

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (COMMUNITY ROOM)
Monday June 13, 2022

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Harmeet Narang
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

GUESTS: Chris McGinty, assistant director
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Sarah Patterson, trustee-elect

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

G. Kirkpatrick shared that he had received two messages from patrons expressing a desire to have the toys returned to the children's area. Bringing back the toys is part of the final phase of the library's pandemic response plan, which hasn't yet been implemented. G. Kirkpatrick said that with recent COVID numbers decreasing and the expectation that young children may be eligible for the vaccine soon, it might be a good time for the board to begin that discussion.

G. Kirkpatrick has responded to a couple of questions about going fine free in July.

In response to a question raised by Delmar resident Anne Moore, the library had used the CDLC's Ask a Lawyer feature to learn more about the library's agency to purchase property. The response was that the library does have the authority, but G. Kirkpatrick said he would continue to research the topic to nail down the particulars for future reference.

Anne Moore had also asked if the house the library had purchased on Borthwick was able to be used in some way by the community. G. Kirkpatrick said this question had been addressed during the previous architect's evaluation that found it would not be feasible to bring the building up to code for public use.

C. Brancatella asked if a member of the public could ask the library to incur legal fees. G. Kirkpatrick said they could not, but the Ask a Lawyer service is available at no additional cost through the library's Upper Hudson membership.

M. Walsh said that she has also heard from people who are asking for the children's toys to be brought back. S. Patterson said she was part of a Facebook moms group that was asking the same question.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

M. Kissinger read a special resolution honoring trustee M. Redmond for her 10 years of service to the library. Afterwards, she was presented with a framed copy and flowers. C. Brancatella brought cupcakes to mark the occasion.

M. Redmond thanked her fellow board members and staff for being supportive of one another and working together to get things done. She said she was proud of the HVAC project and how the library pushed through even when there were difficulties. She said she learned so much from everyone during her time on the board. M. Walsh said her expertise will be missed.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the resolution recognizing M. Redmond's time on the Board of Trustees.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 09 May 2022 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

M. Walsh asked if in-person meetings would continue to feature the board packet on the display screen. G. Kirkpatrick said that as long as it is helpful to some, he would keep doing it. C. Wijeyesinghe said she was in favor of continuing the practice because it allows the public to follow along with what the board is discussing.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- G. Kirkpatrick read the report in S. Whiting's absence.
- C. Wijeyesinghe suggested they should think about trends in lines that are tracking under budget and what that might mean for future budgets or a potential construction project.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 May 2022 (Checks disbursed in May 2022 based on pre-approval \$70,364.98; Checks disbursed in May 2022 relating to payroll \$208,045.26; Checks being submitted for approval \$56,826.05; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$335,236.29).

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board asked about an entry that noted a staffer leaving and returning the same position. G. Kirkpatrick said it was a procedural notation for an individual who had retired from a full-time position elsewhere.

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

- Librarian 1, full-time, permanent, \$54,440/annual or per contract.
- Library Clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$14.17/hour or per contract

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick thanked the community for supporting the library budget and welcomed S. Patterson to the board. He noted that the large voter turnout would mean the number of signatures required for candidates next year will increase.
- Staffing shortages in May meant the cancellation of some programs, but the library was able to remain open thanks to the efforts of staffers who were not sidelined. M. Redmond said it was a testament to that hard work that a lot of members of the public were probably never aware of the shortages.
- G. Kirkpatrick thanked the teen volunteers who decorated the library's Memorial Day float. He noted there have been more volunteer requests than the library has been able to accommodate at this time because volunteer hours take a significant amount of staff time. C. Wijeyesinghe said that speaks to the necessity of the volunteer coordinator position that has been approved with the 2022-23 budget.
- The Friends' recent book sale was the organization's biggest single fundraiser. The board asked if they were planning to take donations for future sales. G. Kirkpatrick said that the Friends are open to the possibility but are not able to handle the coordination of it just yet. They will continue to sell library discards at the fall event. G. Kirkpatrick said that the space needed to collect and organize donations might be something to consider as the library looks at future building needs.
- G. Kirkpatrick noted that the library was way ahead in circulation over the previous pandemic year and the numbers were approaching pre-pandemic levels. M. Kissinger said that it might be time to have a conversation about the library's physical magazine collection as circulation in that area continues to decrease. G. Kirkpatrick said the current collection is primarily electronic, and there is no longer a teen and children's physical magazine collection.
- M. Redmond said she saw a recent segment on the today show that touted Kanopy. G. Kirkpatrick said the streaming service, as well as Hoopla, continue to be popular with patrons.
- C. Wijeyesinghe said she was at a recent conference and was pleased to see a significant number of librarians discussing and participating in inclusive training on issues of race.
- C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the board could see a comparison of the library's annual numbers with those from before the pandemic. G. Kirkpatrick said that C. Stollar Peters would have a chart prepared for the July meeting.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons said the annual celebration was held virtually June 3. She congratulated staffers for their win with the Kindness Matters campaign. She said Martin Garnar, who spoke at the end of the celebration, did a great job covering intellectual freedom.

