

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (VIRTUAL)
Monday January 10, 2022

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger
Harmeet Narang
Mary Redmond
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

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

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

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 5:55pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 13 December 2021 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- C. Wijeyesinghe asked for clarification about the payments made to retired employees reflected in the financial report. G. Kirkpatrick said that in a previous contract, the library agreed to reimburse retired employees through a certain date for their Medicare Part B premiums. Those individuals are reimbursed quarterly. One individual had just recently been located and made whole this quarter for missed reimbursements. T. Choppy noted that there are no more than six individuals still receiving this benefit.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 December 2021 (Manual Disbursements \$29,031.60; Cash Disbursements/Accounts Payable \$77,134.75; Trust & Agency Disbursements/Salaries \$185,849.29; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$292,015.64).

Tree service payment

G. Kirkpatrick said that the tree service payment had already been authorized by the board, but there had been a lag of time between that authorization and when the work was done so he wanted to give the board notice that the off-cycle payment would appear in the February board packet.

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board reviewed the personnel report. The library was seeking authorization to fill a six-hour page position. M. Redmond asked if all the pages were paid at the same rate. T. McShane said that there was a minimum wage increase at the end of the year that wasn't reflected in the "previously approved to fill" part of the personnel chart.

G. Kirkpatrick said that Civil Service had notified the library that the Librarian II list has finally been certified and he would be looking to fill that position shortly. The board discussed the hiring process.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved new hires for the following vacancy:

- Library Page, part-time, permanent, 6 hours/week, \$13.20/hour

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick said there have been some questions from public groups about how much notice they might get if the library has to cancel the use of public spaces for meetings. He has told them he would give them as much notice as possible, but it could still be last-minute.
- The library recently partnered with the town Emergency Management Office to distribute masks and COVID test kits. The most recent test kit handout was quite busy and resulted in some traffic snarls. The town would most likely handle the next giveaway at an area where traffic can be better controlled, but if the demand becomes a little less robust, the library could continue to be a distribution point. Partnerships like these have further established the positive relationship between the library and the town. G. Kirkpatrick thanked the staff and M. Kissinger for volunteering to help with the handout.
- Initial tree removal has been completed, but there is still some branch work that will require the use of a crane. That work has already been bid out.
- G. Kirkpatrick said that librarians have still been busy planning programs, and some of the new librarians have hosted some technology-focused events.
- Automatic renewals have been authorized, but implementation is still forthcoming. C. Wijeyesinghe asked how many renewals are allowed. G. Kirkpatrick said it is generally two, but some items, like museum passes, cannot be renewed. An item will also not be renewed if there is another request for it. The board discussed what would happen to items borrowed and due before implementation. M. Redmond suggested that it not be publicized until after it was in place to avoid confusion.

- G. Kirkpatrick noted the racial equity training menu from Upper Hudson and said it would meet and exceed the 2022 trustee training requirement. M. Walsh noted that the racial equity training has six courses and while it is one of the options available for training, it is not required. G. Kirkpatrick said it was strongly encouraged by Upper Hudson, and M. Kissinger noted that the trustees did not have to complete the training at the same time.
- Circulation continues to do well and is moving closer to what would be expected in a non-pandemic year. G. Kirkpatrick said circulation is usually a pretty good index for how the library is used. H. Narang asked if the 2019 stats could be included in the future for a pre-pandemic comparison.
- The board discussed the scatter plot chart. C. Stollar Peters said it represents physical checkouts and represents the different phases of service during the pandemic.
- L. Scoons asked whether curbside pickup use might have seen an uptick with the colder weather. G. Kirkpatrick said that there has been a recent increase, but it is unclear if it is weather or COVID concerns driving it.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons said the board did not meet in December and haven't discussed the training menu but will likely do so at the upcoming meeting. She noted that the other topic of discussion will likely be the building itself, which recently lost two of its tenants, which has been a hit to the budget.

NEW BUSINESS

Independent auditor authorization

S. Whiting asked the board to authorize the use of Marvin and Co. for the library's fiscal year-end audit. She said the earlier timing works better because if they waited until June or July, the firm would have already started work on the audit.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Redmond, the board unanimously authorized the use of Marvin and Co. to perform the audit for the library's 2021-22 fiscal year.

COVID-19 response/Town Emergency Management partnership

Discussed earlier with the Director's report. Additional items:

- M. Walsh thanked library staff for coordinating with the town to distribute the masks and tests.
- M. Redmond said that the feedback on Nextdoor has been positive.
- G. Kirkpatrick said that distributing materials is something the library does well, so it was nice to have an opportunity to lend out expertise to the process.

Annual UHLS e-book contribution

G. Kirkpatrick said the annual contribution to e-book purchases is automatic but above the authorization amount, so he was asking for board approval. He noted that the money is used to repurchase e-books that have reached the end of their initial lifespan but are still popular based on the number of checkouts. He said contribution rates are determined by usage divided among all of the libraries in the system. State money pays for the staff time to monitor and purchase those materials.

M. Walsh asked if the library is spending the same amount in materials it would have before e-books were a thing. G. Kirkpatrick said the ultimate goal is to spend around 15% of the budget on combined digital and physical materials, and the library is inching closer to that.

On a MOTION by M. Redmond with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved payment of the UHLS invoice for the library's contribution to e-book purchasing in the amount of \$14,704.22.

OLD BUSINESS

Long range plan

G. Kirkpatrick said a virtual meeting was scheduled for Jan. 20 at 6 p.m. He noted that the plan is still in draft form and would come out of the committee and go before the full board for approval. He said he would send out the latest copy of the draft for everyone on the board to review.

Building committee/process update

G. Kirkpatrick said he has e-mails out to some architectural firms as he works to schedule interviews with them and the building committee regarding design work. He noted that he was still working to schedule an informal meeting about bonding options and how they work.

M. Redmond said she wanted to stress for the public record that the library does not yet have a project or an idea of what it might cost, and that is why the work is being sent to an architect in order to get a design and an estimate. She noted that the board was still gathering facts and information before presenting anything concrete.

Other old business

C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the ad hoc fines committee would be continuing their discussion. G. Kirkpatrick said he would work on finding some dates where everyone would be able to meet.

FUTURE BUSINESS

C. Wijeyesinghe asked what the timeline was for developing the library's budget. S. Whiting said she was working on a draft and would have it ready to review for the finance committee and the board at the February meeting. The board will have the opportunity to pass it at the February or March meeting in order to meet the school district deadline. She asked if there were any discussions to be had over staffing needs at the library before the budget is finalized and asked if there should be a meeting with the personnel committee before the next board meeting. G. Kirkpatrick said he would pull something together before the next board meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 6:49pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president