

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Monday December 13, 2021

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger (virtual)
Harmeet Narang
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons (virtual)
Michelle Walsh
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Chris McGinty, assistant director
Catherine Stollar Peters (virtual), assistant director
Tanya Choppy (virtual), accounts clerk
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Chris O'Brien, CSEA Local 6015 vice president
Anne Moore, Borthwick Avenue resident

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Anne Moore addressed the board and said she had two comments. First, she said she believes library programs should come first when it comes to Community Room use. She said the town does need a community center but she does not believe that is the library's role. Second, she asked the board to include in their long-range planning discussions provisions for greener energy and a greener building.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 8 November 2021 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Redmond.

C. Wijeyesinghe addressed comments made by Anne Moore at the November meeting and said she was mindful of her desire for the board to share information.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

The board noted S. Whiting's treasurer's report. Additional items:

- M. Walsh asked about the increase in utilities costs. S. Whiting said that was due rising rates overall. M. Redmond noted that even with the rising costs, usage was down.

- C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the library would be over, under or on budget if all of the open staff positions were filled. S. Whiting said the library would likely be right on track but she would look into it further and get back to her. She said we made some conservative assumptions about turnover in the budget that happens during the year.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 November 2021 (Manual Disbursements \$358,126.06; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable \$44,810.36; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries \$213,823.41; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$616,759.83).

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board reviewed the personnel report. H. Narang asked how many of the previously approved positions the library was actively trying to fill. G. Kirkpatrick said that the library was hoping to fill most of them scaling up with increases in circulation. He noted the Librarian II position is not being filled at this time while Civil Service reviews the list.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved new hires for the following vacancy, pending Civil Service approval:

- Library Page, part-time, permanent, 12.8 hours/week, \$12.50/hour or per contract

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick thanked the trustees for providing the snacks at Staff Development Day. He said the guest speakers were well received. Although some staffers said they would like SDD to be in-person, going virtual was the right decision this year.
- New guidance from the state about masks in public spaces is in effect through at least Jan. 15. G. Kirkpatrick said the board might want to start thinking about any potential room capacity requirements for public groups using the meeting space. He said the library is already limiting staff-led programs to 20 people, but have put no limits on public groups other than fire capacity requirements. Sometimes staffers have to go into the room to assist these groups with technology and other questions.
- The tree facing Delaware Avenue has been removed.
- A diversity audit of the library's collection is ongoing. So far, the numbers indicate that only 8.5% of the collection is by BIPOC (Black, indigenous, and people of color) authors. The goal is to have about 33% of any collection with some form of diverse representation, including religious, LGBTQIA+, and disabilities/mental health. The benchmarks are still under active development. C. Wijeyesinghe said the term BIPOC does not cover all people who are considered socially or racially targeted, so she was glad to see the library was looking at other groups as well.
- Priority program registration is going to Bethlehem School District residents before opening up to the general public.
- C. Stollar Peters shared a link to the digital equity portal, which shows the level of broadband access in the area. In the towns of New Scotland and Bethlehem, 1,100 homes are without broadband access.
- G. Kirkpatrick said circulation continues to edge upward, with the library within 5,000 items of where it would be expected this time of year in the absence of a pandemic. Door count, however, continues to be about half of what would be considered normal, with afternoon study hours particularly quiet.

- M. Redmond asked if patrons have adjusted to the re-implementation of fines. G. Kirkpatrick said they seem to have picked up the new routine.
- M. Walsh asked if the Makerspace had reopened. G. Kirkpatrick said they were finalizing some of it, but it would be available to the public very soon. The maker and A/V equipment are now sharing the same space in the studio. Some of the equipment is now circulating as part of the Library of Things.
- In response to a question from H. Narang, G. Kirkpatrick noted that the approximate cost per therm in November was 91 cents compared to last year's 47 cents.
- C. Wijeyesinghe asked for clarification about the insurance policy mentioned in the NYLA reports. G. Kirkpatrick said that trustees, volunteers and Friends are covered under the general liability when performing library duties. He is waiting for further clarification from the insurance agency. C. Wijeyesinghe requested that he share the policy with the board.

UHLS REPORT

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

NEW BUSINESS

Health insurance invoice

G. Kirkpatrick presented an invoice from the library's insurance broker, with the largest amount representing the pre-funding of the flex spending benefit, which begins Jan 1. That money is eventually self-funded over the year through payroll deduction.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved payment of the Jaeger and Flynn health insurance and benefits management invoice in the amount of \$13,283.54.

Rooftop unit quote

G. Kirkpatrick presented a quote from Trane for a coil replacement on Rooftop Unit 2. The library had tried to get additional quotes on it, but would still need Trane to come in and hook it up to the control units. The library asked Trane to resubmit a quote through the procurement policy, allowing for a pre-negotiated price.

M. Redmond asked if it was part of the system that was put in with the HVAC project. G. Kirkpatrick said that it was, but it was no longer under warranty. M. Redmond suggested the library keep a file of this and other repair expenses related to the HVAC system.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked which budget line the money would come from. G. Kirkpatrick said it would come out of capital expenditures.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously accepted a quote from Trane in the amount of \$11,378 for the replacement of a coil in Rooftop Unit 2.

OLD BUSINESS

Long range plan/process update

G. Kirkpatrick said he is looking to get the LRP committee together in the new year to finalize the services plan.

Building committee/process update

The committee has talked about interviewing some architects and putting together a recommendation for some design work. C. Wijeyesinghe asked how many of the trustees had previously been involved in issuing a bond and asked if they could bring in some agency or person to walk them through the stages and timeframe. She suggested Judi Kehoe with the school district could be a resource. G. Kirkpatrick said he would try to put something together.

Other old business

None at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

C. Brancatella asked if the board could reach out to the union to find out their contract talking points before the end of the year.

C. Wijeyesinghe said she would like the fines committee to meet in January and come up with a recommendation for the full board. C. Brancatella said she was looking for additional information she had come across about the impact of fines on early literacy.

C. Wijeyesinghe also asked fellow board members to consider joining her on the personnel committee. She said something to consider in the future would be the personnel needs of the library.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked about the status of the most recent policy reviewed by the policy committee. G. Kirkpatrick said that it hadn't come back to the board yet.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Redmond, the board adjourned to executive session at 6:50pm to discuss the employment history of a particular individual.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board adjourned executive session at 7:29pm; no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:30pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president