

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING (VIRTUAL)
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY
July 13, 2020

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Catherine Stollar Peters, assistant director
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator

*All present via Zoom broadcast live on YouTube and the library website.

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

OATHS OF OFFICE

M. Redmond virtually administered the oaths of office to L. Scoons and C. Wijeyesinghe.

ETHICS STATEMENTS

Board members were instructed to print out and sign the annual ethics statements to be filed in the public record.

BOARD OFFICER ELECTION

M. Walsh presented nominating committee's recommended slate of officers

The following slate of officers was proposed for 2020-21:

- President: M. Kissinger
- Vice President: M. Walsh
- Secretary: C. Brancatella
- UHLS representative: L. Scoons

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously accepted the slate as presented.

ANNUAL AUTHORIZATIONS

M. Kissinger thanked M. Redmond for her years of service as board president and said he looks forward to filling those footsteps.

The board reviewed the authorizations draft. G. Kirkpatrick noted that there are a lot more banks included than in years past, having been added to the list in the middle of the last fiscal year. M. Redmond asked if the board might want to consider adding an architect or engineer to the list, as the library may have a need for those services in the future and it might simplify the process. L. Scoons noted that the board treasurer was not listed as bonded in the draft. T. Choppy said she believed that was an addition made a few months prior. G. Kirkpatrick said he would confirm the bonding of the treasurer and bring it back to the board in August. M. Kissinger asked G. Kirkpatrick if he could also look into Mary's suggestions.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved board authorizations for 2020-21 as presented.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public participation comments submitted at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 8 June 2020 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by L. Scoons.

FINANCIAL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said the library ended the fiscal year in good shape and under budget, even with the additional expenses incurred because of the nature of the current pandemic. The library was slightly underspent on salaries because some positions have remained unfilled. Although there was an uptick in spending on digital materials during the pandemic, that was mostly offset by a decrease in new physical materials. G. Kirkpatrick said the library will be monitoring whether the demand for digital materials will decrease as more physical items are available or if both items will continue to see high demand and how to balance that spending.

M. Kissinger noted that in the discussion about "getting back to normal," the timing of that is very much up in the air. The board will look at the data from month to month, and the decision about schools reopening is going to have a big impact on what goes on with the library.

The board discussed the library's three main digital collections: Overdrive, Kanopy and Hoopla.

Overdrive is the biggest collection in terms of size, checkouts and spending. It is a shared collection with the Upper Hudson Library System, although the library purchases additional copies of items that, while shared, will go to fulfill Bethlehem holds first. Kanopy is a Bethlehem-only service with some checkout limits. Hoopla was a service purchased by the libraries in the system to help meet a need during library closures. It has a limit on the number of checkouts allowed per month, and the consortium has agreed to fund it through September. Bethlehem patrons are by far the biggest users of this service, and the board will have to decide whether to continue funding it for BPL patrons once the Upper Hudson agreement expires. C. Wijeyesinghe said she appreciated the background information on those service and asked if there would be additional Hoopla usage stats to look at in August when the board would begin discussing how they would like to move forward.

M. Kissinger asked for a short summary of the Storch Technology Fund. G. Kirkpatrick said it is a yearly gift from a local family meant to go toward purchasing public-facing technology. He noted that there hasn't been much spent from the fund over the past year and a half because the biggest recent public technology project was the studio makerspace, which was funded by cable franchise fees.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by H. Narang, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 June 2020.

Following the personnel discussion, M. Redmond said she thought the approval of the financial report usually included specific language about the disbursements.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond and a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the disbursements summarized on page 13 of the board packet (Manual Disbursements \$63,733.04; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries for June \$181,876.75; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable for July \$89,619.82; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks for June \$0.00.)

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said the library was moving forward to fill the board treasurer and technology assistant positions. The board discussed whether they felt it was time to start looking to fill the other open positions.

M. Kissinger asked where there was the greatest need. G. Kirkpatrick said the senior library clerk manages and schedules the pages, which is becoming more necessary as staff returns to working at the library. He added that the full-time librarian position is useful because librarians are the "ultimate switch hitters" at the library and can cover a range of job descriptions. H. Narang said he would be nervous to fill any positions until the state of the economy and the effect it could have on future budgets is better known. M. Walsh asked if staffing levels feel sufficient. G. Kirkpatrick said that moving from three work teams to two has helped, but that still puts some limits on operating hours.

