

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Monday September 11, 2017

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  
Catherine Brenner, CSEA Local 6015 president  
Natalie McDonough, Manager, Programs and Community Outreach  
Catherine Stollar Peters, Head of Tech Services, Circulation  
Tracey McShane, Personnel Administrator  
Janice Irwin, BCN-TV Studio Manager  
Chris McGinty, Head of Public Services  
Tyhisha Ghaffar-ADJei  
Joyce Tompkins  
Andrew Reilly  
Edward Biittig  
Dean Hale  
Cori Irwin  
Nathan Frank  
Joe Lombardo, Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace  
Mary DeTurrus Poust  
Mark Gronich, City of Albany PEG Access Oversight Board  
Rabbi Nachman Simon, Bethlehem Chabad  
Trudy Quaif  
Rev. Darrin V. Burberia  
Art Ware  
Keith Irish  
Adele Nucci  
Micklie Lynn  
Jared King  
Zeb Schmidt  
Leslie Hudson  
Nancy Benedict  
Dennis Karius

President M. Redmond called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

## PUBLIC PARTICPATION

The following people spoke:

- Tyhisha Ghaffar-ADJei: Said her background was in real estate and nursing and she is affiliated with the Albany American Muslim Center. Was against ending BCN-TV at the library and the station going dark. Said it was a way to reach the elderly and homebound and allow people in the community to say what's on their minds.
- The Rev. Darrin V. Burberia spoke in support of public access and said it was important for faith-based organizations to reach the population. Said he would like to see the station operate as budgeted through the funded period with a review done at that time.
- Rabbi Nachman Simon: Said public access is an important community service, and that he is frequently asked what is going on with BCN-TV.
- Joe Lombardo: Said the station could be run in other ways using volunteers and as an educational resource for students. He said that instead of giving up on public access, community members could be given a chance to run it.
- Dean Hale: Said that through his work in addiction recovery, he hopes to reach people through public access, especially with the current opiate addiction crisis. He said his show, Inside Addiction, and the victim impact panel were important for raising awareness.
- Ed Biittig: Said Inside Addiction and victim impact shows can reach people just clicking though the channel and not everyone can access those kinds of programs on a computer.
- Jared King: Asked for clarification on a BOCES payment in the budget line. Urged the board to look at new ideas and not just dollars and cents.
- Mickie Lynn: Delmar resident said she agreed with Trudi Quaif's letter from the previous meeting. Said shows produced at the station reach an audience beyond Bethlehem residents. Said J. Irwin was a good engineer and added that the station is a library service beyond books and computers.
- Nathan Frank: An internet technology strategist, supported the idea of a makerspace and encouraged the board to consider accessibility issues when it comes to offering BCN-TV content only in a digital space.
- Andrew Reilly: Said the video feed from the town board meeting is not good.
- Nancy Benedict: Said she has been on the show Citizens for Public Transportation and 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.
- March Gronich: Asked some rhetorical questions about finding creative solutions through collaboration with other municipalities to provide a county or regional public access station.
- Dennis Karious: Said public access is an important tool outside of mainstream media for holding dysfunctional government accountable.
- Mary DeTurris Poust: Spoke as director of communication for the Diocese of Albany and said that with budget cuts, they rely on BCN-TV to broadcast mass.

M. Redmond thanked everyone for their comments and provided clarification about PEG funding. She noted that the money from the cable companies comes to the town in two forms – franchise fees and PEG money. She said the town uses the franchise fees, which total somewhere in the neighborhood of \$600,000, to offset property taxes. That money stays with the town. The PEG money, which is around \$20,000 to \$24,000 per year, can only be used for equipment and capital purposes and is shared between the town, school district and library. The cost to replace the aging studio-grade equipment in the BCN-TV studio is estimated to be between \$100,000-\$200,000.

The board noted that a second public participation would take place at the end of the meeting.

J. Lombardo asked when the board would likely make a decision. M. Redmond said the board would continue to discuss the proposal and that those discussions would all be done in public. She noted that board members are looking into options and hearing what the public is saying.

