

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (VIRTUAL)
Monday May 9, 2022

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

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

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

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

BUDGET PRESENTATION

S. Whiting presented the 2022-23 fiscal year budget. She said she wanted to highlight a few important things that have been budgeted for:

- Two new staff positions
- More funds for both electronic and physical materials to reduce wait times
- A one-time upgrade to the library's financial software
- An increase in energy costs
- The elimination of most library fines

She noted that the levy increase of 3.25% was within the state limit. C. Wijeyesinghe asked for some clarification for the public. S. Whiting said the library had no levy increase last year and so a greater percentage was available to ask for so it is as if that amount were spread over a two-year period.

M. Redmond noted that savings from the HVAC system upgrade a couple of years ago have kept the energy cost increases manageable.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 11 April 2022 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

Minutes of the 27 April 2022 special board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- C. Wijeyesinghe said she had asked about the expenditures for print versus electronic materials. G. Kirkpatrick said that because print materials are ordered so far in advance, the line at times looks lower than e-materials, which can be purchased and expensed immediately.
- S. Whiting said that the six-month Treasury bill investment had been made May 3. As it approaches Nov. 3, she said she would talk to the board about options and make a recommendation. She noted that, moving forward, it would appear on the cash and investment portion of the monthly financial report in the board packet.
- M. Walsh thanked S. Whiting for finding and implementing that investment opportunity.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 April 2022 (Checks disbursed in April 2022 based on pre-approval \$36,396.29; Checks disbursed in April 2022 relating to payroll \$188,546.72; Checks being submitted for approval \$114,982.53; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$339,925.54).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick reported that L. Kozilski will be joining the library as the new Librarian II, program and outreach team leader.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved new hires for the following vacancies:

- Library Page, part-time, permanent, 12.8 hours/week, \$13.20/hour
- Library Clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$14.17/hour or per contract

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted to authorize the director to enter into a settlement agreement in the amount of \$37,373.52.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- Masks are still optional at the library. There are signs on the front door strongly encouraging them. Many patrons and staff are choosing to wear masks. G. Kirkpatrick said he would continue to monitor the numbers and state and county rules to see if any changes to the current policy become necessary.
- M. Walsh asked if there was a way to know how many requests there might be for a museum pass the library no longer has. G. Kirkpatrick said the library relies on the public to make those requests, and there is a form available on the website and in person to request new materials.
- Board members were invited to march in the Memorial Day parade. The library will be handing out color changing pencils again this year.
- G. Kirkpatrick thanked the Public Services staff for all the work they have done to bring back more programming, including storytimes.

- The library had to close the waitlist for teen volunteers because of the overwhelming interest. He said that volunteer opportunities are one of the services the library provides to the community.
- Circulation numbers continue to climb to something over 90 percent of pre-pandemic numbers. Door count is still lagging a bit, and there aren't as many people using the library as a study space as in the past. M. Walsh said she had heard from two people asking whether study rooms were now available. H. Narang asked if there could be some dedicated communication to reach those less likely to know that study and meeting rooms are once again available to the public.
- Public meetings are currently booking in the Community and Board rooms, with the kitchen available. The library is working on ways to allow those groups to easily host hybrid virtual/in-person meetings.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons reported that it is a busy time of year for the UHLS board and they are reviewing submissions for the annual awards. The celebration is scheduled for Friday, June 3, at the Colonie library. The board also finished their racial equity training and are in the process of giving some feedback.

NEW BUSINESS

5G phone hotspot proposal

G. Kirkpatrick said the library needed to replace the current WiFi hotspots that are being loaned out because the Sprint devices would be sunsetting at the end of June. He said the current hotspots run on the 4G network, but as the library needs to replace them anyway, upgrading to 5G would provide a better service for people. He noted that the library hadn't received complaints about the 4G capability, however it is much less able to handle video conferencing.

The board asked what people tend to use the devices for when they check them out. G. Kirkpatrick said that while that is not tracked specifically, most people report taking them on vacation or using them for essential internet service when it is not available.

The cost of upgrading to 5G over just replacing the 4G ones is more than double, averaging about \$10,000 per year over three years. H. Narang asked if the library had looked at providers other than T-Mobile. G. Kirkpatrick said the other providers were significantly more expensive than T-Mobile.

The board reviewed the cost estimates. M. Redmond said she believes the need for 5G access will only potentially grow in the coming months. M. Walsh said the WiFi hotspots are a well-used service and 5G has a greater capacity for growth so she would be in favor of moving in that direction. The rest of the board agreed with replacing the devices with 5G versions. G. Kirkpatrick said he would return next month with a quote for the devices and service that can be voted on.

Investment policy

S. Whiting presented the library's investment policy and internal controls document noting that in the policy it is required that the board review it annually. She said the Finance Committee had looked at it and are not recommending any changes at this time. G. Kirkpatrick said the policy already accommodates the process used to invest in the treasury bills. C. Wijeyesinghe asked why the policy was structured in a way that allows the treasurer to enter into some investment agreements as they see fit. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is structured in the same way as the school district policy with guidance from BCSD's Judy Kehoe. S. Whiting noted that any financial activity is reported to the board in the monthly report.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously reaffirmed the library's investment policy.

Open meetings law changes

G. Kirkpatrick said he wanted to start the discussion about allowing board members to participate in meetings virtually once the emergency order allowing all-virtual meetings expires. Moving forward, the board will have the option of allowing some members to participate and vote virtually as long as there is an in-person quorum. The virtual board members would not need to provide an address accessible to the public in order to do this. To have this as an option, the board would need to define and vote on the circumstances under which attending virtual would be allowed, as well as hold a public hearing announcing the changes.

C. Wijeyesinghe said that as a member of the policy committee, she would be interested in the staff putting together an initial draft of the policy for the committee to work with. M. Kissinger said he wanted to make the circumstances for virtual attendance as broad as possible.

Other new business

Included in the board packet was a proposal for five new laptops that would be equipped with video editing software. The machines can be used to create content for the library's Public Access Television Station so the purchase is eligible for reimbursement from PEG funds.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously voted to purchase five Dell laptop computers at a cost of \$9,993.95 to be paid for with PEG public access money from the town of Bethlehem.

OLD BUSINESS

Director evaluation process

C. Wijeyesinghe said that the personnel committee had finalized the timeline for the director's annual evaluation. She said the questions provided in the board packet would form the framework for a survey of staff responses. She noted a correction to one of the questions and asked the board to send any comments or feedback about the questions her way. M. Walsh asked the reason for doing the evaluation every year and said she wanted to be sensitive to adding too many tasks to the director's plate. G. Kirkpatrick said he welcomes the opportunity to have that conversation and reflect.

Building committee/Recommendation for architectural design services

H. Narang said the building committee had met with three architects and all had a fair amount of experience. The committee was recommending Ashley McGraw Architects to do any future design work based on their experience with bonding projects and SED approval. C. Wijeyesinghe asked G. Kirkpatrick if he could share with the boards the examples provided by the firm.

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted to use Ashley McGraw Architects for library design work related to the Long-Range Plan.

Other old business

There was no other business at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

M. Redmond asked if the Storch Technology Fund could be used to help cover the cost of upgrading the library's mobile Wi-Fi devices/service to 5G. G. Kirkpatrick said that it would fall under the approved uses and he would look into it.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board adjourned to executive session at 7:24pm to discuss the employment history of a particular individual.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board adjourned executive session at 7:43pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:44pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president