

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday June 12, 2023

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella, virtual
Mark Kissinger
Harmeet Narang
Sarah Patterson
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Jennifer Crawford, confidential secretary
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Phil Berardi, head of Circulation and Technical Services
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Chris O'Brien, CSEA Local 6015 president
Brooke Williams, Ashley McGraw Architects, virtual
Susanne Angarano, Ashley McGraw Architects, virtual
DeAnna Hine, Ashley McGraw Architects, virtual
Natalie Redmore, Ashley McGraw Architects, virtual
Elbert Eller, Ashley McGraw Architects, virtual

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

ASHLEY MCGRAW ARCHITECTS – SCHEMATIC DESIGN UPDATE

S. Angarano presented the latest schematic designs. She told the board that a cost estimator is currently reviewing the design, and those estimates should be complete in a couple of weeks. She asked board members if they would be available for a collaborative session once those numbers come in. The board agreed to look into getting together before the July 10 board meeting.

The latest designs go into a little bit more detail into how that staff and community spaces fit together, both inside and outside the library. S. Angarano asked board members to consider how big they wanted the large meeting space in the community room and in what possible configuration. The board was in agreement that a 350-400 person space was more than needed, and a room that fits 250 people would be more than adequate.

H. Narang asked if the designs included plans to move the boiler and transformer. S. Angarano said they do.

M. Walsh asked where the board room space would be. S. Angarano said that it would most likely be in one of the adjustable community room spaces that will be adaptable to many uses.

L. Scoons asked if story times would take place in the community spaces. G. Kirkpatrick said that it would depend on the size of the program. An enclosed children's craft area could accommodate smaller programs.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if there would be furniture in the children's play space. G. Kirkpatrick said there is already demand for a place for parents and children to meet for playdates because there are not a lot of places in the community where that can happen other than at parks. S. Patterson said she likes that the stacks in the schematic are away from the play area so there is room for both browsing and playing. She noted that the configuration works well at Guilderland Public Library.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the designs included the removal of the mezzanine area. S. Angarano said the cost estimates would include its removal.

M. Walsh asked if storage space would be adequate. S. Angarano said the architects are still working on maximizing that space.

L. Scoons said it appeared the number of stacks had not increased in the design and may have actually decreased. She noted that the library is not interested in using shelves that are too low or too high to hold books. G. Kirkpatrick said the library has just completed a shelf audit and will be comparing those numbers in the near future. He noted that there may be some hard decisions to make.

S. Angarano presented an outdoor option that positions the pavilion closer to the building. The board agreed to discuss it further during their next work session.

G. Kirkpatrick asked S. Angarano to explain what a geotechnical review is. She said it consists of boring for soil samples on the property to ensure that the site can support any potential construction.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

C. O'Brien, CSEA Local 6015 president, spoke to the board regarding the tentative agreement regarding the union contract. He said the union voted to approve it unanimously, and he has heard from a number of members who were very supportive of the deal.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 8 May 2023 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:

- The library is very happy with the interest earnings from investments this year. S. Whiting said some of that money has been reinvested as the library tries to take advantage of interest rates as much as possible.
- C. Wijeyesinghe asked to clarify a couple of items on the bill schedule.
- M. Walsh noted that the library will make approximately \$115,000 in interest income for the year. S. Whiting said that if these rates hold, the library could potentially earn another \$100,000 next year, but that it is a hard number to budget for because of all the unpredictable market factors.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 May 2023 (Checks disbursed in May 2023 based on pre-approval \$41,598.68; Checks disbursed in May 2023 relating to payroll \$203,721.19; Checks being submitted for approval \$112,000.12; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$57,002.15; Total: \$414,322.14).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said he is seeking to backfill two existing positions, as well as reclassify a previously approved part-time Librarian position to part-time Library Assistant to help with hiring options by gaining access to a larger candidate pool. He is also seeking a promotion for the department head in circulation services to assistant director. C. Wijeyesinghe said the request had been reviewed by the personnel committee and there may be a more significant reorganization in the future.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted on the following actions:

- Library Assistant, part-time, permanent, 16 hours/week, \$18.73/hour or per contract
- Reclassification of Librarian 1, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$28.41/hour to Library Assistant, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$18.73/hour or per contract
- Library Page, part-time, permanent, 12.8 hours/week, \$14.20/hour
- Promotion from Department Head to Assistant Director, full-time permanent, \$90,851/annual
- 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:

- The internal filters that had been purchased during the pandemic were redeployed throughout the building to help mitigate the smoke and particulates from the Canadian wildfires. Between that and the HVAC MERV filters, the air quality in the library remained high.
- The library took part in the Memorial Day Parade and the Pride Parade. Some new items like beachballs were handed out this year and proved very popular.
- The Friends of the Library raised close to \$3,500 at the spring book sale. L. Scoons asked if the Friends were going to accept book donations at some point. G. Kirkpatrick said there is a lot of interest from people who would like to donate as well as buy. He noted that some

libraries provide dedicated space for the service and it might be something to think about as they review the design schematics. M. Kissinger said another question would be how involved the library would be in the process. G. Kirkpatrick said that the Friends continues to grow its number of active volunteers.