#### MINUTES

Minutes of the 21 August 2017 board meeting were unanimously approved on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by H. Narang with the clarification noted below.

M. Redmond asked that the line about outstanding checks include a request for a note about any follow-up taken on checks that have been outstanding for more than 30 days.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 August 2017 (Manual Disbursements for August \$59,732.48; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for September \$59,248.37; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for August \$165,924.72; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for August \$1,592.20; Total: \$286,497.77).

G. Kirkpatrick noted that with the change in the banking contract, the library will be credited interest on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

M. Redmond asked when tax money starts coming in. T. Choppy said the library should receive a large portion by the end of the month with more coming in over the fall.

#### BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for August 1-31, 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 B. Sweeney, the board unanimously approved new hires for the following vacancy, pending Civil Service approval:

- Librarian 1, part-time, permanent, \$25.93/hour or per contract.
- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract.
- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 15 hours/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract.
- Custodial work supervisor, full-time, permanent, \$43,188 annual

G. Kirkpatrick asked that he be allowed to hire Kevin Coffey as interim building superintendent and adjust his salary accordingly. The library will advertise for the position as it is not restricted to a civil service list.

The senior clerk position is being held as those duties have been absorbed by technical services.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- There have been requests to add musical instruments to Library of Things. The library is looking into it, but some musical items, such as ukuleles, can be difficult to maintain.
- M. Kissinger said the board should put together a small workgroup with staff to discuss options for the library's CD collection.
- Of the fishing poles circulating, there was an increase in the number of adult checkouts.
- M. Redmond asked how patrons can provide program feedback online. G. Kirkpatrick said that most will send him an email though the "email the director" link.
- G. Kirkpatrick said he had not yet received any feedback from an ad on the BCN-TV channel.
- The board reviewed the Summer Reading statistics and G. Kirkpatrick commended staff for all of the time and effort that is involved in the program. C. Brancatella asked about the jump in adult participation, and N. McDonough noted that it could be due to the addition of an online component and the raffle prizes.

## UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the UHLS board would be meeting Wednesday to go over construction grant applications. She said they have received 16 applications and expect to have some tough decisions ahead.

## NEW BUSINESS

### *Plaza feasibility study*

G. Kirkpatrick noted that the feasibility study is included in the packet for informational purposes, and the engineer is interested in making a presentation to the board at some time in the future. M. Redmond told the board that they have a lot of projects on their plate at this time so it is not something they have to focus on right away. She said it would make sense to see what might be coming back from the New York state construction grant before moving further.

G. Kirkpatrick briefly explained the bonding process as a source of funding. C. Brancatella asked how much preparation time the board could expect to need if they wanted to bond a project. Any information would need to be to the school board by February to be put on a May ballot.

The board agreed to schedule a presentation with the engineer for the December meeting.

### *Municipal banking*

TD Bank will be closing its branch in Bethlehem. The library has always banked with a branch in the school district, but there are many that no longer do municipal banking. TD's branch closure would mean that deposits would need to be taken by courier to East Greenbush or Albany. Representatives will be meeting with the library on Friday. T. Choppy says the school district is currently with TD as well. The board said it would make sense to wait and see what the district does. G. Kirkpatrick said the library wouldn't want to go with someone who provided

less than the current level of service.

*Library cell phone*

G. Kirkpatrick said he would like to have a cell phone for the library as there are some vendors and others that need to be able to text the library. Purchase would be pursued through state contract. M. Redmond asked if there was a need for more than one. The board was in favor of the proposal.

*Other new business*

None

OLD BUSINESS

*BCN-TV*

The board discussed the challenges facing the studio and how they would like to move forward with the decision-making process.

