

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday December 14, 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

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

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 9 November 2020 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

S. Whiting noted that the library is tracking under budget. M. Kissinger asked how far the library was underspent in the personnel line as the library held off on filling some open positions during the pandemic. S. Whiting said spending in that line is at 38 percent as of November where it would normally be expected at around 42 percent.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the money underspent in the salaries line carries over to the new fiscal year. S. Whiting said that money would be available for spending in future years. In response to another question from C. Wijeyesinghe, G. Kirkpatrick noted that while the library does not have

the same requirement as the school districts do to keep the fund balance under a certain percentage of the budget, the Comptroller does want to know that there is a specific plan for that money.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 November 2020 (Manual Disbursements \$317,486.01; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable \$84,178.35; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries \$183,939.97; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$585,604.33).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said he was seeking to fill three new positions. M. Kissinger asked if the library was actively recruiting the approved open positions. G. Kirkpatrick said the library was only filling the ones that were operationally necessary. He noted that the pandemic has created a more-than-usual amount of unexpected staff absences. C. Wijeyesinghe said the board had earlier discussed needing additional staff to expand weekend services and she asked if the hiring being done is based on current service levels or projected. G. Kirkpatrick said it was based on being flexible enough to maintain current levels of service.

PERSONNEL ACTION

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

- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$13.89/hour or per contract.
- Library page, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$11.80/hour or per contract.
- Library page, part-time, permanent, 12.8 hours/week, \$11.80/hour or per contract.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- As the library prepares to restart fines on Jan. 1, the billing cycle has been reinstated, with the hope that it will encourage people to bring those billed items in before fines start back up.
- In anticipation of fines coming back, the library is working with KeyBank to accept credit cards in order to reduce cash handling. Fine payment through Upper Hudson already exists, but this would make it more accessible to patrons.
- Circulation is down a little more than 20 percent compared to last November. G. Kirkpatrick that that he was very proud to have that many library materials going out into the community considering the constraints of the pandemic. He noted that many people are still opting for curbside pickup.
- The library continues to see major increases in the use of e-materials, so the investment in those services is paying off.
- L. Scoons asked if the release of new materials was returning to pre-pandemic levels. G. Kirkpatrick said it is not even close to returning to those levels yet as publishers and authors are still holding off on new releases. C. Stollar Peters also noted there have also been some delays at the vendor level that they are aware of and trying to address.
- G. Kirkpatrick said BPL patrons have always been big requesters of materials throughout the system, and those materials are more available through the courier system.
- C. Wijeyesinghe said she enjoyed the colorful program flyers included at the end of the board packet.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the UHLS board does not meet in December.

NEW BUSINESS

Phased reopening plan – phase triggers

G. Kirkpatrick said it was a good time to revisit phased reopening plans in light of recent hospitalization and infection rate increases and with other libraries pulling back from some services. He said that the phased reopening plan indicates that the library may move among the phases based on the best guidelines available. He said he believed a state designation of an orange zone would be a good general guideline for going back to curbside-only service, but other factors may come into play, such as zone designations for neighboring communities. The board agreed. G. Kirkpatrick said staff have been diligent with sanitizing and mask-wearing, and so far had not experienced a positive case.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if there have been times where people have to wait outside the building. G. Kirkpatrick said that generally only happens on weekends, and added that it is usually not a significant amount of time.

Building committee update – boiler replacement project

Although the boiler has been repaired, it will still eventually need to be replaced. G. Kirkpatrick said that would entail a full design and SED approval to move forward. He said the Building Committee had begun laying the groundwork for that and will be moving forward to find a design team and put together a proposal with estimated costs.

Harassment policy

On the agenda was a series of policies that had been reviewed by the Policy Committee. Additionally, the harassment policies had been vetted by the library's attorney.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to adopt the draft of the harassment policy.

Sexual harassment policy

G. Kirkpatrick noted that the harassment policy had been split into two separate policies to better address new state guidelines.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted to adopt updates to the sexual harassment policy.

Collection development policy

G. Kirkpatrick said the updates to the collection development policy were mainly meant to reduce the library jargon and make it more understandable. When looking at the policy, M. Walsh asked if the library gets many requests from patrons to have an item withdrawn. G. Kirkpatrick said it has happened, and he will review the request and make a decision. That decision can be appealed to the board, but he said it has been a long time since a request has ever risen to that level.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to adopt updates to the collection development policy.

Records and retention schedule

It is a New York state requirement that the library adopt the records and retention schedule, which dictates how long certain local government documents need to be kept. A copy of the schedule is available on the Board of Trustees page on the website.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously voted to adopt a resolution outlining the minimum retention periods for local governmental records.

Jaeger and Flynn healthcare invoice

The invoice from Jaeger and Flynn represent the prefunding amount of certain health savings accounts and flex savings account.

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to approve the payment of \$13,760.24 to Jaeger and Flynn to prefund the health savings and flex accounts administered by them.

Emergency patron conduct policy

The revision to the emergency patron conduct policy clarifies that patrons will be asked to sanitize gloved hands.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously voted to adopt the update to the emergency patron conduct policy.

Other new business

None

OLD BUSINESS

Long range plan steering committee - update

The Long Range Plan Steering Committee will be meeting with library architect Paul Mays later in the week to review updated schematics incorporating the board's suggestions, as well as a smaller-scale first phase. M. Kissinger noted that there was also a service component to the long-range plan. G. Kirkpatrick said that it was largely written, but will be reviewed with some aspects of the pandemic in mind. C. Wijeyesinghe said she thought that was a good idea as some of the effects of the pandemic are likely to linger awhile.

Other old business

M. Walsh said she loved the family scavenger hunt idea. G. Kirkpatrick said the librarians were working very hard to come up with creative ways to "interact" in the absence of face-to-face interaction.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the board had talked going fine free permanently in recent years and if that is something to revisit as part of a discussion about equity and inclusion, as well as who uses the library and how much they do so based on fines. M. Kissinger said that it has been a topic of discussion, but it would be good to keep on the future business agenda. C. Brancatella said that before, the discussion was mainly theoretical, but now the library has actual data from the past few months to see how that might affect patron behavior.

L. Scoons asked about the status of collective bargaining. G. Kirkpatrick said they are talking about restarting the conversation, and he expects things to move quickly once they do.

M. Kissinger wished everyone Happy Holidays and encouraged board members to check out the upcoming Friends meeting. G. Kirkpatrick said anyone interested could email him and he would get them signed up.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business discussed at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by M. Redmond, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 6:51pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president