

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Tuesday October 10, 2017

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella  
Mark Kissinger  
Mary Redmond  
Lisa Scoons  
Brian Sweeney

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Harmeet Narang  
Joyce Becker

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, Accounts Clerk  
Chris McGinty, Head of Public Services  
Michael Cohen, Town of Bethlehem comptroller  
Janice Irwin, BCN-TV Studio Manager  
Marilyn Kaltenborn  
Frank DeSorbo  
Nancy Benedict  
Rabbi Nachman Simon  
Jim Hudson  
Leslie Hudson  
Art Ware  
Cori Irwin  
Nathan Frank  
Joe Lombardo  
Dennis Karious

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

#### PUBLIC PARTICPATION

The following people spoke:

- Nancy Benedict: Reiterated her point from last month's meeting that the audience reached by public access is not the same as the one through YouTube. BCN-TV reaches local people flipping through the channels. She added that she liked having a studio on site where people could make their programs.
- Mike Cohen: Said he was at the meeting as a partner of the library and representative of the town and would be available to answer questions during the Open Stage Media discussion later in the meeting.
- Frank DeSorbo: Said his work with Patriot Flight brings him into many communities and he has heard from people how nice Bethlehem is and that BCN-TV is an asset to the community. He asked if there would be a Powerpoint presentation about the OSM discussion. G. Kirkpatrick answered that he

was reporting the conversation to the board, but there were not enough details yet to put together a formal presentation.

- Marilyn Kaltenborn: Noted that she was able to complete and submit a series of interviews to the Veterans History Project with the assistance provided by BCN-TV.
- Leslie Hudson: Said she had some questions about how the studio equipment had been maintained, when the last major repair was, and what the costs were. She said the local aspect of the station was vital for area groups and religious organizations. She said it was her understanding that the current equipment is working well and that maybe a decision about the studio could be made at a later time when there are issues with the technology.
- Art Ware: Said he supported keeping the studio as is.
- Joe Lombardo: Said BCN-TV is a community resource that should remain in the community. Noted that the equipment does seem to work. Said the space is a little small and maybe there was a better location in Town Hall or somewhere else in the community.
- Dennis Karius: Said public access television was important to promote freedom of speech and constitutional rights.

M. Redmond thanked the public for their comments and noted that the entire board meeting is open to the public, and the board would be discussing BCN-TV later in the meeting. She noted that past minutes are available on the library's website, and added that another public participation period would take place at the end of the meeting.

#### MINUTES

Minutes of the 11 September 2017 board meeting were unanimously approved on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by L. Scoons, with the correction noted below.

M. Redmond noted that the name of one of the public attendees, Art Ware, was mis-recorded.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 September 2017 (Manual Disbursements for September \$67,424.78; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for October \$54,265.38; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for September \$171,867.37; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for October \$7,650.00; Total: \$301,207.53).

G. Kirkpatrick noted that property taxes collected by the school are starting to come in. M. Kissinger asked about the Amazon Credit Plan line on the Cash Disbursements report. T. Choppy said the library has a revolving credit plan with Amazon, like a credit card, to pay for program supplies.

#### BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for September 1-30, 2017.

#### MANUAL INVOICES

None

## RESOLUTIONS

None

## PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report.

## PERSONNEL ACTION

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

- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 15 hours/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract.
- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 13.57 hours/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract.
- Custodial worker, part-time, permanent, 7.63 hours/week at \$15.15/hour or per contract.
- Board treasurer, hours and salary to be decided

M. Redmond noted that the board treasurer has been added to the personnel report as a reminder to keep it part of the discussion, but the board is not expecting to act on it right away. She suggested designating it as a proposed position on the report.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The library is working to fill the open positions in the building and maintenance department. The positions are civil service but classified as labor, which means the library does not have to hire off of a list.
- B. Sweeney asked if the removal of a shelving unit in the Children's Place will reduce the collection size. G. Kirkpatrick it would stay the same size but would be added to existing shelves.
- L. Scoons asked if there had been any impact on the circulation of the Chromebooks now that the Bethlehem School District is providing them for students. G. Kirkpatrick said the library hasn't noticed anything yet, but Catherine Stollar Peters has a good way to compare the circulation data from our non-traditional items in the Library of Things.
- A link provided in the board packet and created by C. Stollar Peters will help the board look at and compare some long-baseline circulation statistics.

