

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING (VIRTUAL)
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
April 20, 2020

PRESENT: Mark Kissinger
Harmeet Narang
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons
Brian Sweeney
Michelle Walsh
Caroline Brancatella

Robert Khalife, treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Paul Mays, library architect

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

President M. Redmond called the meeting to order at 5:59 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

G. Kirkpatrick reminded viewers that they could submit public participation comments via email, and he would be monitoring the inbox throughout the meeting. There were no public participation comments submitted at this time.

LONG RANGE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

P. Mays discussed the sketches that had been submitted to the Long Range Planning Committee earlier in the month. He said the sketches represented some of the constraints and opportunities in addressing the issues identified by the public during the listening sessions in late 2019 and early 2020. He noted that the sketches did not yet include a review of the Borthwick property or a conceptual sketch reworking the library space within the existing building footprint. He said he will do a walk-through of the Borthwick space later in the week. He noted the sketches represent concepts ranging from a minimal intrusion to a more dynamic approach to addressing programmatic needs, as well as how to phase in any potential work.

P. Mays said the existing library design lacks some flexibility because the stacks are constructed on posts that hold up the mezzanine and cannot be moved. The sketches included ways this could be addressed. The concepts presented by P. Mays also looked at decreasing the distance between parking and the library entrance, making public meeting space more available and creating appropriate spaces for teens and children. None of the concepts would result in decreased parking spaces.

M. Kissinger asked for clarification on the concepts for the Borthwick property as the sketch did not show an actual footprint. He said he had always envisioned that the building would come down and be replaced by a structure to be used by the library. P. Mays said he would have more of an idea of how the space could be used once he is able to look at it.

B. Sweeney said that one thing to be aware of is that any plan to move the Children's Space would have to include a discussion about what would happen with the donor-funded reading patio.

P. Mays said the sketches provide some ideas for the board to think about and for the committee to narrow down. He said when the board is ready, they might want to set aside some time for a lengthy discussion about the direction they are thinking about going in.

M. Redmond thanked P. Mays and the Long Range Planning Committee for all their work. P. Mays signed off at 6:33pm.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 9 March 2020 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by M. Walsh.

Minutes of the 9 April 2020 Long-Range Planning Committee meeting (virtual) were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by M. Kissinger.

FINANCIAL REPORT

R. Khalife said there was nothing unusual in terms of spending and income for the month of March. He said that the library received the remaining \$96,145.34 in property taxes in April. He noted that the library opened an account with Key Bank right before closing, and it has a balance of \$2,500. He said the library continues to get a competitive interest rate from TD Bank.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 March 2020 (Manual Disbursements \$44,706.20; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for March \$186,264.52; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for March \$82,258.29; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for February \$0.00).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said the library would not be filling any of the open positions at this time. He added that he will seek reauthorization from the board when there is a need to fill previously approved positions.

M. Kissinger asked if the library has the staffing resources it needs as it goes to a more technology-based approach to providing services. G. Kirkpatrick said the IT department is down to one, and the library is looking at ways of shifting different tasks to others in a job-title appropriate way.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick said the report was a little different because he really wanted to chronicle the work that has been done across the organization, as employees work hard to honor the board's decision to allow them to continue working from home.
- G. Kirkpatrick praised Upper Hudson for the speed with which they got the Hoopla streaming service up and running for all member libraries.
- He said the reworking of Footnotes was a way to get out information about what the library is doing and how we can be reached to those who do not interact with us online.
- E-materials are seeing record checkouts with a 30 percent increase since closing. The library continues to add new e-content all the time, so that even with the increase, wait times for Bethlehem patrons is down slightly.
- Videos featuring librarians reading stories and doing crafts help provide a sense of normalcy for our patrons.
- John Love has been producing headbands for face shields and working with SUNY Albany to get them to health care professionals. The library was also able to get 20 fully assembled face shields to the Delmar EMS. Staff is trying to procure parts to get a second 3D printer up and running.
- BCSD Superintendent Jodie Monroe mentioned the library's educational resources.
- People are using the WiFi out and about and away from the building. It was good that network was already in place so we are able to serve people in more spaces than just the parking lot.
- G. Kirkpatrick thanked the board and library staff for all their hard work during this time.
- M. Redmond asked if there had been any update on the budget and trustees vote. G. Kirkpatrick said there wasn't yet, but petitioning was halted and the vote has been delayed but not rescheduled. The library's vote is held by the school district. M. Redmond asked how the library moves forward in terms of the budget. G. Kirkpatrick said that in the absence of a vote, the library automatically receives the same dollar amount as the previous year's levy. He said the board did approve a 2020-21 budget, but there is still time to take a further look at it.
- M. Redmond thanked G. Kirkpatrick and library staff for all their hard work. M. Kissinger said he was in awe of the staff and all of the unbelievable things they are doing.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the UHLS board met remotely. She noted that the state aid funding in the budget is \$94.1 million, and construction aid has been cut back to \$14 million, which will have an impact on the amount available for grants. The UHLS annual dinner has been canceled, but the awards are still going on. The UHLS board discussed what to do about the trustees that were cycling off their five-year term, and L. Scoons said she would be willing to serve another year.

