

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday November 13, 2017

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, Accounts Clerk
Natalie McDonough, Manager, Programs and Community Outreach
Catherine Stollar Peters, Head of Tech Services, Circulation
Chris McGinty, Head of Public Services
Janice Irwin, BCN-TV Studio Manager
Alan Walther, The Bonadio Group
Carol Northrup
Andrew Reilly
Frank DeSorbo
Nathan Frank
Rabbi Nachman Simon
Ralph LeBarron
Trudy Quaif
Zachary Simpson
Richard Kilroe, library staff
Dennis Kariou
Nancy Benedict
Thomas Goodfellow
Keith Irish
Marc Gronich
Jared King

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

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

M. Redmond opened the public participation portion of the meeting with some prepared comments about what the board is trying to address with potential changes to BCN-TV. See comments as addendum.

The following people spoke:

- Frank DeSorbo: Read from a prepared statement, included as an addendum to these minutes. Said the board had set a negative tone with the discussion. Took issue with M. Redmond's comments as not being the board speaking with one voice.
- Andrew Reilly: Said he spoke with the town about viewership numbers for its board meetings, and was told about 122 people a month access the meetings. (Numbers reflect digital viewership, not cable access viewership.)
- Richard Kilroe: Asked why there is a problem to be addressed with the studio now if it has been budgeted up to this point. M. Redmond responded that it was a discussion that started when a part-time studio staffer resigned and the board decided to review the services being offered.
- Carol Northrup: Said she felt the proposals and decision were happening very suddenly. Asked if there would be a public referendum. M. Redmond responded that it is not a decision that would require a referendum but the board had been listening to feedback from the community.
- Trudy Quaif: Said the studio is a wonderful asset to the community and said it appears as though the studio is closed already. M. Redmond noted that in all of the proposals the board is reviewing, the studio remains open.
- Rabbi Nachman Simon: Said the station was a good resource, and it wasn't always wise to compare money versus services rendered. He said the channel is a way to reach homebound or computer illiterate community members.
- Jared King: Said he was hoping that whatever the decision, it would be a smooth transition and that public access is important. Blamed the town for not choosing to allot some of the franchise fees for use by the public access station. Had concerns about how digitized content is treated online.
- Dennis Kariou: Said that some people like the studio in the library more than the books and that he hopes the library goes in a good direction. Said public access gives the public the opportunity to expose dysfunctional government and tell the truth.
- Richard Kilroe: Said he was interested in hearing the studio manager thoughts. M. Redmond noted that J. Irwin was in attendance and had spoken up at previous meetings.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Alan Walther of The Bonadio Group reviewed the draft report and required communications letter. The library has received an unmodified opinion — the highest level of assurance. The report noted no deficiencies and no noncompliance with regard to internal controls. The final report will be placed in the public record.

A. Walther thanked G. Kirkpatrick and T. Choppy for their help and collaboration with the audit.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 10 October 2017 board meeting was approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, with the correction noted below. J. Becker recused herself.

M. Redmond said that in the discussion under New Business regarding the DASNY project management agreement, the minutes should note that the \$94,000 cash transfer should be classified as a prepaid expense.

FINANCIAL REPORT

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 October 2017 (Manual Disbursements for October \$41,718.21; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for November \$63,846.14; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for October \$163,345.12; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for November \$3,552.60; Total: \$272,462.07).

H. Narang asked if the library was whole on property taxes. T. Choppy said 94 percent of the taxes have been received with the rest expected sometime in April.

BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for October 1-31, 2017.

MANUAL INVOICES

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a SECOND by M. Kissinger the board unanimously authorized payment of \$3,552 to M/E Engineering for fire alarm and security system design work.

RESOLUTIONS

None

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report.

PERSONNEL ACTION

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by J. Becker, the board unanimously approved new hires for the following vacancies, pending Civil Service approval:

- Custodial worker, full-time, permanent, \$32,000/annual or per contract.
- Library page, part-time, permanent, 13.85 hours/week at \$9.70/hour or per contract.
- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 15 hours/week at \$13.19/hour or per contract.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The library is working quickly to fill the full-time custodial position left open by K. Coffey's promotion.
- The restructured Halloween trick-or-treating program was a hit, and many parents were glad the library was handing out non-edible treats.
- The library will hold a custom library card program in January featuring the new library card printer. Future programs may include library cards with a child's custom artwork, etc.
- The library will be testing its new phone-based translation service at Staff Development Day. This technology allows the library to provide services to more community members
- G. Kirkpatrick invited any interested board members to Staff Development Day.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the UHLS contract will be discussed later on the agenda. The UHS board is also continuing to evaluate and discuss the grant awarding process.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Library Association conference attendance

G. Kirkpatrick asked to send five staffers to the PLA conference in Philadelphia. There will be some travel savings because of the use of the library van.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously authorized the estimated \$6,298 in costs for five staffers to attend the PLA conference in March.

UHLS contract

The current contract is set to expire at the end of the calendar year. Upper Hudson is currently considering updating the contract, but will likely offer an extension of the current one with a minimal increase and no significant change while they continue to discuss how they would like to move forward.

Resource sharing discussion

B. Sweeney said he wanted to open a preliminary discussion that could be revisited in a couple of months about how libraries in the Upper Hudson system share items like DVDs and other resources. He said he was curious because he noticed some libraries would not share certain materials even though anyone with an Upper Hudson card could check those same materials out on site. He said he'd like to sit down with G. Kirkpatrick sometime to really try to understand the complexities of the process and the decisions in light of the UHLS contract discussions and decide what the library's own philosophy is and how to move forward with that. L. Scoons and M. Kissinger said they would also be interested in further exploring resource-sharing issues.