G. Kirkpatrick said Phillip Morris from Proctors offered to merge the library's public access channel with Open Stage Media's, taking over the scheduling and trafficking. Local shows would be added to the OSM lineup and broadcast to the area, making it more of a regional entity. The offer did not include studio services. The cost would have to be negotiated with the town but was estimated at \$10,000-\$15,000 of the PEG money. G. Kirkpatrick noted that a lot of the programs on BCN-TV already currently run on the OSM channel. He said that what he was discussing this evening was just a rough outline, and a lot of questions need to be answered before it could even be a formal proposal.

B. Sweeney asked if there would be enough desirable timeslots for the content produced by Bethlehem residents. M. Redmond noted that this was a more regional model of operating, which was discussed at previous meeting.

The board discussed whether the channels from OSM would fit in the library's existing channel footprint. G. Kirkpatrick said the logistics of the education and government channels would have to be worked out. M. Cohen said it is unlikely the cable companies would reopen negotiations. C. Brancatella asked how much funding a channel through OSM would cut into funding for the makerspace. G. Kirkpatrick said it would reduce the funding, but PEG money still could potentially be used if the items in the makerspace are employed to create shows that could end up on public access television. M. Kissinger asked who made decisions about eligible activity. M. Cohen said it would come down to the town and what is proscribed by the agreement. He said when the town negotiated the last contract, part of the reason they received as much as they did in PEG funds is because of the existing studio, and he wasn't sure if subcontracting out the scheduling changes the conceptual deal. M. Redmond asked if the town would be able to pay the OSM fee even if the PEG money went away in order to provide the service for the community.

The board discussed the current studio equipment, noting that most of it was purchased well before the 2011 needs assessment. J. Irwin said a new video server was added in 2015 for around \$14,000. She said all of the equipment purchases have been upgrading the overall system as forecast by the needs assessment. She said the equipment is in working order, with only normal updates and maintenance.

G. Kirkpatrick said that the proposed makerspace equipment that would be easy for public to manage and not require a paid professional to operate would cost around \$5,000 based on what other libraries have spent on similar projects. He said it would allow people to educate themselves about editing video and podcast or videocast for digital distribution. That same content could also potentially be distributed through OSM if a partnership agreement were reached. C. Brancatella asked if there were any comparisons between public use of digitized makerspaces versus what the library currently has. G. Kirkpatrick said it would be hard to make a comparison as the numbers would be very community-specific. C. Brancatella noted that she was intrigued by the podcasting possibility and thought such a use could attract a whole new demographic. G. Kirkpatrick said that a similar Makerspace in Albany was also frequently used as an amateur level recording studio. The idea for Bethlehem is to open up the equipment and the space to more people in the community.

The board discussed how often the cable franchise agreements are negotiated, which is every 10 years, with the last ones occurring in 2011 and 2013. They noted that the nationwide trend is that many people are dropping cable services, but M. Cohen noted that trend hasn't been noticed yet locally.

#### UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the UHLS board has awarded the library one of three grants out of 16 applications. The library received \$289,467, which comes in at 35 percent of the total cost of the upcoming HVAC project. She said the other two projects funded were for the Valley Falls and Grafton libraries. She said it was a difficult decision with lots of applicants this year. M. Redmond thanked her for her hard work.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### *DASNY project management agreement*

The board reviewed the project management agreement with DASNY for construction management services and discussed what would happen following approval of the document. The first transfer of cash totaling \$94,000 will be set up in an escrow type account, which will

be classified as a prepaid expense for the library. T. Choppy said she would get in touch with the library's accountants to find out the logistics of setting up such an account.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously authorized the library to enter into a project management agreement with the New York State Dorm Authority for HVAC construction as included in the board packet documents for the month of September.

