

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday April 17, 2023

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella
Mark Kissinger
Sarah Patterson
Lisa Scoons
Charmaine Wijeyesinghe
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer
Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

EXCUSED: Harmeet Narang
Michelle Walsh

GUESTS: Jennifer Crawford, confidential secretary
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Phil Berardi, head of Circulation and Technical Services
Tanya Choppy, business manager

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 13 March 2023 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by S. Patterson.

C. Wijeyesinghe noted there was some miscellaneous text to strike from the end of the paragraph under the exam proctoring policy header. She also said she wanted to direct the board's attention to the previous month's discussion about naming rights where M. Walsh had said the board should first decide if they wanted to offer naming rights at all before ironing out the minutiae. She said it would be useful to keep that in mind when they discussed naming rights later in the meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- S. Whiting noted that she and T. Choppy would be meeting with TD Bank and reviewing the library's investments. She would be making a recommendation to the finance committee in early May about how much to re-invest and for what duration. C. Wijeyesinghe asked which board members were on the committee. M. Kissinger said both he and M. Walsh attend, but any board member is welcome to attend meetings.

- S. Whiting said, in response to an earlier discussion about banking security, that she has very good communication with TD Bank and believes the library's funds are as secure as they could be. She noted that the library has an irrevocable letter of credit and our deposits are fully collateralized.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 March 2023 (Checks disbursed in March 2023 based on pre-approval \$48,819.453; Checks disbursed in March 2023 relating to payroll \$197,633.46; Checks being submitted for approval \$59,330.64; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$8,580.00; Total: \$270,363.55).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick positions is seeking to back fill part-time custodian and part-time librarian positions. He was also seeking to reclassify at part-time librarian position to library assistant to cover the Friday nights and a weekend rotation. C. Wijeyesinghe noted that the Personnel Committee supports the change, and the board could reclassify it down the road if needed.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted on the following actions:

- Custodial Worker, part-time, permanent, 7.63/hours/week, \$16.60/hour or per contract
- Librarian I, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$28.41/hour or per contract TO
Library Assistant, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$18.73/hour or per contract
- Librarian I, part-time, permanent, 11.67 hours/week, \$28.41/hour or per contract

UHLS BOARD UPDATE

L. Scoons encouraged everyone to take part in the 2023 Library Expedition. She said UHLS is trying to get the whole board to do it together. She noted that the annual meeting will be held in person on June 14 at a location in Rensselaer County. She said the annual awards application is May 1. Budget news is on hold as the state has not yet passed one.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The Library Expedition has started and there has been a lot of interest. The library has some fun props in the works. It is scheduled to run through the end of July with a celebration in September, but L. Scoons said there has been some talk about extending it through summer. There is a new poster this year, along with all kinds of merchandise that can be purchased. The program is intended to encourage people to visit all 36 library locations in the Upper Hudson system. G. Kirkpatrick said that while it doesn't have a huge impact on door count at Bethlehem, it brings in a lot of new traffic for some of the smaller libraries.
- Seed library requests have now been opened to the general public. Until April 11, seeds were exclusively available to Bethlehem cardholders.
- Volunteer activity continues to grow. The library has about 15 Participation in Government students looking to fulfill their required volunteer hours.

- The Bethlehem Historical Society’s programs continue to fill the room to capacity. The past two have been filmed and are available to watch on YouTube. M. Kissinger said he has heard from multiple people how much they enjoy the programs.
- Story times continue to be heavily attended. The Saturday story time has been averaging 20-40 attendees, which is up from when it has been offered in the past.
- The “Seeking Truth in a Fake News World” program with Mary Miller has been scheduled for July. This time, there will also be a discussion about emerging AI.
- The library has planned a bunch of programming to tie in with the 2024 solar eclipse. The last eclipse generated significant excitement so the library has made sure to increase the number of programs and viewing glasses available to meet the demand.
- On-time return rates continue to be higher than when fines were implemented. L. Scoons said that might also have a lot to do with automatic renewals.
- G. Kirkpatrick said he continues to discuss with the town their storage needs for local history records. He has asked the town for a linear feet estimate to get a sense of how much space is needed. He said he doesn’t think it makes much sense to house the records unless it can be made accessible to the public.