NEW BUSINESS

Board meeting videoconference policy

G. Kirkpatrick said that an executive order in place allows for fully virtual meetings, but at some point that will expire and not be renewed. He said boards will be allowed the option of a hybrid meeting in the future as long as a quorum is present. For that reason, he was looking to put a videoconferencing policy in place so the board can have that option as needed. Board members participating remotely would be

required to be on screen and would be able to vote. C. Wijeyesinghe said the policy had been reviewed by the policy committee. M. Kissinger said the board would have to establish a notification process for those wishing to attend remotely.

A public hearing on the policy will be held at the July meeting.

C. Wijeyesinghe noted a typo in the second paragraph that should be the word “are.”

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously adopted the Videoconferencing Policy with the correction.

M/C Salaries

A copy of the salary schedule was shared with the board.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the M/C salaries for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

C. Wijeyesinghe said the board might consider in the future whether the M/C employees should have individual contracts.

OLD BUSINESS

Building committee report and proposal from architect

M. Kissinger said the building committee had received a proposal from the architects at Ashley McGraw. He noted that there are still some questions to be addressed, so the version in the board packet will not be the final version. The building committee is hoping to meet in the next couple of weeks so that the proposal would be ready for a full board review at the July meeting. M. Redmond asked if there was some redundancy with the proposal with what has already been done. M. Kissinger said that was one of the issues he would like to get addressed.

C. Brancatella said it was important to note that the process is still in the discussion phase.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if there was a way to put out additional information letting the public know the board would be discussing an architect’s proposal. M. Redmond echoed that idea, asking if there was a way to put materials related to any potential building plan in a dedicated spot on the website.

M. Redmond said it might be a good idea to revisit some of the public opinion that was gathered when the library first started thinking about building needs because those meetings were all held pre-pandemic, and the world is a different place now.

C. Wijeyesinghe talked about the timing of a potential bond vote coinciding with the budget vote and encouraged the board to seek out experts in that area for additional perspective. G. Kirkpatrick said that Ashley McGraw has a lot of experience in bonding projects, which was one of the reasons they were selected.

Other old business

M. Kissinger said the board needed to put together a nominating committee to set a slate of officers for vote at the July meeting.

M. Walsh and M. Kissinger volunteered to serve as the committee.

C. Brancatella proposed having two vice presidents. She said the structure had worked in the past.

L. Scoons said she wanted to raise a question that came up in the intellectual property discussion at the UHLS celebration. She asked what kind of policy the library has in place if books get challenged. G. Kirkpatrick said it was part of the Collection Development Policy. He noted that it would make sense to only

allow challenges from those within the library taxing district. He said challenges do come up periodically, and now some libraries are starting to see challenges to database content. He said it seems to be an issue that is ramping up nationally. M. Kissinger also noted that the library is great about getting items added to the library through patrons' requests.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked how the equity assessment of the library catalog is going. C. McGinty said the new software just went live, but the library has finished an audit of the adult fiction collection.

C. Brancatella said that although the board discussed writing an editorial for The Spotlight regarding the decision to go fine free, she felt the Times Union article did a very thorough job covering the topic and an additional letter would be unnecessary. G. Kirkpatrick said staff were expecting a smooth transition to fine free.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was 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 7:03pm to discuss the employment history of a particular individual.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board adjourned executive session at 7:48pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:49pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president