

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday May 8, 2023

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

EXCUSED: Harmmeet Narang

GUESTS: Jennifer Crawford, confidential secretary
Tracey McShane, personnel administrator
Phil Berardi, head of Circulation and Technical Services
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Chris McGinty, assistant director
Susanne Angarano, Ashley McGraw Architects
DeAnna Hine, Ashley McGraw Architects
Natalie Redmore, Ashley McGraw Architects
Andrew Reilly

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

BUDGET PRESENTATION

S. Whiting noted that there was a typo in the budget graphic that went in the May/June Footnotes under the total expenses line. It has been corrected online and did not affect the total.

She said the budget remains under the state tax cap while providing adequate funding for materials and services, as well as the staffing needed to provide those services. It also supports an increasing use of e-materials and curbside pickup. S. Whiting noted that taking advantage of higher interest rates has also benefited the library.

M. Walsh said that the levy increase of 2.18% is lower than last year's 3.25%. She said it might be nice in future years to mention something like that in the budget graphic to point out how the library is being frugal.

C. Wijeyesinghe asked S. Whiting to explain the fund balance. S. Whiting said that of the \$4.1 million accumulated over past years, the library needs to set aside \$1.4 million to fund operations from July until September/October when tax revenue starts coming in.

M. Kissinger urged everyone to vote on May 16.

ASHLEY MCGRAW ARCHITECTS – MEET WITH THE BOARD

S. Angarano said she and her colleagues were at the library in person to learn more about staff and operations and talk about the next steps in the schematic design process. She asked board members and attendees to write about a favorite library memory and the impact it had on their lives.

M. Kissinger said he saw the library as a place to get lost in knowledge and explore and learn. M. Walsh said story time with her daughters was a great experience even though she remembers the space being cramped. L. Scoons said the library's mission to promote a lifelong love of learning and reading led to her volunteering as a board member. C. Wijesinghe said libraries have changed a lot since she was young. She said that she doesn't remember interacting with librarians that much as a kid, but now they play a key role in providing reference and other services.

N. Redmore said the architects had been meeting with focus groups all day to discuss how the proposed design footprint could best meet the needs of the community. She said the architects would be taking that feedback into consideration as they further develop those concepts. She said the next step may involve surveying the staff and community to gather additional feedback. They are also planning another round of stakeholder meetings in early June.

S. Angarano said a team would be at the library later in the week to do a site survey and assess the existing condition. They would be gathering data to refine and develop multiple options for target areas in the design, like the children's area, study rooms and staff space. Following that step, they would be able to start providing cost estimates and cost-saving options.

M. Kissinger asked how extensive the second round of stakeholders meetings would be. S. Angarano said it would include library staff looking at multiple design options.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 17 April 2023 board meeting were approved unanimously on a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by M. Walsh.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

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

- The \$500,000 CD that comes due in June will most likely not be reinvested.
- The \$1 million CD that came due in May has been rolled over to a \$1.1 million, six-month CD at 5.07%.

- S. Whiting said she was proposing the board transfer \$350,000 from operating cash to the capital reserve fund in order to cover the costs of the next phase of the building project, such as the site plan and schematic design. She said those expenses had already been approved at previous meetings but the use of the capital reserve fund is a way to track building project related expenses.
 - On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously passed a resolution transferring \$350,000 from the fund balance to the capital reserve fund to cover schematic design and boundary, topography utility survey fees.
- M. Walsh thanked S. Whiting and T. Choppy for being on top of interest rate increases.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 April 2023 (Checks disbursed in April 2023 based on pre-approval \$54,710.54; Checks disbursed in April 2023 relating to payroll \$202,188.02; Checks being submitted for approval \$108,068.24; CapProject Fund/Hand-Drawn Checks \$0; Total: \$364,966.80).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said he is seeking to backfill part-time library clerk position.

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

- Library Clerk, part-time, permanent, 15.67/hours/week, \$14.45/hour or per contract

UHLS BOARD UPDATE

L. Scoons said the Upper Hudson board would start looking at the award nominations on Wednesday. She said library and construction funding remains flat in the state budget. She reminded everyone about the annual celebration in June.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The library continues to be increasingly busy in person, even as circulation increases are starting to level out. G. Kirkpatrick noted that there was some question during the pandemic if library use trends were going to permanently change, but these increases point to a return to traditional foot traffic.
- A new copier has been installed, and domestic faxing is now free. This has reduced a lot of the hassle involved with paying for the service. Photo copies are 10 cents per page.
- There have been increases in demand for the library's proctoring service, with many of those requests coming from out of the district.
- G. Kirkpatrick gave a shout out to the staff at UHLS who have arranged the Library Expedition. He noted that it is a lot of work, but very well received by the public.
- M. Walsh asked if the Cricut was going to return to the Studio Makerspace. G. Kirkpatrick said there is a lot of staff support needed with the machine, so the library was waiting to get everyone up to speed. M. Walsh said she has had a couple of patrons ask her about it.

