

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday December 12, 2022

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger (arrived at 6:47)
Sarah Patterson
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Harmeet Narang

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Phil Berardi, head of Circulation and Technical Services
Jennifer Crawford, confidential secretary

Vice President M. Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 14 November 2022 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons.

Minutes of the 28 November 2022 personnel committee meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- S. Whiting said that \$50,000 had been moved from the general operating bank account to the capital projects account in anticipation of architects' fees related to the feasibility study. She said the money comes from the surplus and not the annual budget. The capital projects account allows the library to track all construction-related expenses in one place.

- S. Whiting said that if the board were to approve a project at a certain amount or were to have a construction bond passed, those dollar amounts would also be transferred to the capital projects fund for transparency and ease of tracking.
- S. Whiting said that the library has already seen about \$20,000 so far in interest revenue this fiscal year.
- S. Whiting said that the notation “See detailed report” on the check warrant refers to multiple purchase orders in one payment, such as purchases through Amazon. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the breakdown would be available to the public upon request. S. Whiting said all of the information is public, and she would be able to run a detailed report upon request.
- C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the library was planning to spend all of the money in the materials line. T. Choppy noted that some of the money had been spent already on laptops and A/V equipment and later reimbursed by PEG funds. G. Kirkpatrick said that a lot of materials are ordered 4-6 months in advance so the line can look underspent until those items become available. The goal is that every penny in the materials line is spent.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 November 2022 (Checks disbursed in November 2022 based on pre-approval \$287,493.90; Checks disbursed in November 2022 relating to payroll \$219,398.51; Checks being submitted for approval \$82,954.01; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$14,967.00; Total: \$604,813.42).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said the library was able to fill the open Public Services librarian position, so he was removing the request for a part-time position. He noted that a part-time employee had accepted the full-time position. The library is now looking to backfill a Librarian I position in Technical Services following the retirement of Lisa Bouchard. The other backfill request is for a full-time Library Assistant. S. Patterson asked if there was some kind of graphic that details the specific job positions in the library. G. Kirkpatrick introduced the board to his confidential secretary, J. Crawford, and said that it was something she would be working on.

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

- Librarian I, full-time, permanent, 35 hours/week, \$55,529/annual or per contract
- Library Assistant, full-time, permanent, 35 hours/week, \$39,604/ annual or per contract

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

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

- K. Coffey was very pleased with the library’s new snow plowing service. G. Kirkpatrick said the library had a chance to see them in action during the snowfall over the weekend. M. Walsh asked about the early closure of the library by one hour on Sunday. G. Kirkpatrick said the roads were starting to get challenging, and he wanted to get staff home in the daylight.

- Library architects Ashley McGraw will be meeting with board members on Thursday, and the meeting is open to the public.
- G. Kirkpatrick said the partnership with the Bethlehem Historical Association has been very successful. He said the group has asked about additional seating because attendance at some of the recent programs has approached the Community Room fire code capacity.
- The number of offered programs and attendance are both up, and G. Kirkpatrick extended his thanks to Public Services for making that happen.
- The second storytime session offered on weekdays is more lightly attended than the first. The library will continue to seek out new opportunities that are popular with attendees.
- Staffers will be attending First Night at Four Corners from 6-7:30pm, bringing a photo booth and other goodies.
- M. Walsh asked about the Teen Book Boxes. G. Kirkpatrick said they were like subscription boxes filled with books and items for teens to keep. Registration is required. During the pandemic, it was one of the main ways the library was able to engage that age group.
- C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the library could give out books to children at outreach events. C. McGinty said that the library hands out coupons for free books during outreach that children can then redeem at the library.
- G. Kirkpatrick spoke with a senior group about library services and pushed the Books to People home delivery service, as well as book and media bundles.
- In December, there are usually questions from the public about holiday displays and exhibits and what is allowed. The library provides public space for displays defined by the Displays and Exhibits policy. The library does not do any holiday decorating in non-display areas following a decision in the mid '90s. Over the past couple of years, interest in displaying in December has waned, but the library gets questions about it every year. C. Brancatella asked if the library could remind patrons of the policy in the fall Footnotes to get a jump on the questions.
- G. Kirkpatrick provided a graph showing electric use has been consistent since the HVAC upgrade despite increasing costs.
- M. Walsh said she was happy to learn that the library would be offering Fold3 in the new year. She said that it was a great way to learn about ancestors in the military.
- S. Patterson said she noticed that the Storywalk in Park is still fall-themed. C. McGinty said installing a winter story is on her to-do list.

BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said the architects have met with staff and will be meeting with trustees on Thursday as part of their building feasibility study. That meeting will be open to the public and streamed live.

NEW BUSINESS

Notary services

The library has been offering notary services when an employee with notary certification is available, generally Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm. Only one person on staff is currently eligible to offer this service and has expressed an interest in no longer doing so. G. Kirkpatrick said that providing a notary has not been considered a core business of the library, but he asked the board if they were interested in continuing to provide the service. If interested, the library could offer training to multiple employees and cover the yearly insurance for each library notary. Board members said they were interested in continuing the service and asked G. Kirkpatrick for more information about the cost of training and insurance.

Public photocopiers

The vendor who maintained the library's coin-operated copiers will no longer be providing that service. The machines currently in use would be given over to the library to run and maintain. G. Kirkpatrick said the intent is to continue using those machines until they have run their course and then invest in a standard copy machine that would be used on the honor system, much like the printers work. The board agreed that this made sense moving forward.

Donation/naming rights

The library has been approached by a community member who has donated in past years and wanted to know what the requirements are for naming rights for the building. At this time, the library does not offer naming rights, but G. Kirkpatrick asked the board their thoughts. M. Kissinger, M. Walsh, and C. Brancatella were in general agreement that they supported the process, but would need to discuss further the guidelines, such as dollar amounts and who would be eligible. C. Brancatella said she would like to have a solid policy in place describing how the board would vet the names and whether corporate or non-profit organizations would be eligible. C. Wijeyesinghe said that as part of the discussion, the board should talk about all the ways to recognize significant contributions to the library. G. Kirkpatrick said the library itself cannot directly fundraise. M. Walsh encouraged the board to not wait too long to have the discussion. Board members agreed to revisit this talking point at the January board meeting.

Marshall & Sterling invoice

G. Kirkpatrick presented an invoice for pre-paid health care expenses related to flex and FSA accounts for staffers. The majority of the expense will be paid back over the year through paycheck deductions.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board voted unanimously to approve an invoice from Marshall & Sterling in the amount of \$17,008.08 for costs related to the administration of employee health benefits.

Other new business

C. Wijeyesinghe asked when contract discussions would begin. G. Kirkpatrick said that the union has been notified that the library is ready to begin negotiations and he is waiting to hear back.

L. Scoons said she wanted to let the board know about the UHLS recommendation to sign the National Movement of Unite Against Book Bans pledge.

OLD BUSINESS

Personnel committee - report

As part of his evaluation, C. Wijeyesinghe said G. Kirkpatrick will receive a summary of the board's perspective shortly. He will provide his own assessment followed by an executive discussion in January.

Other old business

There was no other old business at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:12pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president