

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday September 14, 2020

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Caroline Brancatella

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator

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

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 5:58pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There was no public participation.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 10 August 2020 board meeting and the 19 July August Long-Range Planning Committee meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

G. Kirkpatrick introduced library treasurer S. Whiting and welcomed her to the board of trustees.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 August 2020 (Manual Disbursements \$48,578.15; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable \$48,434.00; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries \$184,226.58; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$281,238.73).

G. Kirkpatrick said the library has received the final 10 percent of the remaining construction grant for the HVAC project. He noted that it would be accepted into the H Fund for projects and then transferred to the general fund.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the HVAC project created any benefits that would be relevant to the current COVID situation. G. Kirkpatrick said that airflow requirements had changed, and the library was initially experiencing some issues with adjusting the system to make that more comfortable. He noted that large air turnover in public buildings is now actually a good thing in regards to how to mitigate COVID transmission.

M. Redmond said she has asked S. Whiting to prepare a final report on the costs of the project to have it all summarized in one place.

G. Kirkpatrick told the board that the library received the first portion of the tax payments for the fiscal year.

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report. G. Kirkpatrick said on actions requested were positions that were vacated in the past month. He said he is requesting to fill them but would not be rushing to do so, noting that the part-time evening clerk would be the top priority of the three.

M. Walsh asked about the potential need for a part-time person to transcribe the board meetings. G. Kirkpatrick said that the library had been filling that need with people working from home, but as more people are working back at the library, there is less time to devote to the task. He said he would be more interested in adding some additional hours for people who would be willing to volunteer.

M. Redmond asked for clarification on why the transcript was required. G. Kirkpatrick said that it was part of the amendment to the open meeting law that allows government entities to conduct their board meetings remotely while still providing public access.

C. Wijeyesinghe noted that transcribing meetings is extremely time consuming. C. Stollar Peters said that one hour of speaking time will generally require 3-4 hours to transcribe.

G. Kirkpatrick noted that some libraries are accepting the YouTube automatically generated transcript, which has some flaws and doesn't denote who is speaking. M. Walsh asked if that is good enough. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is technically compliant. The board agreed to review a copy of the automatically generated transcript compared to the one prepared by staff to make a decision at the next meeting whether to continue the practice.

M. Redmond asked that the description of the hours worked by the district treasurer say "an average of 12 hours per week" instead of "up to 12 hours per week."

PERSONNEL ACTION

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

- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 15 hours/week at \$13.89/hour or per contract.
- Library page, part-time permanent, 9.8 hours/week at \$11.80/hour or per contract.
- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week at \$13.89/hour or per contract.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick said the library was seeking quotes for an awning structure that would attach to the garage and facilitate curbside pickup safely into the winter months. He noted that he was still waiting to hear back from other vendors but wanted to bring the concept to the board to see if they agreed with moving in this direction as the library looks to continue providing the services it needs to provide. G. Kirkpatrick said that the one quote received for an aluminum structure comes to about \$10,000. M. Redmond asked if the board would need to pre-approve an amount that would let the library move quickly once a decision has been made about the vendor. G. Kirkpatrick said he does not imagine the costs going over \$15,000. The board discussed whether it would make more sense to call a second meeting to approve the costs or vote to pre-approve G. Kirkpatrick to spend up to a certain amount on the project.
 - On a MOTION by M. Redmond and a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board voted unanimously to give the library director the authority to proceed with the purchase and installation of an awning based on the most reasonable quote up to \$15,000.
- The library is working closely with the school district to direct students to library resources to assist remote learning. There's also a new connection with OverDrive that links the library's Overdrive materials to the school's, allowing students broader access. M. Walsh thanked staff for making that partnership possible.
- Included in the board packet was the breakdown of the library's insurance policy.
- G. Kirkpatrick extended his thanks to patrons and staff.
- H. Narang asked what the current patron maximum was for in-person browsing. G. Kirkpatrick said it was currently set at 10 to balance with the number of staffers, but there are very few people who have had to wait to go inside. G. Kirkpatrick said that might not be the case when the library opens for Saturday browsing. H. Narang asked how the library encourages people not to linger. G. Kirkpatrick said that is often a conversation that is had with the entrance greeter, if needed. M. Redmond asked if there was any latitude in the number of people allowed in the library at once. G. Kirkpatrick said he could see raising that number to 15 if needed in the future.
- G. Kirkpatrick said that even with in-person browsing, the library has not seen a decrease in curbside pickup, and Pop-Up Library use remains significantly higher.
- M. Kissinger said he has heard a lot of positive feedback about the Book Bundles.
- C. Wijeyesinghe asked about the non-fiction collection for young adults. G. Kirkpatrick said it is a newer and smaller collection, and that many young adults are also using the adult non-fiction materials, so the circulation statistics for that collection do not tell the whole story.
- H. Narang asked if there was a count of the number of books moved by request versus picked up through browsing. G. Kirkpatrick said that data exists, and he would ask C. Stollar Peters to track that down.
- L. Scoons asked if the library was able to partner with the New York State Writers Institute to share some of the content from their online book festival.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the services committee met to make recommendations for the state construction grants. She said the majority got close to their requested awards. She said they would be reviewing the feedback from Albany Public Library regarding the 90 percent match guidelines for the following year.

