

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

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED:

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

None at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 8 August 2022 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- M. Walsh and C. Wijeyesinghe asked how the annual audit was going and what the next steps were. S. Whiting said the team would be back the week of September 26 to continue gathering information. After that, there would be internal reviews over the course of a couple of weeks, after which, S. Whiting would receive a draft financial statement to review before the finance committee meets to discuss it. The auditors will then make a full presentation to the board at the November meeting.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 August 2022 (Checks disbursed in August 2022 based on pre-approval \$40,484.80; Checks disbursed in August 2022 relating to payroll \$191,505.99; Checks being submitted for approval \$74,487.86; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$306,778.65).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick requested permission to backfill two vacant positions. M. Kissinger asked for an update on the hiring of a Librarian III. G. Kirkpatrick said he doesn't have anything official to report, but the process is moving forward.

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

- Library page, part-time, permanent, 12.8 hours/week, \$13.20/hour
- Librarian I, full-time, permanent, 35 hours/week, \$55,529/annual or per contract

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The library received LED lighting upgrade quotes while looking into the possibility of getting an Upper Hudson grant to help cover the costs. Any project over \$10,000 would require lengthy SED approval, so it would not be feasible for the grant timeline, but G. Kirkpatrick said it is a project the library should consider either as a standalone or as part of any potential building plan.
- A recent climate change program was well-received by those who attended, with one patron wishing more people had been there. The library will continue to hold similar green and sustainability programs as part of the long-range plan goals.
- Staffing challenges have made it difficult to attend many outreach events, but the library recently took part in National Night Out and the Farmers Market.
- Thursdays in the Park enjoyed another successful year of collaboration between the town and the library, as well as their Friends groups. The public likes to see all of these groups working together.
- Baker and Taylor experienced a major cyber attack, which set orders back a couple of weeks. They are finally back online, and it appears the library's ordering data has been preserved. Some items were ordered from Barnes and Noble in the interim.
- Curbside pickup has dropped to about 7% of total transactions. M. Walsh asked if curbside service was here to stay. G. Kirkpatrick said that part of the reason for the drop is people are more comfortable coming into the library, but he suspects there will always be a core number of people who prefer curbside. He said it continues to be an important service and something to be considered as the library looks at building needs. The board asked if staff found the service onerous. G. Kirkpatrick said it was relatively easy in the warmer months, but that changes when it is cold and icy. C. Wijeyesinghe said it would be interesting to see if curbside numbers go back up when it is cold and snowy out. M. Kissinger asked if it was something that could be offered on only specific days.
- G. Kirkpatrick noted that the library was doing a big push for Books to People, a home delivery service.
- There has been an increased demand for non-academic exam proctoring, possibly because many other libraries in the area have not brought that service back.

- The library has returned to its pre-pandemic hours, but many others in the area have not, due in large part to staffing shortages.
- There have been increases in program attendance and outreach, and circulation is very close to pre-pandemic numbers. There have also been increases in meeting room and study room use, and there are more students back in the library studying.
- C. Brancatella asked if it was still possible to track library use with economic markers. G. Kirkpatrick said the pandemic threw some of those traditional indicators off kilter but they are starting to normalize.
- L. Scoons said she thinks people might be more willing to trade Friday evening hours for being open on Sundays in the summer.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons said the UHLS board had ended up with more construction money to grant than there were bids. They were able to award \$868,000 with about \$200,000 going back to DLD to be distributed to other libraries in the state. She encouraged fellow board members to think about having an ongoing list of smaller projects moving through the SED process to be able to act quickly when it comes time to apply for construction money.

NEW BUSINESS

McLean Group

The first and second sessions of the board's UHLS-sponsored diversity training through the McLean Group have been scheduled for Thursday, January 19 and 26 at 6 p.m. Board members opted for a third session on Wednesday, February 1. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the facilitators had any preliminary questions about the board's concerns or goals. G. Kirkpatrick said he would reach out to Upper Hudson to find out.

