

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday October 17, 2022

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger
Sarah Patterson
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Harmeet Narang
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe

GUESTS: Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Phil Berardi, head of Circulation and Technical Services

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

G. Kirkpatrick said he received an e-mail earlier in the day with high praise for the Erie Canal program offered recently at the library.

MINUTES

L. Scoons noted a wording issue in the draft to be corrected.

Minutes of the 12 September 2022 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:

- S. Whiting said she has received the draft financial statements from the auditors and has begun reviewing them. She said that so far, everything looks good, and she has only some minor wording change requests. She said she hopes to have a final draft ready in the next 10 days, at which point the finance committee can review the draft before sending it out to the full board to look over before the November meeting.
- With the Treasury bill coming due Nov. 3, the finance committee will have to review their options, whether it means rolling the amount into a new T-bill or purchasing more than one. S. Whiting said she wants to be mindful of not tying up too much money.

- S. Patterson asked about the history behind the T-bill investments. S. Whiting said the board had been looking at low-risk opportunities to make more in interest, and Treasury bills are among the investments allowed for libraries. M. Walsh said the board was grateful for S. Whiting bringing this investment opportunity to their attention.
- S. Whiting said that because the library has entered into a contract for a feasibility study, the expected expenses should be allocated from the current operating (A) fund to the capital projects (H) fund so that all building project related expenses can be easily tracked. She recommended transferring \$50,000, which would cover the architect expenses. Any building project related invoices would be paid from the H Fund. If the library were to receive bond money, that would also go into the H Fund. Money remaining in the H Fund after a building project is complete can be transferred back to the general fund. M. Walsh asked if the board needed to make a declaration of project expense. G. Kirkpatrick said that by transferring the money to the H Fund, the board has made that declaration.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously authorized the transfer of \$50,000 from the Current Operating Fund (Fund A) to the Capital Projects Fund (Fund H) to pay for a feasibility study for improvements to the library.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 September 2022 (Checks disbursed in August 2022 based on pre-approval \$88,676.44; Checks disbursed in September 2022 relating to payroll \$189,425.23; Checks being submitted for approval \$85,243.08; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$363,344.75).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick introduced the board to Phil Berardi, head of Circulation and Technical Services. He requested permission to backfill a part-time clerk position and noted that as circulation scales up so will active recruitment for some pre-approved positions.

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

- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$14.45/hour

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The library is working quickly to get a new plowing service lined up as it was learned very recently that the former provider is no longer available.
- Architects were at the library recently for an on-site building assessment. The general feeling was that for a 50-year-old building, the library has held up fairly well. They also looked at the Borthwick property.
- The IT Department is spearheading orientations for the 3D printer. The majority of the people who are signing up just want to learn about it and see how it works and are not booking additional sessions.

- The availability of display space was formally announced, and those spaces are once again fully booked.
- G. Kirkpatrick said there is going to be a major focus on early literacy programs in the fall. He told the board that those programs are currently taking place in the Community Room, which makes it less available to community groups.
- The Friends had a very successful book sale fundraiser, and their bus trip to New York City is already full.
- Large outdoor community events are seeing huge attendance. The library's participation in outreach events has resulted in many positive interactions, and it may be something to consider when talking about allocating staff resources. S. Patterson asked about outreach to the PTA's and PTO's in the area. G. Kirkpatrick said that a librarian is assigned to each of the schools in the district, and since many are new, they are just getting up to speed and setting things up.
- G. Kirkpatrick said he is trying to figure out a way to explain post-pandemic library use patterns, as door counts are substantially lower, but overall circulation has returned to pre-pandemic levels. He said part of the reason for the lower door count may be that there are fewer tutoring sessions taking place at the library. Other reasons might be that there are fewer people attending public meetings or library programs, possibly out of health concerns or just having gotten out of the habit. Board members said it might be a good thing to reach out to parents of younger children to remind them of the early literacy options at the library.
- L. Scoons said the library speaker consortium author talks have been a great resource. She asked if the library could publish the link to the talks so attendees could watch them live without having to register. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is not possible at this time, but he would look into it.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons discussed the proposed contract for UHLAN services and noted that while the library pays a large percentage of the costs, there are also a large number of users from Bethlehem. G. Kirkpatrick said that the library gets value out of the system. M. Walsh said there was a library in the Southern Tier that backed out of its consortium but quickly realized it was a mistake.

NEW BUSINESS

UHLS contract

M. Kissinger noted that increases were capped at no higher than 5% under the contract. S. Peterson said she felt there was no need to postpone voting on something that was an essential service for the library.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved to accept the agreement with UHLAN to provide system services to the library with the amount totaling \$53,345 for 2023.

Meeting room issues

G. Kirkpatrick said there were two larger community groups that were interested in meeting more than once a month. The meeting room policy only lets groups book one room a month in advance, however, if there are spaces available 4 weeks prior, then those groups could use them. He asked the board if they believed that it was an equitable interpretation of the policy. The board agreed it was fair, especially if there are other groups interested in using the space.

Credit card policy

The updated policy included the addition of department heads, as well as some minor edits. S. Whiting said it simplifies the policy by not breaking it down into travel and purchasing credit cards.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to accept the updates made to the library's Credit Card Policy.

Payroll/timekeeping system upgrade

M. Kissinger noted that the system upgrade had been part of the 2022-23 budget. S. Whiting said the library wanted to move forward with the upgrade process in order to have the new software installed and people trained before the next fiscal year. G. Kirkpatrick said the timekeeping system is already a cooperatively bid product. T. Choppy said it will integrate with the library's current accounting software. Both she and S. Whiting said customer support from NERIC was very good.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to purchase through NERIC a new timekeeping/payroll system for the library, along with an extended warranty and associated costs, for the one-time price of \$15,095.

Steering committee name and composition

M. Kissinger said the architect wanted the board to create a steering committee so that decisions could be made between board meetings. He said it was his feeling that all board members should be on the steering committee and they could communicate via e-mail. L. Scoons asked that e-mails related to the building project should indicate in the subject line that they are a high priority. The board settled on Building Project Committee for the name.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson and a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board voted unanimously to create a steering committee made up of all board members to make decisions during the building project planning process. The steering committee is to be called the Building Project Committee and will primarily communicate electronically.

Other new business

There was no other new business at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Building committee

M. Kissinger noted that the architects have given themselves a Dec. 2 deadline to finalize their design concepts for the library.

Personnel committee

The director evaluation process has started. The deadline for responses is Nov. 10. C. Brancatella asked when negotiations would begin. G. Kirkpatrick said he will be reaching out soon to get feedback as the union begins to identify their priorities.

Other old business

There was no other old business at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 6:58pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president