- G. Kirkpatrick said it is unlikely the studio would be able to operate the public channel and support a makerspace under existing staffing.
- M. Redmond asked if there existed any software that could make the scheduling process more efficient.
- A user-friendly A/V makerspace would allow people to continue producing their shows and it would open up the space for those who would like to distribute the content in other ways. M. Redmond called it a more community-oriented approach.
- The board discussed what the demand might be, as well as what constitutes a meaningful level of service, and how to meet that in a cost-effective way.
- There does not exist a mandate for the library to host a public access station; it has simply been done that way since 1982.
- Professional-grade equipment updates would far exceed \$24,000. Current equipment is about 15 years old. User-friendly equipment would be cheaper, but there is still an expense involved.
- H. Narang said moving away from producing shows for people seems the right move philosophically because the library is in the technology training business. The question remains what you do with the end product once people have been trained to produce their own content.
- B. Sweeney asked for a clearer picture of what the capital investment would be to equip the studio as a makerspace.
- Support of the current equipment is difficult because it falls outside the IT department's scope. IT could better support equipment that is not industry specific.
- C. Brancatella asked if there were any numbers on how many people make use of the current space and number projections for the proposed makerspace. G. Kirkpatrick said he could get some numbers from other libraries that have created similar spaces.
- T. Choppy said the library hasn't received PEG money in two years.
- M. Redmond asked what direction J. Irwin has been given during this period of discussion. G. Kirkpatrick said she is receiving some help with the community calendar from IT and has been told to keep pre-existing appointments but not make new ones.

- M. Redmond said that the board needs to put together a fact sheet and schedule a public meeting before making a final decision, potentially pushing that decision out to November or beyond.
- J. Becker asked how many people are currently asking to use the studio.
- H. Narang asked how long it would be to set up a makerspace, if the board went in that direction. G. Kirkpatrick said it would most likely be 3-6 months.
- New equipment would allow the library to film and share its own programs more easily through Vimeo and YouTube. Both platforms make it easier to track viewership.
- The board asked if there was some way to find out who is watching BCN-TV. G.Kirkpatrick said the town is reaching out to the cable companies, but there is no guarantee they collect that number or would share it.
- H. Narang asked if there was some way to get a response from those who might be watching the station's programming, and he noted that it is hard to make data-based decisions based on anecdotes and no actual data.
- M. Redmond said the goal for October's meeting should be to outline a procedure for getting input from the public and sharing information.

*Fire alarm and security project update*

The fire alarm and security project is officially in the queue at SED and has been assigned to a reviewer.

*HVAC project update*

*NYS Construction Grant*

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger and a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously adopted the assurances outlined in the application for the State Aid for Library Construction Program.

*DASNY legislation*

The library is expected to execute the HVAC project management agreement with DASNY in the next week or so. DASNY has extended the date for bids through mid-October.

*First Night participation*

The library has received enough staff response to participate, but that does not include a maintenance presence. The board noted that town Supervisor John Clarkson offered snow plowing support if needed. M. Redmond asked that the library make it clear that participation is contingent on snow maintenance support from the town.

*NYLA conference attendance*

G. Kirkpatrick asked the board to add Tori Russo to those attending the NYLA conference in November.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger and a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously voted to approve Tori Russo's attendance at the NYLA conference for a total cost of \$184 to include registration and per diem.

*Pavement repair/sealing*

G. Kirkpatrick said all the information from the plaza feasibility study will impact the parking lot, and it would not make sense to move forward with refeathering the slopes now if that work will eventually be torn up for plaza updates. What can be done now is restripe the ADA spots and reconfigure in a way that would allow additional parking spots.

*Board treasurer*

The library has reached out to director of Suffolk Cooperative Library Council for a treasurer job description. M. Redmond said the most useful description would come from a library that is similar in size to Bethlehem.

*Other old business*

H. Narang asked about the self-checkout kiosk information in the board packet and was told the numbers were preliminary, and C. Stollar Peters is still collecting data and trying to line up talks with vendors. A more detailed presentation is expected at a later date.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The following people spoke:

- Marc Gronich: Recommended getting an equipment estimate. Suggested the board consider fundraising through naming rights. Asked for a clarification about what is a makerspace.
- Dennis Kariou: Said he didn't want to see BCN-TV go off the air.
- Jared King: Asked for clarification about how much PEG money is currently available and what happens to it if it isn't spent. He said public access is an important resource, but it doesn't necessarily have to be borne by the library and there could be some kind of shared services solution.

On a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:30pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
M. Redmond, board president