*Other new business*

None

OLD BUSINESS

*BCN-TV*

- The board discussed the information gathering process for proposed changes to the studio. The consensus was that they would like to hold a public forum on a non-board meeting night to allow for the presentation of a proposal/s and public comment. G. Kirkpatrick noted that the community room has very little availability from now until the end of the year, but the board room was open and they could maybe switch with a library group for the larger space.
- M. Redmond, M. Kissinger and B. Sweeney said they wanted to make sure the board had a fleshed-out proposal/s to present at the public meeting. The board agreed it had to decide on a date for the forum at least two weeks out.
- M. Kissinger said he wanted to move the process along so the board makes a decision no later than the December 13 meeting.
- M. Redmond asked how the studio would operate with that timeline in mind. The board noted that they did not want to hire for the second part-time position while they were still in the decision phase. G. Kirkpatrick said J. Irwin was overwhelmed with work from a backlog of shows and that taking new appointments was unrealistic. Other library staffers have been helping with the community calendar and the library continues to look at using its resources to reduce the burden for the time being. M. Redmond said the scheduling of the shows was a priority and the library cannot take new appointments at this time.

*Fire alarm and security project update*

The project is being reviewed by SED now, which means it will be ready for the construction grant application next year.

Regarding the bonding discussion at last month's meeting, M. Redmond wanted to point out that even if a bond is approved on the May ballot, the money is not immediately available.

*HVAC project update*

With the project management agreement approved, DASNY can now move forward with bidding out the project. The hope is to still get the work done in the spring shoulder season for minimal impact. There may be a day that the library has to close to accommodate the large crane that will place the HVAC units on the roof.

M. Redmond noted that on Page 54 of the board packet in the HVAC update document, it should read that construction begins in 2018 instead of 2017.

### *First Night*

G. Kirkpatrick said he was given assurances by Town Supervisor John Clarkson that the town would provide snow removal for the library should it be an issue on December 31. The board asked that G. Kirkpatrick put it in writing that the library will not open as a venue for First Night Bethlehem if snow removal is not provided in the event that it is needed.

### *Board treasurer*

The board noted that the position is now on the personnel report to be discussed at a later time.

### *Other old business*

None

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following people spoke:

- Michael Cohen: Reiterated a point made earlier about PEG channel costs.
- Leslie Hudson: Said there were still a lot of unknowns about the proposal and the losses and gains to be had from reconfiguring the studio. M. Redmond said the board would have more information to present at the public forum, but they are not currently ready to make an official proposal. L. Hudson asked if the library would fill the current vacancy, and M. Redmond said that it would depend on what the board decided for the studio moving forward. L. Hudson asked what advantages there were to making changes to the current BCN-TV setup. G. Kirkpatrick responded that for most of its technology services, like the 3D printer, the library doesn't do things for people but rather educates them on how to use the technology themselves, creating a more digitally literate community. Changes to BCN-TV would enable more people to have a space and the equipment to produce their own projects. L. Hudson said it would be a loss for people and organizations that don't have people who can do that. M. Redmond said the library would provide training. L. Hudson said she was concerned that local organizations could have their shows crowded out if scheduling is moved to OSM. She said it doesn't have to be an either or proposition with BCN-TV and that the library could do both the makerspace and keep the studio as is.
- Dennis Karius: Said he would like to see the library expand what is offered in the studio.
- Janice Irwin: Said she didn't believe that Schenectady and Bethlehem public access channels would line up. She added that the studio already has the ability to create podcasts and do voiceovers. She also said that part of the reason the current server was purchased was so that live streaming and video on demand could be integrated and that the system is expandable.
- Nathan Frank: Said a makerspace conversion can come with its own marketing and training costs, as well as the potential for theft. He said the current studio setup is a known quantity.
- Nachman Simon: Said nothing in the BCN-TV suggestions he had heard sounded like an improvement to what was already there.
- Art Ware: Asked the board to keep the studio as is and support and improve it.
- Janice Irwin: Said the BCN-TV signal goes all the way to Averill Park, and Schenectady's likely would not. M. Redmond asked why Bethlehem residents and taxpayers were providing a service to Rensselaer County. J. Irwin added that she already does studio training for anyone who asks.
- Dennis Karius: Asked why the library can't keep BCN-TV the way it is. G. Kirkpatrick said that the board is considering that along with other options, but that the library has a responsibility to periodically evaluate its resources and how to better provide services to the greatest number of people in the community. G. Kirkpatrick said it is easy to get focused on PEG capital money, but the majority of the money for the studio's operation is coming from the library budget, and the board has

to decide how they want to allocate funding for those and other services the library provides.

- Art Ware: Said he understood the importance of digital training but didn't want to lose what is already available with the studio.

M. Redmond thanked participants once again and said the board was listening to their comments. She encouraged everyone to listen to the board and understand what they are trying to do, as well.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:53pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
M. Redmond, board president