

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (COMMUNITY ROOM)
Monday July 11, 2022

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger
Sara Patterson
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe (remote)
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary (remote)

EXCUSED: Harmeet Narang

GUESTS: Chris McGinty, assistant director
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Jonathan and Christopher Patterson

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

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

G. Kirkpatrick read an email from a member of the public commending the library on its vast digital offerings, including Hoopla, Kanopy and OverDrive. The patron said they would frequently access the Great Courses and urged the board to continue offering those services.

TRUSTEE OATH OF OFFICE

M. Kissinger administered the oath of office to trustee-elect S. Patterson.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

M. Kissinger started the conversation by noting that he had become aware that as president, he cannot be part of the nominating committee.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if there would be an opportunity for her to speak before the vote. M. Kissinger said there would be time.

M. Walsh introduced the nominating committee's proposed slate of 2022-23 officers as follows: M. Kissinger, president; M. Walsh and C. Wijeyesinghe, vice president; S. Whiting, treasurer; C. Brancatella, secretary; and L. Scoons, UHLS representative.

M. Walsh said the board bylaws allow for one vice president so there would be a vote for that position as there was multiple interest.

C. Brancatella said she believed the board had addressed the issue of vice president in 2019 when they agreed to appoint two co-vice presidents, and the matter was settled then with the vote for the slate of officers, even if the bylaws were not officially changed at that time.

M. Walsh said there are a number of reasons why she believes there is no need for two vice presidents. First, she said, there is no limit to who can add items to the agenda, whether they are an officer or not; second, the bylaws do not provide for a second vice president; and third, adding an additional officer could make it even more difficult to schedule agenda and other meetings. She said a second vice president was inefficient and overkill.

C. Brancatella responded that the decision to add a second vice president in 2019 was unanimously supported by the board at the time. She said she believes it is a good way to give multiple people a perspective of what the position entails, which is why the board chose to do so in 2019.

M. Walsh noted that the 2019 decision was made at the first board meeting of her term.

C. Brancatella MOVED that the board review the bylaws and make changes that allow for a second vice president no later than the September 2022 board meeting. L. Scoons SECONDED the motion.

C. Wijeyesinghe said her interest in the vice president position was inspired by M. Redmond's involvement and work with the board. She said she felt she had the skills and interest to augment the leadership team, and it was never her intent to compete for the position of vice president but rather to join the existing team as was done in 2019. She said she was not interested in being elected in opposition to the board bylaws and asked that the board make a motion to revise the bylaws to accommodate the consideration of co-vice presidents, either tonight or on a near future agenda. She said she is extremely engaged and has an open schedule and looking to augment a team that serves the library and community.

M. Walsh reiterated that the position of vice president is purely administrative. She said the board is a team of leaders and each member has a collaborative role. The bylaws provide for flexibility by proposing a vote if there is more than one person interested in a position. She said the board doesn't need to add a second person to avoid a vote; a vote is very democratic and a good way to proceed.

S. Patterson asked for some background regarding the decision to add a co-vice president in 2019. G. Kirkpatrick said part of the motivation was the change of the treasurer position to a paid role and some board members still wanting to serve in a leadership capacity, as well as the longtime president expressing interest in stepping down in the coming year and the board wanting to keep some options open.

C. Brancatella asked if C. Wijeyesinghe would be interested in the co-vice presidency if it were allowed. C. Wijeyesinghe said she doesn't want to ignore the bylaws even though those rules were set aside three years ago.

C. Brancatella said she believes the board in 2019 got 80 percent of the way to changing the bylaws but did not follow through even though it was agreed on in concept.

S. Patterson said she didn't think that the argument held up that the 2019 board broke the laws before then the current board should do it now. She suggested the board vote that night on the slate and then amend the bylaws ASAP so it would not be an issue in the future.

C. Brancatella amended her original MOTION to:

- Vote on the slate of recommended officers;
- Make changes to the language in the bylaws allowing for co-vice presidents no later than the September 2022 meeting; and
- As soon as those changes are made, anyone can make a motion to add an officer.

S. Patterson SECONDED. The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

L. Scoons noted that while the board was looking at the bylaws, they should look at the language allowing an assistant secretary and assistant treasurer position.