- Outreach numbers have been off the charts recently. Circulation continues to increase, but slower. Door count has been really high. G. Kirkpatrick said he was excited for a “normal” Summer Reading season.

UHLS BOARD UPDATE

L. Scoons said the UHLS annual meeting would be held Wednesday.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating committee

M. Kissinger said he was looking for volunteers for the nominating committee. S. Patters asked what the job entailed. M. Kissinger said the committee was responsible for putting together a slate of officers after reviewing interest in those positions. S. Patterson and C. Brancatella agreed to serve on the nominating committee.

Collective bargaining agreement

The board reviewed the tentative agreement with the union. G. Kirkpatrick said it was a five-year agreement, which would potentially keep the board from having to enter into negotiations during a building project. The contract also included a COLA schedule with a 5% increase in the first year, decreasing after. It will bring part-time people up to 100% of the hourly wage for their position over the next two years, and add the position of confidential secretary to the list of exempt employees. Health care contributions would also increase for families and employee plus children by the end of the contract period. Bereavement leave options were also clarified in the new contract. C. Brancatella said she was very happy with the outcome of the negotiations and believes it achieved the library’s goals regarding recruitment and fairness. She thanked the library and the union for being good negotiating partners.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously voted to accept the terms outlined in the collective bargaining agreement between the library and the Civil Service Employees Association to cover the next five years.

M/C salaries

G. Kirkpatrick said that the board is required to approve the M/C salaries every year. He said that M/C staff have historically received the same terms as negotiated by the contract.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously approved the M/C salaries for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked G. Kirkpatrick to gauge if the M/C staff would be interested in negotiating their own individual terms.

Internet policy – first read

G. Kirkpatrick said the policy draft presented was a major rewrite with input from the library attorney. It includes more modern terminology and expands on what is considered confidential records.

Mini-golf Saturday, August 29, restriction of normal library services

The end of Summer Reading celebration will take place during regular hours on a Saturday. G. Kirkpatrick said that some access will be limited, but staff would be available to check out materials and grab requests if a patron is not able to access an area.

Udemy online learning database invoice

G. Kirkpatrick said the library was proposing a yearlong trial of the Udemy database that features skill share videos curated by Gale. He said the library would evaluate usage over the year to see if it something they might renew. M. Kissinger noted that he had recently been asked by two individuals about it.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons and SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to approve an annual subscription to Gale Presents: Udemy, an on-demand skills-learning database in the amount of \$6,500.

Geotechnical investigation proposal

G. Kirkpatrick said the library's architects have proposed that the library conduct a geotechnical investigation of the site to make sure it is suitable for any additional construction. He said it had been mentioned before in previous discussions about additions and would prevent any unwanted surprises before disturbing the ground.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson and SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted to accept the proposal from Kenney Geotechnical Engineering Services starting at \$10,750 to perform geotechnical investigation services to evaluate the site for suitability of a potential building addition.

Other new business

There was no other new business at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Plaza entry –update

The shared governmental agreement for paving services between the town and the library has been approved, but all parties are still waiting for a cost to present to board. The goal is to be able to remove the plaza bricks and pave over the walkway sometime this summer. C. Wijeyesinghe said the library should be proactive communicating about the paving project, as well as the geotechnical investigation.

Policy Committee update

- Library Card Policy – second read

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously adopted the proposed updates to the library's Library Card Policy.

- Patron Conduct Policy – second read

C. Wijeyesinghe noted a small reformatting revision.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously adopted the proposed updates to the library’s Patron Conduct Policy.

Notary service – update

G. Kirkpatrick said that he is recommending the library discontinue offering notary services. He said the potential legal ramifications and complexity of offering the service became apparent following the Upper Hudson notary training. M. Walsh said she would be sad to see the service go. C. Wijeyesinghe suggested that the library communicate this change with the public and provide a brochure of other notary options in the area.

Other old business

C. Wijeyesinghe said she and G. Kirkpatrick would be meeting soon to discuss the parameters of the library’s gifts and donations policy in regards to room naming rights.

M. Kissinger asked when the library would be bringing any building plans to the public. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is still a schematic design. When the board has accepted a design and a price tag would be the time to start selling it to the public. L. Scoons noted that the board discussions about a potential project have been very public, and G. Kirkpatrick said he has been getting feedback whenever it is publicized. C. Wijeyesinghe said she was surprised more members of the public haven’t weighed in. J. Crawford has been compiling a file of all instances of public communication about the project.

FUTURE BUSINESS

C. Wijeyesinghe told the board that she would be checking the timeframe for G. Kirkpatrick’s evaluation process and would report back at the next meeting. She said she was looking for someone to help or shadow her during the process.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

H. Narang said he would be stepping down from the Board following the meeting. He said it has been a wonderful experience. He thanked the Board, staff and G. Kirkpatrick for his leadership.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:38pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president