Following the discussion, G. Kirkpatrick said he would continue to move forward with the board treasurer and technology assistant positions, but make no moves on the other open positions at this time.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick said he was very pleased with how curbside pickup is working and that the library is able to do it without requiring appointments. He noted that there are already a number of repeat customers and that feedback has been positive. He said that at a recent Director's Association meeting, most agreed that curbside pickup can be managed safely for as long as needed.
- The process designed for accepting returns is working well. M. Walsh asked if the items being returned are pre-COVID checkouts or things that have been recently checked out. G. Kirkpatrick said that while the library is waiving fines through the beginning of August, there are approximately 11,000 items still checked out from pre-COVID times that are going to start showing a due date, which could have an impact on returns.
- Book bundle requests will be launching soon. It allows people to get some readers advisory help from librarians who will pull together some selections based on information about favorite genres and authors. This could help fill a need for children's books, which tend to be less title focused.
- M. Walsh asked if the library was still accepting quarantine memories submissions. G. Kirkpatrick said that it was ongoing and had gotten some good press recently.
- H. Narang asked if there were plans to make curbside service more manageable if it becomes a longer term service and stretches into the cooler months. G. Kirkpatrick said the library has a tent ordered for the pop-up library, which may be a useful model for future curbside needs. Tents could potentially have multiple uses like the Friends' book sale or outdoor programming.
- Curbside stats show that the numbers seem to be stabilizing, with a rush of customers from 1-2 p.m.
- Circulation numbers are starting to come back, with some interesting trends. Adult fiction numbers are fairly stable because those titles lend themselves well to the digital platforms. Non fiction is a more browsable collection, so it is taking a big hit, along with the children's collection. Book bundles will hopefully address some of that, as well as the pop-up library, which will be located on the plaza.

UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM REPORT

L. Scoons said the services committee met to put criteria together based on legislation that allows up to a 90 percent building grant award. She said the adult and youth awards have been selected but not announced. There may be a Facebook event to reveal the winners.

NEW BUSINESS

CSEA contract memo of agreement

Instead of full contract negotiations this year, CSEA has agreed to a one-year extension of the existing contract with a COLA of 1 percent for this fiscal year. The goal is to restart negotiations when everyone knows more about what the economy looks like.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella and a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously agreed to the extension of the current contract for one year with a salary schedule increase of 1% effective July 1, 2020 as outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement between the library and the bargaining unit.

M/C salaries 2020-21

The proposal for M/C salaries are in line with the bargaining unit contract, but must be approved separately.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond and a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the management confidential salaries, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

OPEB semiannual valuations BPAS proposal

G. Kirkpatrick presented the contract for actuarial services that account for the value of other post-employment benefits. This is a requirement for the library's annual audit.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond and a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approved the contract with BPAS to provide actuarial services for the following two years in the amount of \$6,000 for the full accounting the first year and \$1,500 for an update the following year.

MERV filters for HVAC

G. Kirkpatrick said a contract has been signed to purchase MERV 13 filters for the HVAC system. These filters exceed the governor's requirement for shopping malls. Other air filtration systems were looked into, but they were either incompatible with the current system or expensive and difficult to install and would be more of a long-range planning discussion. G. Kirkpatrick said the MERV 13 filters may take some time to arrive. M. Redmond asked if that would be a factor in reopening. G. Kirkpatrick said it is something to take into consideration.

Reopening phase report and discussion

G. Kirkpatrick said that the library would be closely following the guidelines for reopening schools, set to be finalized in August. These metrics will be useful in guiding how the library will move forward. The library continues to look at ways to meet the needs of those most affected by the building's closure and has procured three dozen laptops, which will be in circulation soon to address digital disparity in the community. M. Kissinger asked what the board could do to assist in reopening. G. Kirkpatrick said to keep an ear out for community feedback. L. Scoons asked if the pop-up library would be at the farmer's market. G. Kirkpatrick said that it was initially just food vendors allowed, but he would circle back and see if that has changed.

Holidays and closings

G. Kirkpatrick presented the draft of 2021 holidays and closings, but told the board that it is just a framework for discussion. M. Kissinger said he would like to include Juneteenth on the draft as a placeholder for further discussion at a future meeting.

Other new business

No other new business at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Long range plan steering committee

H. Narang said architects Paul Mays and Lisa Hayes would be attending the July 15 committee meeting, and the regular board meeting in August. M. Walsh asked if the evaluation of the Borthwick property has been completed. G. Kirkpatrick said the walkthrough has taken place, but he has not seen the official write-up. He and H. Narang have requested that information before the July 15 meeting.

Other old business

The board agreed to discuss committee memberships at the August meeting. K. Roberts said she would forward a list of the current committees so there is a baseline to review.

FUTURE BUSINESS

Background checks

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if there was a state mandate to conduct background checks. G. Kirkpatrick said there wasn't, but the board started thinking about it following the hiring of the last board treasurer, which was the first time the library had done a background check.

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.

C. Brancatella said she would not be at the August meeting because that was her baby's due date. C. Wijeyesinghe thanked the board for their welcome and patience as she gets up to speed. M. Kissinger said the library staff has been doing great work and he has heard nothing but positive comments from the community.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Redmond, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:52pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president