C. Wijeyesinghe said she puts her trust in the board to consider her interest to serve once the bylaws have been amended, and she would be willing to remove her name from the slate at this time.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously agreed to remove C. Wijeyesinghe's name from the proposed slate of officers.

The revised slate of officers proposed for 2022-23:

- President: Mark Kissinger
- Vice President: Michelle Walsh
- Secretary: Caroline Brancatella
- UHLS representative: Lisa Scoons
- Board treasurer: Shari Whiting

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously accepted the revised slate as presented.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

M. Kissinger proposed the following committee appointments but note he was still recruiting, so anyone was welcome to put their name forward at any time.

Finance

- M. Walsh
- M. Kissinger (ex officio)

Nominating

- M. Walsh
- C. Brancatella

Policy

- C. Wijeyesinghe
- L. Scoons
- M. Kissinger (ex officio)

Building

- C. Wijeyesinghe
- H. Narang
- M. Kissinger (ex officio)

Personnel

- S. Patterson
- C. Wijeyesinghe
- L. Scoons
- M. Kissinger (ex officio)

Collective bargaining (as needed)

- L. Scoons
- C. Brancatella

L. Scoons noted that the policy committee is not one required in the bylaws but the board is able to add additional committees as they see fit. They have added such committees in the past, like the long-range plan committee and fine-free committee.

BOARD ANNUAL AUTHORIZATIONS

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the petty cash amount of \$100 is enough. G. Kirkpatrick and T. Choppy said it has always been more than enough and has never come close to reaching the limit. L. Scoons asked about the notation regarding the last RFPs. G. Kirkpatrick said he was asked to include that by a previous board and it was strictly informational.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approved the 2022-23 authorizations as presented.

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS

G. Kirkpatrick presented the proposed board meeting dates for 2023 and noted that the scheduled April meeting falls on Passover and school vacation week. The board agreed to tentatively move the meeting to the following Monday, April 17.

On the proposed library closings schedule for 2023, G. Kirkpatrick mentioned a pair of highlighted items for the board to consider. One was whether the library wanted to continue

using the term “Columbus Day” for the October holiday. He noted that it would strictly be a matter of semantics because the library is open that day as it is generally a very busy one. The board said a decision could be made on that at the next contract negotiations.

The proposed schedule also included closing the library at 3pm on New Year’s Eve. This is something that is typically done to get staff home before it gets dark and the roads crowded. This coming year, however, New Year’s Eve falls on a Sunday, which would mean the library would only be open noon-3pm. G. Kirkpatrick recommended the library close that day as it is not a busy one.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh, with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board voted unanimously to close the library Sunday, December 31, 2023.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board voted unanimously to adopt the amended holidays and closings schedule for 2023.

ANNUAL ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Ethics statements were distributed to the trustees for signing and will be filed in the public record.

PUBLIC HEARING – VIDEOCONFERENCING POLICY

C. Wijeyesinghe noted that the policy had been brought before the board and approved. M. Kissinger said the board should discuss the procedure for notifying the director that one would be attending remotely. There would still need to be at least four in-person board members for a meeting to take place.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ABOUT POLICY

There was no public participation.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh and a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously adopted the Videoconferencing Policy to allow for hybrid meetings once the state emergency executive order expires.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 13 June 2022 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by S. Patterson.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer’s update

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

- M. Kissinger asked the reason behind lower spending in the YS lines. G. Kirkpatrick said that because of COVID, fewer items were being published, and a paper shortage resulted in limited reprints leading to limited availability of material.

- C. Wijeyesinghe noticed the gifts and donation line was 310 percent over what was budgeted. She thanked the public for their generosity.
- S. Whiting stated that the year ended with an unadjusted surplus of \$418,310. Several year-end adjustments that will be made as part of the audit process will reduce the surplus to roughly \$390,000. She drew the board's attention to a schedule explaining the variances.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 June 2022 (Checks disbursed in June 2022 based on pre-approval \$35,509.73; Checks disbursed in June 2022 relating to payroll \$184,497.78; Checks being submitted for approval \$99,191.38; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$319,198.89).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick provided the board with an amended job status report that included the position of full-time library assistant, which is the civil service title for the volunteer coordinator position approved with the 2022-23 budget.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approved new hires/changes for the following positions:

