem was a natural fit for such an entity as there may be people willing and able to give but unsure how.

M. Redmond said she believes the discussion of funding is premature as the board does not even have a list of projects or estimated costs in front of them. H. Narang said that he agrees it is too soon to talk about how to spend the money, but it still might be worthwhile to discuss what the board would be comfortable spending.

G. Kirkpatrick said P. Mays would be presenting multiple concepts in the next couple of months for the board to look at and decide what fits best with their 10-year priorities before a public presentation scheduled for September. Even then, it won't be a fixed plan as the community will have the opportunity to let the board know if their priorities align. M. Redmond said she believes public opinion is going to really drive the outcome.

HVAC update

All of the HVAC papers have been signed and returned to the state to claim the last bit of grant money, and the library is close to officially closing out the project.

Infectious disease report

G. Kirkpatrick said there has been much discussion of library response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He told the board the library's reaction would likely fall into the three phases below:

1. (Happening at this time.) Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of surfaces. Increased availability of hand sanitizers, posted hygiene reminders and information available on the website.
2. Limiting large group meetings, programs and creating social distancing within the library on a temporary basis.
3. A mandated long-term closure.

G. Kirkpatrick said that the library would have to establish a procedure for a long-term closure of

this nature. B. Sweeney asked if the library would continue to pay part-timers affected by a long-term closure. The board agreed that part-time positions are budgeted for and would not represent additional costs so they were therefore in favor of compensating these employees in the event of a long-term emergency closure due to the Coronavirus. M. Redmond said this would be a one-time allowance and not intended as a precedence-setting event. The board said they would also support part-timers put under mandatory quarantine.

G. Kirkpatrick said there was still some discussion to be had about what level of service the library could maintain in the event of a forced closure, and who might be able to work from home.

The board also said this situation has brought to the forefront the issue of sick leave for part timers and the state's paid family leave, which the library currently does not participate in.

G. Kirkpatrick and C. McGinty have been investigating the digital service Hoopla as a way to serve patrons outside of the physical building. The pay-per service model features streaming video, e-books, e-audio and music with prices starting at 34 cents per use. The board decided they would like to look into the service further before moving forward with a decision.

Other old business

M. Kissinger said he would like to be ready to tackle 1-2 policy updates every meeting.

FUTURE BUSINESS

Background checks

No further discussion at this time.

Plaza feasibility – to be included in the long-range plan

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 at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:02pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Redmond, board president