

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday February 11, 2019

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Joyce Becker
Mark Kissinger
Harmeet Narang
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons
Brian Sweeney
Robert Khalife, treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, Accounts Clerk
Catherine Stollar Peters, Head of Tech Services, Circulation
Chris McGinty, Head of Public Services
Catherine Brenner, CSEA Local 6015 president
Tracey McShane, Personnel Administrator

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

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

None

MINUTES

Minutes of the 14 January 2019 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by J. Becker.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 January 2019 (Manual Disbursements for January \$65,032.96; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for February \$85,617.26; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for January \$177,655.15; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for February \$1,874.54; Total: \$330,179.91).

G. Kirkpatrick said that a treasurer's update would now be a standing agenda item.

R. Khalife began his report by saying he had reviewed the financial statements and they looked good. He said he had been working with G. Kirkpatrick on preparing the budget proposal. He noted that the surplus page that had previously been a part of the director's report has been removed, and he will be working on a better way to represent those funds for the next meeting. He also said he would have an RFP for a new auditor prepared by the March meeting. He noted that he spent much of last month meeting with local banks that do municipal banking and will be reviewing the library's current investment policy.

BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for January 1-31, 2019.

MANUAL INVOICES

None

RESOLUTIONS

M. Redmond noted that authorizing R. Khalife to sign checks on behalf of the library is the first step in identifying the job responsibilities of the board treasurer, and they would be further looking at the matrix of financial responsibilities and division of duties that was outlined as they began developing the position.

R. Khalife said that there is no change in procedure at this time and the authorization simply gives him the same signing authority that already exists for G. Kirkpatrick and T. Choppy.

H. Narang asked if the discussions with the banks have included how they might help the library maintain the financial rules put in place.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger and a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board voted unanimously to adopt a certificate of resolution authorizing R. Khalife to sign checks on behalf of the library in addition to T. Choppy and G. Kirkpatrick.

PERSONNEL REPORT

M. Redmond noted that the Librarian II position had been filled by C. Brenner.

PERSONNEL ACTION

None requested at this time.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- A call with the engineer just this week indicated that components of the HVAC system are not working as designed and the airflow should be better modulated. The library has now gone back to the company in charge of the components to seek solutions.
- The new AV system in the Community Room is already a major improvement in terms of microphone sound quality. Some bugs in other aspects of the audio are still being worked out.
- The Premiere Elements training sessions have been well attended in the run up to the studio opening to the public.

- H. Narang asked why library cards had an expiration date. G. Kirkpatrick noted that it was a way to keep user data current and keep people who have moved out of the library district from accessing services funded by local taxpayers. The new online renewal process will better accommodate those who only use digital services.
- G. Kirkpatrick noted that the seed library, which was one of the ideas pitched at Staff Development Day is set to launch this spring, along with a pet adoption day, which is still being coordinated.
- Program highlights are now being included in the director's report.
- Trustees were invited to let G. Kirkpatrick know if they were interested in participating in Advocacy Day. He mentioned that a number of libraries in the 109th District attended Assemblymember Pat Fahy's open house.
- The G3 students at UAlbany will be working with the library again this year after a successful partnership two years ago. This time the program will be no charge to the library.
- Circulation numbers are generally up, and Wi-Fi use continues to see major increases.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said that Tim Burke has reported the state budget shows a proposed \$5 million cut in library funding and \$20 million in construction aid. She said that while these numbers are not set in stone, it means there is much to advocate for. The UHLS service committee will be meeting again to reallocate construction funds that have been returned.

NEW BUSINESS

Draft budget review

As always, the biggest portion of the budget goes toward staffing expenses, with some decreases in retirement costs and increases due to negotiated COLA and step increases. Health insurance is the most unpredictable number, but the budget assumes a 10 percent increase in those costs, as well as the possibility that unfilled full-time positions may ultimately take single full coverage. M. Kissinger asked if staffing levels have remained flat, and R. Khalife responded that his position was the equivalent of a quarter FTE. G. Kirkpatrick said that staffing level have remained consistent.

More money is proposed to bolster the e-collections, which are seeing significant use and unmet need, especially with e-audiobooks as people switch from the CD format.

B. Sweeney said he would like to see additional funding for the media line, as items in that category are also seeing circulation increases. C. McGinty noted that some of the items in that line have 7-day loan periods so they turn over more frequently.

In operations, some costs in equipment are offset by toner savings resulting from a consolidation of printers. Telephone and Wi-Fi costs are increasing as the library takes over funding of the hotspots from the Friends.