NEW BUSINESS

Patron conduct policy

G. Kirkpatrick directed the board's attention to the emergency patron policy, which has been updated to include COVID-specific browsing and hygiene rules, as well as increases the age for children to visit alone to 12.

M. Redmond said that the policy specifically limits browser to 10 and asked that the wording be changed to allow some flexibility. M. Kissinger made the same wording request for computer use.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the emergency patron policy with the wording changes noted above.

Hoopla participation

G. Kirkpatrick said that he would like to continue providing access to Hoopla for Bethlehem patrons, as the Upper Hudson purchase at the beginning of the pandemic is slated to run out of funding sometime in mid-October. He said usage estimates predict a 12-month cost of \$23,000 to continue the service. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if that was money that was in the budget. G. Kirkpatrick said it was in the materials line already, but represents how the library has shifted some money from the physical to digital materials line to go in line with usage increases. He said Hoopla was a good complement to Overdrive because it provides instant access to materials.

The library has the most registered patrons in Hoopla of all the Upper Hudson libraries. E-books and audiobooks are the most checked out items. M. Kissinger said he was very much in favor of continuing Hoopla. H. Narang said he agreed as long as there were a bunch of people using it. M. Redmond said the board should review the service in a year to see if it continues to provide a value to the community.

M. Redmond asked if the treasurer's report could include a line-by-line summary of expenses so the board could occasionally review where the library was over or under budget. M. Kissinger said that might be useful as a quarterly update.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted to continue the library's Hoopla subscription for a year at the estimated cost of \$23,000.

Chromebooks

G. Kirkpatrick said the library is advertising and circulating the new Chromebooks. Not all have been checked out, which means the library is meeting this need at this time. The same is true for the WiFi hotspots.

Committee discussion

M. Kissinger said he will be getting the policy and collections committees going in the coming weeks and encouraged the other committees to continue their work. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if non-quorum committees could meet at the library. She made an appeal for a second trustee to join the personnel committee. G. Kirkpatrick said that space could most likely be found.

Other new business

There was no other new business discussed at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Long range plan steering committee - update

H. Narang said the committee met with library architect Paul Mays on August 19 to go over the latest building schemes, which were grouped in phases. He said they are waiting for additional cost and schedule estimates and plan to meet one more time without P. Mays to discuss what they would like to put before the full board.

MERV filters for HVAC

G. Kirkpatrick said the filters have not yet arrived, as there is a shortage of this high-demand item.

Reopening phase discussion

G. Kirkpatrick said the library continues to work on plans to open on Saturdays for browsing. He noted that there has been very little issue enforcing mask compliance. He said the library is closely watching the COVID numbers in colleges in schools as staffers slowly move forward with additional services.

M. Redmond asked what the next step might be after reintroducing Saturday hours. G. Kirkpatrick said he would like to find a way to provide computer use and eventually expand browsing hours to overlap curbside hours. He noted the community has been so supportive of the library's efforts to bring back services.

Other old business

There was no other old business discussed at this time

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 7:24pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president