Other new business

The library received its invoice from the NYSLRS.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously authorized payment of \$288,233 to the New York State and Local Retirement system, detailed in an invoice dated November 8, 2017.

OLD BUSINESS

BCN-TV

The board noted that they were looking at three separate proposals detailed in a chart in the board packet. The first would result in no change to the current service. The second would keep the current public access channel and scheduling and would put consumer-grade A/V equipment in the studio so people could self-produce their content, and the third option would use the channel for government

programming and still have an A/V studio set up for self-production. In all three options, the public retains the ability to make programs using the studio.

M. Kissinger said he strongly supported the middle option.

T. Quaif: Said the process of making shows is too complicated to train people how to do it. M. Kissinger said the library has trained people on the 3D printer in a similar way.

M. Redmond said that the resources that exist, even with the replacement of the second part-time person, are not sufficient to do all of the things people are looking for in a full-service studio. She said the library is looking at ways to simplify that process and make a viable plan going forward. H. Narang said that the board is evaluating the studio like it does all the services and resources at the library, and that two part-time positions are currently tied up producing content for a small number of people. He noted that, in terms of evaluating resources, if a book doesn't get checked out for six months, it goes on the sold shelf. He said that the library has heard from people who create shows at the library, but not the people who might be accessing through the channel. He added that not every service at the library needs to remain unchanged, and that in terms of the budget, the board needs to ask whether the library is getting enough from the current output of the studio space to justify the resources expended.

M. Redmond said there needs to be some type of training manual in place to transition to new hires.

J. Irwin: Said she created a training manual on her own 15 years ago, along with training shortcuts. Noted that there are user manuals for all of the equipment in the studio. She said she has tried to accommodate the taping of library programs.

H. Narang said that public access television has become less and less relevant over the years, and the library could have had this discussion two years ago. He said the major question is: What is the number of people you are reaching with the library's resources?

C. Brancatella said she realizes there are a lot of personal feelings involved, but it is the library's job to be forward thinking and decide what is the best service that provides the most value for the most people. She suggested it might be beneficial to revisit the decision in a year or so to see what is working.

G. Kirkpatrick clarified that viewership numbers for the public access station do not exist. It is data that is simply not collected by the cable companies.

F. DeSorbo: Said there would need to be a tech person to make sure equipment is working from user to user.

J. King: Said the financial resources should be available to the library, but the town has not provided the assets.

B. Sweeney addressed the comment from earlier about the board speaking with one voice, saying that he believes the individuals were elected to bring their voices to the mix. He also addressed the comments

that there were decisions made before the public discussion started. He said almost every word he has spoken about BCN-TV has been done in the public meetings and that the board has worked hard to be open and gather feedback, even moving to a larger room to accommodate additional people during the meetings. C. Brancatella said that the strongest evidence that the board has been listening to feedback is the fact that the proposals have changed.

The board reiterated that the PEG money from the town can only be used for capital expenses, not staffing/benefits. H. Narang said that regardless of the equipment costs, the current setup is not the most efficient use of two part-time employees.

T. Goodfellow: Said that he doesn't have cable, and BCN-TV is not broadcast on local stations so he does not have access to the same service.

M. Gronich: Said he has encountered some people who seem enthusiastic about a public/private venture for public access. Offered to help if there was interest. Said he may know of upcoming legislation that would make more funds available.

The board noted that in the absence of viewership stats, they have tried to get feedback through public surveys and notices in The Spotlight and on the public access channels themselves. Board members reviewed the three proposals again and discussed narrowing them down so they could flesh out the details and schedule a public forum.

J. Irwin: Said promises were made to the cable company at the time of the contract negotiations, and a needs assessment was conducted.

In response to a question by C. Brancatella, G. Kirkpatrick noted that the library does not have any contractual obligation with the cable companies. The library is not a party to the contract, and negotiations were between the town and the cable companies.

The board opted to present the second BCN-TV option to the public at a forum on Tuesday, December 5, from 6-8pm.

Fire alarm and security project update

The project design has been given SED approval and a building permit. M. Kissinger asked what effect the work will have on patrons, and G. Kirkpatrick said the asbestos abatement in the hallway would be the most disruptive part of the project, potentially blocking access for three days or more. The library is looking at some different ways to continue providing service during that time.

HVAC project update

The pre-bid walkthrough takes place Nov. 28 with five pre-vetted contractors, who will then have a couple of weeks to put their bids together. G. Kirkpatrick said the board would likely be selecting a contractor at the January meeting.

Board treasurer

The board noted that the treasurer discussion will take place at a future time.

Other old business

L. Scoons asked about the library's First Night participation. G. Kirkpatrick said there will be two performers in the community room with crafts and games in the board and storyhour rooms. K. Coffey has said he would be available if needed for snow removal help. The library is loaning its green screen for teens to use at Town Hall. The library will be a purchase point for the buttons.

The board discussed providing cupcakes for the staffers on staff development day.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following people spoke:

- A. Reilly: Had a question about how library loans are classified if an item from a non-sharing library is checked out from the library by a Bethlehem patron. Asked for information about the costs involved for the A/V makerspace proposal. M. Kissinger said the library had already provided some rough estimates at an earlier meeting but would start getting some harder numbers together. G. Kirkpatrick said some of the existing equipment will remain.
- R. Kilroe: Noted that, as an employee, this was the first meeting he has gone to, and he thanked the board for all they do.

On a MOTION by J. Becker with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:41pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Redmond, board president