NEW BUSINESS

Phased reopening plan

G. Kirkpatrick said the library has a plan in place that has been shared with staff and trustees, as well as the other directors in the Upper Hudson system. The document is getting updated all the time as the situation remains uncertain. It focuses on what services the library can safely provide at different phases of reopening and in concert with federal and state guidelines about transmission of COVID-19. It also looks at how the library connects with others in the system.

M. Walsh said she has heard a lot of people asking about curbside pick-up and would that happen before the library reopened. G. Kirkpatrick said that is a part of the beginning reopening phase, but there are logistical issues regarding what's available in the library and through the courier system. Safety equipment for staffers has already been ordered.

L. Scoons pointed out that there might be an issue of how to get all the books back that were checked out in a frenzy before closing. She asked how the library would handle intake. G. Kirkpatrick said those books that are out now will need to be sequestered and cleaned, but the details of how long are awaiting more information from health officials. He said there are a bunch of new book orders queued up and ready to go as soon as the vendors are up and running.

M. Redmond asked what the library was doing about room requests. G. Kirkpatrick said that no new request were being accepted but current bookings will remain pending until more is known about reopening guidelines.

Other new business

G. Kirkpatrick said the library has been looking at new calendar software for a long time, but the library closure and cancellation of most events has made this a good time to transition. He said a library team had been looking at demos and have decided on Library Market, which has received high praise from library peers for its responsiveness. He said the first-year cost of \$5,500 includes set-up and data migration costs, with the annual fee being \$2,000 thereafter.

On a MOTION by H. Narang and a SECOND by L. Scoons the board unanimously approved the purchase of new calendaring software from Library Market in the total amount of \$5,500 dollars, which includes one-time set-up and data migration and the \$2,000 annual fee.

OLD BUSINESS

Insurance payment policy

The board noted the policy was passed at the March meeting.

Budget 2021

The library did pass a 2021 budget with a levy increase before the pandemic took hold. A vote date has still not been established. M. Redmond asked if the board wanted to discuss changing the budget as submitted.

Long range plan steering committee
New committee chair

B. Sweeney noted that with his term as trustee coming to an end, he would like to arrange for new leadership on the Long Range Planning Committee. H. Narang has agreed to take on the role of chairman. B. Sweeney also noted that with the uncertainty regarding the trustee vote, he would be willing to serve on the board longer if needed.

The board discussed when to schedule the next Long Range Planning Committee meeting. B. Sweeney said he got the sense that P. Mays is now just waiting for them to provide some feedback and that it would be good to find some time to discuss the sketches in detail. C. Brancatella asked if the committee has a general idea of the direction they'd like to move in. M. Redmond said it was her feeling that the direction should not be based on the current world situation. She said she would like to see use of the Borthwick property as an early priority. C. Brancatella agreed that she would like to see a plan that shows how the library could use the Borthwick property to align with public needs.

M. Walsh said she would like to know more about the range of costs for some of the concepts. M. Kissinger agreed.

L. Scoons said it would be useful for the committee to have a meeting before they next meet with P. Mays so they can really look into and discuss the sketches and come up with some concrete questions to ask him. G. Kirkpatrick said he will look at possible dates to set up a committee meeting sometime before the next full board meeting.

HVAC update

The project is closing out following some final accounting. M. Redmond noted that there would be some money returned from the DASNY account – around \$16,000. She said the charts in the board packet showing electricity use really highlight how the costs went down as the library started making modifications and tweaks to the system. G. Kirkpatrick asked if the board would like to continue receiving that information in a graph form, and they agreed but with the addition of one that represents costs.

Other old business

M. Redmond said she would like to continue moving forward with the investment policy.

G. Kirkpatrick said that he intended to allow some maintenance staff to return and work on the outdoor grounds in a way that complies with current regulations.

H. Narang asked how the spending has changed for the current budget. G. Kirkpatrick said some spending has shifted to e-materials as expected as far as budget this year. He said other ways the budget has been thrown askew will become more apparent in the next couple of months.

B. Sweeney asked if there was an update to contract negotiations. G. Kirkpatrick said things were paused for a time, C. Brancatella said she would be available to meet with G. Kirkpatrick and L. Scoons most evenings.

FUTURE BUSINESS

Background checks

No further discussion at this time.

Plaza feasibility – to be included in the long-range plan
No further discussion at this time.

Policy updates/schedule
No further discussion at this time.

Resource sharing
No further discussion at this time.

Fines and fees
No further discussion at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:43pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Redmond, board president