

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday April 7, 2025

PRESENT: Laura DiBetta
Mark Kissinger
Sarah Patterson
Gail Sacco
Lisa Scoons
Michelle Walsh
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director

EXCUSED: Caroline Brancatella
Kristen Roberts, public information specialist

GUESTS: Phil Berardi, assistant director/head of operations
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Jennifer Crawford, confidential secretary
Chris McGinty, assistant director of Public Services
Anne Moore
Tessy Nedy

President M. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

M. Kissinger opened the meeting with a statement about public participation and noted additional ways that the public can interact with board members. He said that the board is also considering the addition of a more informal time for discussion in the future.

One member of the public spoke during the public comment period. G. Kirkpatrick read a second comment received via email. A recording of the meeting is available on YouTube.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the minutes from the Monday March 10 regular board meeting.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously approved the minutes from the Monday April 1 building committee meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

- G. Sacco noted that gifts and donations seem to be up. T. Choppy said that the library recently received a donation of \$5,000 from a local educational foundation. G. Sacco said that at a recent trustee office hour, a patron was asking about gifting to the library.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 March 2025 (Checks disbursed in March 2025 based on pre-approval \$68,760.87; Checks disbursed in March 2025 relating to payroll \$206,017.65; Checks being submitted for approval \$58,254.78; CapProject Fund Checks \$0; Total: \$333,033.30).

PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report. M. Kissinger asked about the status of the open positions. G. Kirkpatrick said the library is only actively seeking to fill the Librarian 1 position, as the other positions were not included on the 2025-26 budget. M. Walsh asked how the process of filling it was going. There is currently no list for the Librarian 1 position as it is currently part of NY Helps. G. Kirkpatrick said the library has been conducting interviews for this position.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

There were no personnel actions.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- M. Walsh asked about the high attendance at a Music and Movement session and whether the numbers were manageable. G. Kirkpatrick said it was manageable, but the library may have to limit attendance in the future if it continues to grow.
- G. Kirkpatrick noted recent webinar participation. One provided guidance that he shared with staff about law enforcement requests for information.
- G. Kirkpatrick highlighted increased BCSD use of OverDrive children and youth collection, which is more robust than available through the school.
- G. Sacco noted the door count in the previous month was up and not related to program attendance. G. Kirkpatrick said he is starting to see more groups of students using the library to study.
- M. Walsh asked about streaming video use. G. Kirkpatrick said it was videos available from Kanopy and Hoopla, which have some of the Great Courses, which are popular with Bethlehem patrons.
- M. Walsh also noted that public use of the meeting spaces has increased.

UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons said the meeting would be held on Wednesday and would be retiring Director Tim Burke's last meeting. She noted that new authority to grant construction awards has been given to the system allowing UHLS to grant a higher percentage. G. Kirkpatrick said that the SED approval process timeframe is shorter at the moment.

NEW BUSINESS

Room rental contract

The contract is for a June 8 piano recital. G. Sacco said she thought G. Kirkpatrick had already been given the authority to approve the contracts. G. Kirkpatrick said that it had been discussed in the policy committee but hadn't come to the board yet.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously approved the rental contract for the Community Room to host a private piano recital on June 8.

Boiler project

The RFP notice has been posted in the Times Union and The Spotlight incurring a small expense. G. Kirkpatrick presented a resolution to transfer \$50,000 from the general fund to the project fund at this time to cover early design expenses and amend it later when actual construction costs are better known.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously approved a resolution to transfer \$50,000 from the general fund to the special project fund.

Other new business

There was no other new business at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

UHLS board member

L. Scoons said the board would like to have a new member nominated by May. L. Scoons said board meetings are currently on Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. Nominating committee will discuss potential appointees.

Building committee update

The committee continues to discuss upcoming projects and priorities. Asbestos removal and parking lot resurfacing have been identified as the next big projects to investigate further. G. Kirkpatrick said the amount in the fund balance should be close to being able to cover those expenses. L. Scoons said they discussed reaching out to the town about the parking lot as they have been helpful in the past.

M. Walsh urged the board to continue moving forward with the building discussion.

Other old business

There was no other old business at this time.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business at this time.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One member of the public spoke during the public comment period. A recording of the meeting is available on YouTube.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by G. Sacco, the board unanimously voted to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular individual at 6:55pm.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to adjourn executive session at 8:05pm.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by M. Kissinger, the board unanimously voted to ban an individual from the library for 60 days after a discussion about the individual disrupting the executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:20pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
M. Kissinger, board president