- Attendance at the Historical Association programs continues to be high. The library now has a good system in place for recording and sharing them on YouTube, which many people have responded positively to.
- Demand for WiFi hotspots has been picking up and hard to keep up with. Adding additional hotspots to the collection will be discussed later in the agenda.
- M. Walsh asked if automatic renewals were necessary with the elimination of fines at the library. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is an Upper Hudson wide setting that cannot be personalized for individual libraries. He said he continues to watch the on-time return rate to see if that has been affected. He noted that items that have been requested will not auto renew. M. Walsh said that she has experienced long wait times for popular YA book.
- L. Scoons asked if there has been any feedback about people now having access to e-materials from other systems. G. Kirkpatrick said that he can see from the data that people are using it, but a major hurdle seems to be the difficulty in setting those options up in the app. The program is still in its infancy so more data is to come.

NEW BUSINESS

Library card policy – first read

G. Kirkpatrick said the new library card policy simplifies some of the language and brings it into congruence with what Upper Hudson is using. It also aims to address who might have been excluded by the policy and be more accommodating to people in a variety of life situations.

G. Kirkpatrick asked the board how they preferred to see the policies under review. Board members indicated that they wanted to see both the clear copy and the marked up one.

Patron conduct – first read

C. Wijeyesinghe said that this policy draft was a major rewrite of the original but still covers everything included in the previous version. She noted that it rephrases and rearranges some elements without listing every potential small violation, which can be posted separately.

Notary services – update

Ten staffers recently completed notary training. They had a range of schedules that could potentially cover the evenings and weekends for notary service. The course brought home the importance of insurance and the potential liabilities of providing the service. The one person who is currently providing notary service also attended. She indicated she would no longer be interested in being a notary for the library in the next fiscal year without insurance and other assurances in place, as well as fellow staff members who would also be able to provide backup. G. Kirkpatrick asked the board how they wanted to proceed.

M. Walsh said she thought it had already been discussed. G. Kirkpatrick said the board had decided to send the employees to the free class, but the discussion about the insurance was still ongoing. G. Kirkpatrick said the insurance was \$140 per notary and the lawyer said the library also needed to put in place policies in case a notary would need time off to testify. He said the course made clear that there are a lot of legal ramifications involved that might not have been considered in the past, and the library's lawyer recommends the top level of insurance offered.

M. Walsh proposed the board revisit this topic in detail at the June meeting. She asked G. Kirkpatrick to email a list of pros and cons. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if G. Kirkpatrick even wanted to continue providing the service given what he had learned. He said that providing notary service is something the public loves, but it may not be worth it. C. Wijeyesinghe asked G. Kirkpatrick to reflect on it for a month and come back with a recommendation.

Lawnmower

G. Kirkpatrick asked the board to approve the purchase of a new lawnmower.

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella and SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the purchase of a new walk-behind mower for the library in the amount of \$6,599.

WiFi hotspots

G. Kirkpatrick said the library currently has 30 hotspot devices, but they are in high demand and he would like to be able to circulate more. M. Walsh asked if the cost was included in the budget. G. Kirkpatrick said it would exceed the telecommunications line, but the money was there. C. Brancatella asked if the library had any trouble with having them returned. P. Berardi said that they can be shut off remotely if overdue, and once that's done, they usually come back. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if the growing need could be met with fewer devices. P. Berardi said that 30 would best fill the demand.

G. Kirkpatrick said the library was investigating an equivalent device that could be used internationally.

On a MOTION by L. Scoons and SECOND by C. Wijeyesinghe, the board unanimously approved the purchase of 20 new T-Mobile WiFi hotspots with unlimited data and 12 months of service in the amount of \$6,888 for the year.

Other new business

The library is participating in the Memorial Day parade, and the theme is "All Together Now." Everyone is invited to participate and represent the library.

OLD BUSINESS

Plaza entry – process update

G. Kirkpatrick said he has learned that the library did not need SED approval to replace the bricks with a concrete surface because the drainage would remain unchanged. He has reached out to the town to see if the library could sign on to the town's contract, which is currently out to bid. If that doesn't work out, he will reach out to the architects' landscaping company for guidance on how to put together a bid. C. Wijeyesinghe asked if concrete would, in fact, require different drainage as it is a different material than bricks. She suggested reaching out to the school district's office and maintenance department for guidance.

Policy Committee update

- Drug and Alcohol Policy – second read

On a MOTION by C. Brancatella with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously adopted the proposed updates to the library's Drug and Alcohol Policy.

Negotiations – update

C. Brancatella said the board hasn't heard anything from the union yet. Further discussion would take place in executive session.

Other old business

C. Wijeyesinghe updated the board on the progress of the naming rights policy. She said she and G. Kirkpatrick would try to get a draft prepared for the policy committee to look at, but it may not make the original August deadline.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by L. Scoons, the board adjourned to executive session at 7:07pm to discuss contact negotiations pursuant to Article Fourteen of the Civil Service Law

On a MOTION by C. Wijeyesinghe with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board adjourned executive session at 8:05pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board adjourned the regular meeting at 8:06pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president