

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

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella  
Mark Kissinger  
Harmeet Narang  
Mary Redmond  
Lisa Scoons  
Michelle Walsh  
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe  
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk  
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director  
Chris McGinty, assistant director  
Thomas Hosey, auditor with Marvin and Co.

\*All present via Zoom broadcast live on YouTube and the library website.

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

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There was no public participation.

AUDIT PRESENTATION

Thomas Hosey of Marvin and Co., auditors for the library, presented a series of slides that explained the draft audit report and required communications to the board. He noted that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the library, and an unmodified opinion has been expressed.

He stated that there is one management letter comment related to the calculation of the compensated absences liability. The recommendation is that the calculation includes FICA as per GSAB 16 requirements, and the limit on the maximum amount available to be paid to eligible participants per the contract should be considered.

He further discussed the library's net assets and liabilities, as well as the COVID-19 contingency footnote that notes that discusses the lack of clarity regarding the affect the pandemic will have on the library in the future.

In response to a question from H. Narang, T. Hosey explained that the swings in the net pension liability are based on actuarial calculations, which take into account a number of factors that can fluctuate from year to year.

C. Wijeyesinghe noted that the school district owns the library building, even though it appears on the library's books. T. Hosey said this was common among similar libraries, but if the library wanted to take the building off the books, it could be done using a prior period adjustment. M. Redmond said she didn't see any benefit to removing the building from the library's books since the costs to purchase and maintain it are borne by the library.

M. Redmond noted that a large portion of the fund balance covers the cost of operating the library from July 1 until tax money starts coming in around September.

T. Hosey closed his remarks by thanking the library, especially G. Kirkpatrick, S. Whiting and T. Choppy for their assistance during the audit process, and said it was noteworthy that it was a clean audit, done on time despite the pandemic.

T. Hosey exited the meeting at 6:44pm.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe and a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board voted to accept the audit report and required communications as presented by Marvin and Co.

#### MINUTES

Minutes of the 13 October 2020 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

##### *Treasurer's update*

S. Whiting noted a few minor changes to the report. The revenue and expense report now includes percentages so board members can easily see where the library's finances stand. She noted that the library is under budget at this point, which is a third of the way through the fiscal year. In response to a question raised at the previous board meeting about where tax receipts are compared to the previous year, S. Whiting said the library had spoken to the school district and found that it is comparable to previous years. M. Redmond asked if there was any clarification received on how the library would receive its money if the entire amount is not collected from taxpayers. T. Choppy said that the state would make the school district whole, which would make the library whole.

The board discussed having a short written treasurer's update in future board packets, and asked that S. Whiting include one moving forward to highlight any important concepts. M. Redmond said she liked the new formatting of the financial report.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 October 2020 (Manual Disbursements \$48,402.14; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable \$82,188.27; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries \$183,523.06; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$314,113.47).

#### PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report. G. Kirkpatrick said he was requesting backfill of clerk position and two temporary part-time librarian positions in place of the full time librarian

position previously approved. He said the temporary positions will better help the library cover any increased weekend hours during the pandemic. The expectation is that once there is a return to normalcy, the library can remove the temporary positions and return to seeking someone full time. Civil service stipulates that temporary positions can last no longer than a year.

## PERSONNEL ACTION

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinge, the board unanimously approved a new hire for the following vacancies, pending Civil Service approval:

- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 19 hours/week, \$13.89/hour or per contract.
- Librarian 1, part-time, temporary, up to 19 hours/week, \$27.31/hour or per contract.
- Librarian 1, part-time, temporary, up to 19 hours/week, \$27.31/hour or per contract.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick said C. Stollar Peters would provide an overview of the updated charts highlighting due dates and returns.
- The Friends book sale was very popular and may serve as a potential a model for future sales.
- The library had received some comments about recording programs where the audience discussion was a large part of the event. Staffers will continue to monitor the reaction and decide how they might edit the programs to avoid making people feel uncomfortable while still making valuable library content available to a wider audience.
- The statistical report has been modified slightly to better show e-content use across platforms.
- Circulation continues to be down 27.6% compared to last year, but G. Kirkpatrick said that considering the effects of the pandemic, those numbers were still pretty positive. He said interlibrary loan hold shelves are more active than last year, something he called the "curbside effect," and e-audio and e-book use is still high.
- The due date histograms originally presented in the packet have been updated to account for the quarantine period of four days. C. Stollar Peters noted that this unintentional fine-free "experiment" due to the pandemic has provided some valuable data and insight into patron behavior. She shared a histogram of how many items are returned in relation to the due date and she noted that, just as in previous years, the majority of items are returned before their due date. She said the data seems to suggest that the impetus to return items is not based on fines. The board thanked her for presenting the information, and G. Kirkpatrick said it was good background to have a discussion about how people behave in a fine-free scenario, as well as revenue loss versus staff time spent collecting fines.

## UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said meetings have been scheduled to discuss library development aid and other financial issues. G. Kirkpatrick said state budget cuts have had a greater impact on Upper Hudson than larger individual libraries like Bethlehem.

## NEW BUSINESS

*New York State and Local Retirement System annual invoice*

The library gets an invoice for ERS contributions every year. The yearly contribution amount is not the same as the pension liability discussed with the audit. This is a number that stays fairly constant from year to year. T. Choppy noted that last year's bill was approximately \$283,000.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a second by C Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously authorized prepayment of the NYS Retirement System annual invoice for 2021, in the amount of \$287,751.

*Bobcat quote*

The walk-behind tractor would help with moving the book bins from the sheds to the garage in winter, as well as pallet deliveries, landscaping and smaller snow removal projects. The equipment would come from a local vendor, making it easier to rent attachments for less regular jobs.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to purchase a Bobcat Mini Track Loader and accessories to assist with book bin moving and other maintenance tasks at the quoted cost of \$20,397.84.

*Boiler*

G. Kirkpatrick said that a crack was recently discovered in the library's boiler, prompting library staff to look into the cost of replacing or fixing it. A proposal from Trane for the replacement and installation of a new hot water heater comes in at just over \$58,000, which is over the purchasing limit and would require bids. G. Kirkpatrick said the library is in the process of finding out how much of an emergency it is and what the options might be. Trane has suggested that there might be a way to purchase it on a government procurement contract, which would eliminate the need for multiple bids. The boiler was installed in 1995 and does not have any asbestos that would need to be abated. The money exists in the budget to pay for the replacement of the boiler. G. Kirkpatrick said he would like to have a conversation with the engineer brought in by library architect Paul Mays to see how urgent the situation is. H. Narang asked if a newer boiler system would result in any savings through added efficiencies. G. Kirkpatrick said the difference would likely be negligible. M. Redmond said that knowing the amount of lead time needed to fix the boiler would be an important part of the decision making process. M. Redmond and C. Brancatella suggested having a lawyer go over what the library's options are if it comes down to a bid process.

*Emergency patron conduct policy*

G. Kirkpatrick presented the revised policy that added additional masks types to the list of those that aren't acceptable face coverings in the library. M. Redmond asked if there needed to be any changes to the wording about public computers. G. Kirkpatrick said that Chromebooks are available to the public and the library was currently in the process of setting up an Internet-enabled computer to allow for printing.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously voted to update the current emergency patron conduct policy to include mesh masks and masks with vents among the face coverings not allowed inside the library.

*Other new business*

M. Redmond asked the board if they wanted to recognize the staff in some way since the annual Staff Development Day, where they traditionally provided dessert, had been canceled this year. The board agreed and said they would discuss via email some options.

## OLD BUSINESS

### *Long range plan steering committee - update*

H. Narang said he and G. Kirkpatrick met with Paul Mays to discuss the library's concept for phases and the priorities for each, with the intent that a first phase would include smaller projects, and the second phase would be larger. Some of the identified priorities for the first phase included demolition of the Borthwick house, a larger lawn-facing seating area, consolidating the reference desk area and covering the walkway. Another committee meeting is in the process of being scheduled.

### *Phase reopening plan – updates*

G. Kirkpatrick shared a chart that represented what libraries across the state were doing to provide services during the pandemic. He said it provided some useful information as the board talks about what are the next services they would like to phase back in. He noted that very few currently offer onsite programs or meeting space. M. Kissinger asked fellow board members what they had been hearing from the community. M. Walsh said she has heard from some people that they would like a place to study. G. Kirkpatrick said that if the library can get the staffing in place, extending weekend hours would be ideal, and there has been some call for bringing back the public PCs, which could be partially addressed once the public printing station has been set up.

### *Other old business*

C. Wijeyesinghe asked fellow board members to consider joining her on the personnel committee. The policy committee has some revisions that may be ready to go before the board soon. C. McGinty is also making some revisions to the staff handbook for the board to review.

## FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business discussed at this time.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

## ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Redmond, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:03pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
M. Kissinger, board president