- District library treasurer, part-time, permanent, hourly rate change from \$50/hour to \$55/hour
- Librarian 1, full-time, permanent, \$55,529/annual or per contract.
- Librarian 1, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$28.41/hour or per contract
- Library assistant, full-time, permanent, \$39,604/annual or per contract

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- Staffing has continued to be a challenge with absences and position vacancies. This has caused the library to dial back some of its outreach and programming. The library continues to work to get back up to full staffing to meet these community expectations.
- G. Kirkpatrick said that a part-time librarian had recently accepted a full-time position, leaving the Friday evening shift open. He said the library would be actively seeking to fill that spot, but it is traditionally a difficult one to find people to work, even more so with current recruiting trends. G. Kirkpatrick said he was proposing closing the library for in-person use on Fridays from 6-9pm and extending curbside pickup to 8:30 on those nights for the month of August. M. Walsh said she has been in the library on Friday nights in the fall and it was busy with families. L. Scoons asked that the library do their best to get out the word that curbside would still be available those nights. The board agreed to revisit whether it would be necessary to extend this through September at their August meeting.

- On a MOTION by M. Kissinger and a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously agreed to close the library for in-person browsing Friday night from 6-9 pm during the month of August, with curbside pickup available 6-8:30pm.
- M. Walsh said she is grateful to the IT department for helping with the public use of the 3D printer so that service is available. She said she had been asked by more than one community member about its return.
- G. Kirkpatrick noted good increases across the board in circulation and presented a chart showing circulation trends from 2017 until present.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons said the next meeting would be held that Wednesday. She encouraged fellow board members to watch the UHLS celebration video. She said the service committee would be meeting later in the summer to start talking about construction grants. She said the board should consider scheduling their racial equity training soon as available spaces may begin filling up. The board had talked about doing it in January or February. L. Scoons encouraged them to not schedule it for a regular board meeting night as it is made up of two, 90-minute sessions. G. Kirkpatrick said he would put out a poll to find out what times would work best for board members. C. Wijeyesinghe said it would be helpful if the board could get an abstract of the session goals so they could be better prepared. G. Kirkpatrick said he would reach out and see if he could get that information for them.

NEW BUSINESS

Attorney proposal

G. Kirkpatrick said he was requesting to add another attorney to the library's authorizations. The Law Office of Stephanie Adams from Buffalo has some expertise in library-specific topics, including the relationship with school districts. The firm is offering reduced fees to members of UHLS and CDLC.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously authorized the addition of the Law Office of Stephanie Adams to the list of approved authorizations for 2022-23.

GASB 75 valuation proposal

G. Kirkpatrick presented a proposal from the actuarial firm BPAS to do a post-employment needs analysis valuation, which is required for the audit every other year.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously accepted a service agreement with BPAS to conduct a post-employment needs analysis at a cost of \$6,000 for fiscal year 2022 and \$1,500 for fiscal year 2023.

OLD BUSINESS

Building committee report and proposal from architect

G. Kirkpatrick said that before discussion about the architect's proposal, he needed to

disclose a potential conflict of interest. He said the firm the board was considering – Ashley McGraw – subcontracts with an engineering firm where his brother is employed. He recused himself from any further discussion about the selection. M. Kissinger noted the recusal.

M. Kissinger said the building committee had received a slightly amend proposal following input from the June board meeting and after a request from the building committee to provide some more definition to the scope. He noted that it is still a design proposal, so nothing is set in stone. C. Wijeyesinghe said that there would be a pretty tight timeframe with the design taking place January-February with a potential vote in May, and it would be imperative to keep the public apprised of the progress so they are well-informed should it come to a vote in May. M. Walsh noted that the proposal includes language about an auditorium space but not necessarily the other spaces the board had discussed adding. M. Kissinger said that it was just a starting point and not a final list. C. Brancatella said she wanted to note that it might seem like the process is duplicating what had been done in the past, but the circumstances and world are very different from what they were just a couple years ago. M. Kissinger said there would definitely be further discussion with the board and the public, and this is just the starting point.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously agreed to enter into contract with Ashley McGraw for design services.

Future business

C. Wijeyesinghe asked to include on the August agenda a discussion about whether the board wanted to hold an annual retreat in the fall as a way to go over some larger topics. She also asked to include a reminder under Old Business in August to check in on the director evaluation process.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:15pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president