Credit card authorized users

G. Kirkpatrick asked the board to name Lauren Kozilski an authorized credit card user with a purchasing limit of \$2,000. As a team leader in Public Services, L. Kozilski is frequently in charge of purchasing supplies for programs and library events. G. Kirkpatrick said that once a new Librarian III is in place, he will be seeking credit card authorization for that individual.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously voted to make Lauren Kozilski and authorized library credit card user in the amount of \$2,000.

Other new business

There was no other new business at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Board retreat

At a previous meeting, the board had discussed revisiting the possibility of a board retreat. C. Wijeyesinghe said she believes that a team benefits from a regular check in. M. Kissinger said he

agreed with the concept but was mindful of the time commitment required, especially with a discussion with the architects beginning this fall. Tim Burke at Upper Hudson has offered to be a facilitator for libraries. The board discussed an ideal time of year to have that kind of gathering and whether it should be an annual check in. The board agreed to conduct a Doodle poll to see if there were any dates on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday in November that would work for a retreat.

Bylaws

C. Wijeyesinghe said the Policy Committee had made some revisions to the draft based on feedback from the board following the last meeting. M. Kissinger noted that there was a question about the citizenship requirement, and it has since been removed. The draft version has been reviewed by the library's attorney.

The board reviewed the revisions and had an extended discussion about the wording describing the naming of officers. They opted to keep the language broad enough that it would be relevant for future boards with different needs. If there is more than one person nominated for a position, voting would no longer be by secret ballot.

M. Kissinger said that if there is more than one vice president named, the board must be clear before the vote as to which one is responsible for taking over the president's duties if they are unavailable. These decisions would most likely take place with the nominating committee before the annual organizational meeting but can happen at any time through a motion on the floor.

M. Walsh asked if it was necessary to include anything about virtual voting and a quorum. G. Kirkpatrick said that the recent policy that outlines that process should be sufficient.

C. Wijeyesinghe commended the board for their work reviewing and updating the policy. M. Walsh thanked the Policy Committee.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to accept changes to the bylaws as presented with the recommended changes reflected in the final document.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board voted to create a second vice president position for the 2022-23 fiscal year. C. Brancatella, M. Kissinger, H. Narang, S. Patterson, L. Scoons and C. Wijeyesinghe voted in favor. M. Walsh was opposed.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously voted to appoint C. Wijeyesinghe as co vice president, with M. Walsh the vice president in charge of taking over presidential duties in the absence of the board president.

M. Walsh said it is her belief that the board would be better served if it focused on committee work at this time rather than having four officers on a seven-member board. She noted that C. Wijeyesinghe brings a lot of passion to the board and welcomed her to the new position.

C. Wijeyesinghe thanked the board for their confidence in her. She said she feels it will be beneficial having additional hands on deck in what is expected to be a busy year with a building discussion and contract negotiations. She noted her experience on the school board through two bonds and said that it is the board's job to win public support for any building project coming up.

Building committee report/Contract

G. Kirkpatrick presented the board with a contract and addendum from architects Ashley McGraw. He said that both documents had been extensively reviewed by attorneys Nolan Heller Kauffman. Many of the things that were addressed through the addendum set up the next potential design contract. The presented contract is for a quick feasibility study to get to a point where the board decides on a specific scope for the design work. L. Scoons noted that there was no reference to curbside in the contract. G. Kirkpatrick said they were not limited to the five elements listed. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if there would be a presentation to the entire board at some point. M. Kissinger said that it was his expectation there would be. C. Wijeyesinghe said board members would have to decide what they want from the design and how big of a bond they want to put in front of the public. G. Kirkpatrick also said discussions should include how they would like to phase any updates. L. Scoons said that as part of the discussion, the library should be thinking about regularly putting in smaller side projects for Upper Hudson building grants.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously voted to enter into a contract with Ashley McGraw Architects for a feasibility and renovation study in the amount of \$48,990 plus reimbursable expenses.

Personnel committee/Director evaluation process update

C. Wijeyesinghe said that the evaluation timeline is starting, and trustees would be receiving a digital survey in October or November as part of the process. A smaller staff survey will also be going out. The personnel committee will compile a narrative from the information gathered there.

Other old business

There was no other old business at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

C. Wijeyesinghe said the library should reach out to Borthwick Avenue resident Anne Moore to inform her that the library was looking at a building project.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:36pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president