Real property tax refunds have had an effect as they were unexpected in the last fiscal year but are planned for in the upcoming budget. Professional services will see an increase as the library expects additional cost to switch to a new auditor.

H. Narang asked if there could be savings found by buying the equipment and taking over some of the previously contracted services, such as plowing.

G. Kirkpatrick said that once the one-year warranty for the HVAC system is up, the library will have to enter into a new service contract.

The budget proposal comes in under the tax cap as set forth by Tax and Finance.

The board agreed to vote on the budget at the March meeting.

B. Sweeney reiterated his concern about the reduction in media line.

H. Narang asked if, given the percent spent on personnel, the library evaluating whether employees are spending time on tasks that are “value added.” G. Kirkpatrick said this is something the library is continuously looking at. As an example, he noted staffers in circulation have begun loaning out items that take more time to process as they are freed up from other tasks. He said additional efficiencies have allowed for an IT position to be shifted to a library clerk to help in other areas. He also said the library is seeking software to track benefit leave, which is currently handled by time-consuming paperwork.

The board discussed whether employees were required to complete tasks in off hours. G. Kirkpatrick said it was strongly discouraged, and librarians are given time off the desk and outside of programs to work on planning for and coordinating events.

H. Narang asked if there was any way to encourage gifts and donations to see an increase in the \$1,000 income line. G. Kirkpatrick said that staffers and the board are prohibited from fundraising, so that task falls to the Friends. T. Choppy noted that the Friends disburse between \$10,000-\$15,000 per year to the library, but it generally goes to offset specific expenses so it does not appear in the gifts and donations line. J. Becker and M. Kissinger said they would like to see the Friends actively solicit funds. G. Kirkpatrick said the Friends are currently exploring ways to grow their membership and provide meaningful contributions to the library, and there is a lot of potential there.

Library conferences

K. Roberts has requested to go to a library marketing conference in the fall with total expenses to be around \$1,300. A copy of the 2018 conference schedule was included in the packet.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board voted unanimously to approve travel and registration expenses in the approximate amount of \$1,285-\$1,385 for K. Roberts to attend the Library Marketing and Communications Conference in St. Louis Nov. 13-14.

Studio Makerspace ribbon cutting

The library will be holding a ribbon cutting for the new Studio Makerspace Friday, March 22, at 11 a.m. It will be coordinated with the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, and Assemblymember Pat Fahy has agreed to attend.

NYS annual report

G. Kirkpatrick asked the board to review their personal information in a future email, as it was redacted from the online copy.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger and a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to accept the information in the annual state report as accurate for filing.

Other new business

B. Sweeney asked that the board take some time at the next meeting to discuss what will happen

to the position of fiscal officer now that R. Khalife has been hired as treasurer. M. Redmond agreed that it places a burden on board members who may not have a financial background, and she would be in favor of getting rid of it if the bylaws allow it. G. Kirkpatrick and the board agreed to review the bylaws to see if the position is a requirement.

OLD BUSINESS

Long-range capital plan meeting 2/20 with Paul Mays

Paul Mays will make his building presentation in the storyhour room in what is the first step in putting together a long-range plan for the library. He will be able to explain what a capital plan process will look like.

M. Redmond noted that the board packet includes a list of upcoming discussion topics and asked trustees to let her know if there is a topic they would like included on the list.

HVAC update

The library has seen some temperature improvements, but it remains to be seen whether there is a big fix or a number of tweaks that need to be made to get the system working as it should. DASNY has offered to meet with library and the engineers at M/E to discuss it further.

BCN-TV/studio makerspace update

Someone was in the studio recording a show for the first time earlier in the day. G. Noble is reaching out to Rabbi Simon to do some additional beta testing, and M. Farley and R. Molineaux have been training the public on the video editing software. A video of G. Kirkpatrick is on the website, and additional intro videos are planned.

Other old business

M. Redmond reminded the board committees to start scheduling times to meet.

FUTURE BUSINESS

Friends of the Library – April Book Bash

The Friends' Book Bash will take place the April 12-14 and is the same weekend as the town's Recycle Fest. M Kissinger asked how board members could volunteer, and G. Kirkpatrick said he would get in touch with Friends President Jeremy Johannesen.

Background checks

No further discussion at this time.

Plaza feasibility

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.

The board discussed the open trustee position, noting that there has been a lot of interest. Library petition packets will be available Feb. 25 in coordination with the school district.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned to executive session at 7:49 to discuss the employment performance of a specific individual.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned executive session at 8:35pm.

On a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:36pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
Mary Redmond, board president