NEW BUSINESS

Drug and Alcohol policy – first read

The Policy Committee felt this was due for an update with marijuana becoming legal in the state. The board will be voting on the policy at the next meeting.

Schematic design proposal – process update

The design contract with Ashley McGraw has been signed, following attorney review. The architects noted that two public information sessions are part of the scope of work in their contract and asked the library to consider when and what kind of gathering it should be – either a focus group or a presentation with more details. G. Kirkpatrick said the library held a number of focus groups in the Long Range Planning process. M. Kissinger said the architect’s timeline shows a 50 percent presentation to the board by mid-July and suggested that might be a good time to present it to the public as there would be something to react to. C. Wijeyesinghe said the board needs to be mindful of reaching people before they leave the area for the summer. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if it was possible to have a design schematic ready for an earlier bond vote than May 2024. G. Kirkpatrick said even going full speed ahead, that would be ambitious.

Other new business

Keplinger Freeman Associates, the landscape firm working with Ashley McGraw, had asked CT Male for an estimate for a topographic survey. The survey of the library’s four properties is required by the architects and not included in the scope of work in the contract. Keplinger Freeman Associates said the quote of \$14,500 was reasonable for the work.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella and SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the payment of \$14,500 to C.T. Male Associates to conduct a topographic survey of the library’s four parcels.

OLD BUSINESS

Plaza entry – process update

G. Kirkpatrick said he has asked the architects at Ashley McGraw to help him get in touch with SED regarding whether the emergency paving of the plaza would require pre-approval. He said that if the library went through the full process before and work is done, it is likely it would be too far down the road to be of any benefit. C. Brancatella asked if the work could be classified as an emergency repair. M. Kissinger said the library should deal with it ASAP because he would hate to go through another winter with ongoing icing issues. G. Kirkpatrick said the work would cost around \$60,000 based on quotes he has seen. The project will have to go out to bid. C. Wijeyesinghe wondered why the SED approval process takes so long. S. Patterson asked how long the icing on the plaza has been an issue. G. Kirkpatrick said it has been something the board has been aware of for the better part of a decade, but recent winter temps have seen the bricks icing over more frequently. L. Scoons asked if Upper Hudson might reach out to SED to streamline the process for all libraries. C. Wijeyesinghe said she would not be comfortable if the library knowingly went forward with the project without SED approval. C. Brancatella said she considers this an emergency and the timeline for full approval would be too long. S. Patterson agreed.

Policy Committee update

C. Wijeyesinghe said the Policy Committee has been going over about three policies each meeting followed by a half hour discussion of naming rights.

- Donations/naming rights

C. Wijeyesinghe said the committee has enough examples to cut and paste together a policy, but they need the board to weigh in on whether they wanted a centralized location to recognize donors or have rooms and other spaces throughout the library that could be named. L. Scoons said they could also include both, maybe with the central location for smaller monetary gifts and room naming for something bigger. S. Patterson said that if people want to give, it makes sense to have a policy set in stone to define the parameters and that she is in favor naming rights for rooms if the amount was significant. L. Scoons noted that Guilderland has put together a room naming policy and parameters but has yet to have any offers. C. Brancatella said she is in favor of room naming rights but with an iron clad policy that gives the board discretion in what is allowed. C. Wijeyesinghe said the central location will be a place to recognize others who give what they can. She said the Policy Committee would continue to discuss naming rights based on the board's feedback.

- Confidential Records Policy – second read

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously adopted the proposed updates to the library's Confidential Records Policy.

- Exam Proctoring Policy – second read

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously adopted the proposed updates to the library's Exam Proctoring Policy.

Negotiations – update

G. Kirkpatrick said labor and management are scheduled to go back to table in May.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board adjourned to executive session at 7:03pm to discuss contact negotiations pursuant to Article Fourteen of the Civil Service Law

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board adjourned executive session at 7:37pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 7:38pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president