

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Monday December 9, 2019

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella  
Mark Kissinger  
Harmeet Narang  
Mary Redmond  
Lisa Scoons  
Brian Sweeney  
Michelle Walsh  
Robert Khalife, treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk  
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

PRESENTATION BY LONG RANGE PLAN CONSULTANT

P. Mays was unavailable for the planned presentation. The board discussed rescheduling, and B. Sweeney noted that P. Mays would be meeting with the Long Range Planning committee the coming Friday, Dec. 13. While board members were originally in favor of rescheduling the presentation for the January board meeting, during a later discussion about committees, they decided to forgo that presentation in the interest of time and planning.

G. Kirkpatrick gave a brief overview of the process so far, and noted that a site visit was conducted to evaluate the building envelope. He said there were some issue with the masonry veneer noted, but that the building was deemed in good overall condition. He noted the We Heard You meeting is scheduled for Jan. 8, and that stakeholder interviews have been rescheduled for Dec. 13. Field trips to other libraries that P. Mays has worked with have been discussed but not scheduled. P. Mays will begin prioritizing concepts in January, with the planning phase to take place the following months.

M. Redmond expressed surprise that an engineer visit to evaluate the mechanical and electrical aspects of the building had not yet taken place. She expressed concern that delays might push the completion of the process further down the road.

The board discussed the level of communication received during the Long Range Planning process so far. B. Sweeney asked the board if it was something they would like the committee to address with P. Mays at the Friday meeting. Overall, the board agreed that they would like more frequent communication from P. Mays. Suggestions included FaceTiming, conference calls, or sharing of bullet point updates at regular intervals. The board also discussed whether it would be helpful to pursue having B. Sweeney as a second point of contact. L. Scoons said she was surprised to see P. Mays present information at Staff Development Day that had not yet been shared with the board. G. Kirkpatrick said he would make the PowerPoint from Staff Development Day available to board members. He said the pie charts represented feedback from staff and the public, and most noteworthy was how much they aligned.

## MINUTES

Minutes of the 12 November 2019 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by C. Brancatella.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

R. Khalife presented the financial report. He noted nothing unusual in disbursements or receipts for the month.

M. Redmond asked why the interest appears in different locations in the financial statement. R. Khalife noted there are two interest-earning accounts – a money market account and an operating account. M. Redmond suggested there might be a simpler way to present the information, and it is something the Finance Committee should look at as they move forward with updating how the report is presented. H. Narang said he would like to see a representation of the categories of checks being cut, highlighting what the library pays for contract services, materials etc. M. Redmond said she would be interested in a tabular representation of how much is spent with individual vendors over a 6-month period.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 November 2019 (Manual Disbursements for November \$321,572.45; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for December \$79,120.67; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for November \$194,706.36; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for October \$0.00; Total: \$595,399.48).

## BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION REPORT

The board noted Bank Reconciliations for November 1-30, 2019.

## MANUAL INVOICES

None

## RESOLUTIONS

None

## PERSONNEL REPORT

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by B. Sweeney, the board unanimously approved a new hire for the following vacancies, pending Civil Service approval:

- Library Page, 11.67 hours/week, part-time permanent, \$11.10/hour

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick noted that there were a number of NYLA conference reports in the December packet, as well as some continuing education write-ups, and a report from K. Robert's attendance at the Library Marketing and Communication Conference.
- The Studio Makerspace has been especially popular with podcasters. L. Scoons asked if there should be a library podcast. G. Kirkpatrick said that it can be done, but noted that there are some time restraints. He noted that the video presenter at the Library Marketing conference spends a third of her job creating and processing 2-3 videos a week, so it is about finding a balance. H. Narang asked if that might be something the library could ask a page could do. G. Kirkpatrick said that there is a limit to what the library can ask pages to do as defined by Civil Service.
- The craft swap and crafting tools at the library have been a huge hit with the public.
- L. Scoons asked how the library is tracking Kanopy use. G. Kirkpatrick said that the number of views is the closest thing to represent circulation, even though views don't necessarily translate to people watching more than a minute. He noted that this first year with Kanopy, the library is paying a flat fee, but that is something to think about for a pay-per-use model. C. Stollar Peters also noted that users only get a certain number of credits per month, so it encourages them to avoid wasting those opportunities. G. Kirkpatrick said that while Upper Hudson libraries tend to be leery of a pay-per-use model, many other libraries across the country have moved in that direction.
- H. Narang said it appears circulation of the DVD collection remains robust. G. Kirkpatrick said there is still demand for the physical format because some needs are not being met by all the streaming services out there.
- Board members asked if there was some way to have the library closing time populate on the home page. K. Roberts said that it was not possible in its current configuration, but the web team can research if there is some type of widget or coding to accomplish that. L. Scoons said that some people at the brainstorming meeting had issues with the website. G. Kirkpatrick said that the library is in the process of migrating its server-based functions to the cloud, with Wordpress to be next. He also said there was a committee looking at new calendar software that would hopefully bring some improvements there.
- M. Walsh said she enjoyed attending NYLA. She said she particularly impressed with the organization and effectiveness of C. Brenner's presentation. She said that in her feedback form, she noted a desire for more programs geared toward trustees.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board unanimously voted to accept the director's report.

## UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the board will vote a little later on the UHLAN agreement reached for the coming year. The Upper Hudson board will continue to evaluate how to equitably apply the fees to all the libraries in the system. G. Kirkpatrick said that as a huge net borrower, there are no substantive changes in fees for Bethlehem.

## NEW BUSINESS

### *UHLS The Fine Free Experience program*

G. Kirkpatrick said he had earlier shared some of the information received at this program, noting the impact of going fine free at some libraries in the area, including Albany Public. He said one of the biggest issues is the lack of impact on whether or not items were returned, and in fact some of Albany's numbers indicate fewer items were being categorized as lost, possibly because people sometimes will not return items if they are worried about a fine.

G. Kirkpatrick said the director of Albany Public shared two key points: Libraries are already adjusting fine policy in individual cases, which means bias is involved, and if the goal is to use fines to teach financial responsibility, then the numbers seem to indicate it is not effective. C. Brancatella said that maybe the goal of fines is more about teaching community responsibility. G. Kirkpatrick said that the fear of fines is encouraging some people in the community to not use the library.

The board discussed what currently happens if a Bethlehem item is checked out by someone at a fine-free library. They talked about how much revenue would be lost if the library went fine free. C. Brancatella asked if there was a way to go fine free for children. The board agreed to table the discussion until they had more time to discuss it in detail. H. Narang asked if the board could get numbers for how much is brought in through fines once the cost for lost materials was taken into account.

### *2020 flex spending and deductible invoice*

The board reviewed an invoice from Jaeger and Flynn representing flex spending and prefunded employer contributions to the high deductible health care plan. Board members asked what happened to the flex account if an employee were to leave the library before the end of the calendar year. G. Kirkpatrick noted that if the full amount has already been used, the library is on the hook for the remainder.

On a MOTION by B. Sweeney with a second by L. Scoons, the board unanimously authorized payment to Jaeger and Flynn of \$10,595.18 for the administration of the library's flex spending benefit.

### *Other new business*

The was no other new business at this time.

## OLD BUSINESS

### *Contract negotiation team*

The board noted that C. Brancatella and L. Scoons are the trustee liaisons in contract negotiations.

### *Long-range plan steering committee – status report*

This was discussed earlier.

### *HVAC update*

#### *HVAC project conclusion*

G. Kirkpatrick said the library was getting closer to closing out the project, and he is

working with Dan Coughlin at DASNY to finalize a timeline. Temperatures are still being monitored, and there is an issue with the air handler having to be reset manually by accessing it on the roof, which the library would like addressed. He said the library is still evaluating the comfort level in the Children's Place, but there has been some overall improvement since the work was completed in November. G. Kirkpatrick said he would like to provide advanced training for K. Coffey to learn as much as he can about the new system so he can manage some of it in-house.

### *UHLAN*

On a MOTION by L. Scoons and a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved a one-year extension to the UHLAN contract at a cost of \$48,386 for 2020, a 2 percent increase over the previous year.

M. Redmond said that she wanted to thank M. Walsh for coordinating dessert for the Staff Development Day luncheon. She also said that she would like to resume monthly Finance Committee meetings by early January.

### *Board committees*

B. Sweeney said that he asked for this item to be put on the agenda because of a concern that the extended committee structure put in place a couple of months ago may not actually be working to reduce the time spent discussing things in the regular meetings. He said the hope was that the committees would help the board work more efficiently, but that the meetings have not gotten any shorter.

C. Brancatella said she believes there just aren't enough board members to divide the work, and that it might be time to consider adding to that number.

M. Redmond suggested that this is a particularly busy time for the board with the Long Range Planning process moving full steam ahead, and that it would be worthwhile to give the committee structure a little more time to be fully evaluated.

G. Kirkpatrick said some boards of similar-sized libraries will meet once a month only but stay as long as needed to discuss agenda items, while others will rely on the director's recommendations to provide the needed guidance.

C. Brancatella said board members could maybe rely more on the reports from the committees without going into a full board discussion that expands the meetings. M. Redmond agreed and said that if board members could also spend more time reviewing the packet before the meetings, many of the presentations would be shortened or eliminated. The board agreed to try this approach starting in January.

The board also suggested adding time stamps to the agenda beginning in January to keep things moving along with the understanding that if a topic needs more time, they will not necessarily cut it off because of the time stamp.

### *Other old business*

There was no old business discussed.

## FUTURE BUSINESS

### *Background checks*

No further discussion at this time.

### *Plaza feasibility*

No further discussion at this time.

### *Policy updates/schedule*

No further discussion at this time.

### *Resource sharing*

No further discussion at this time.

### *Fines and fees*

No further discussion at this time.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

## ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by H. Narang with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:56pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
M. Redmond, board president