

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)  
Monday April 13, 2026

PRESENT: Jill Adams  
Caroline Brancatella  
Sarah Patterson  
Gail Sacco  
Michelle Walsh  
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director  
Kristen Roberts, public information specialist

EXCUSED: Laura DiBetta  
Mark Kissinger

GUESTS: Phil Berardi, assistant director/head of operations  
Chris McGinty, assistant director/Public Services  
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk  
Robert McDonnell  
Bruce Phillips

President C. Brancatella called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

#### PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There were no public comments at this time.

#### REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by J. Adams, the board unanimously approved the minutes with the deletion as noted from the Monday March 9 regular board meeting.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

##### *Treasurer's update*

S. Whiting presented her report.

- She noted that she expects to end the fiscal year with salaries right on target, however benefits will be over budget.
- S. Whiting said she expects that the underspent lines in the budget will offset the ones that are over.
- She noted that as the library starts spending more of fund balance on building projects, interest earnings will go down because there will be less money for investments.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 March 2026 (Checks disbursed in March 2026 based on pre-approval \$63,612.08; Checks disbursed in March 2026 relating to payroll \$222,436.54; Checks

being submitted for approval \$147,008.09; Checks being submitted for approval – Capital Project Fund \$32,092.75; Total: \$405,149.46).

#### PERSONNEL REPORT

The board noted the personnel report. G. Kirkpatrick asked for approval to backfill a part-time clerk position but noted that he will hold off on posting it so administration can assess what is actually needed. He said that in the coming year, the library will look very carefully at every position that comes open.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by J. Adams, the board unanimously voted to approve the following position:

- Library clerk, part-time, permanent, 9.57hours/week, \$18.83/hour or per contract

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The board noted the director's report.

- M. Walsh said that the new genre section for children's books is a great idea. She asked if it would focus on one topic at a time or if it will rotate. G. Kirkpatrick said there would be about five genres at a time featuring popular topics and that some would stay and some would rotate.
- The new shelves featuring new releases are up and moveable.
- Mahjong continues to be very popular, with players spread across multiple rooms for different skill levels.
- M. Walsh noted the low attendance at the senior outreach program and asked if it was worth the employee time and additional resources. She said it might be worth revisiting whether those resources could be best used some other way. S. Patterson noted that if staffing decreases, it would be better to have employees in the building.
- G. Sacco asked if there might be a better way to highlight/display the Library of Things collection because she finds the shelves very confusing to browse. M. Walsh suggested that a sign or graphic might help. G. Kirkpatrick said the library was in the process of moving the collections around to make them more visible and accessible.
- M. Walsh asked if the library had looked into circulating WiFi hotspots that could go out of country. G. Kirkpatrick said the ones currently circulating work in North America, but that ones that had rangers farther outside that were cost prohibitive.

#### UHLS REPORT

There was no UHLS update at this time.

#### FRIENDS REPORT

J. Adams said the Friends will be meeting the following week. She said she wasn't sure yet if there was a final decision made on whether they would selling mugs, but noted that the profit margin would be very small.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### *NYS annual report*

G. Kirkpatrick said there was a bit of a scramble to get the numbers to Upper Hudson but it has been reviewed by Upper Hudson and will be submitted to the state on April 16. C. Brancatella noted that much of the information is in the monthly report that is part of the board packet. G. Kirkpatrick said that Bethlehem's circulation numbers per capita got flagged for further explanation because they were higher

than expected. He said that number has been historically high because the community is highly engaged with the library.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the NYS Annual Report for submission.

#### *Long range plan*

C. Brancatella said she was looking to set up a Long Range Planning committee meeting sometime before the next regular board meeting. She encouraged the board to read through the current one and make markups or suggestions to discuss as the process moves forward. G. Sacco encouraged trustees to think about “who we are as a library.”

#### *Policies*

C. Brancatella said that there are a number of policies that library administration has assessed that need updates. She said she, S. Patterson and J. Adams would each be reviewing three of those with staff to find out what needs to be modified. They would be marking up the policies based on that feedback and bringing about two to three to the coming meetings for the full board to comment on.

#### *Other new business*

There was no other new business discussed.

#### OLD BUSINESS

#### *Boiler project update*

G. Kirkpatrick said all the installation is completed and the library is now waiting for the electricians to hook everything up to the HVAC hub followed by any necessary testing.

#### *59 Borthwick project update*

G. Kirkpatrick said the architects expect to have design development documents shortly for the board to review. The bidding process would then follow. C. Brancatella asked if the entire board wanted to review the documents or if it should be done on the building committee level. G. Kirkpatrick said that in the interest of moving the process along quickly, he would recommend a building committee review because it might be easier to assemble quickly on a tight schedule. C. Brancatella said the full board would be kept apprised of the process and are welcome to weigh in.

C. Brancatella asked the board if they wanted to engage a construction manager for the process as they have in past projects. G. Sacco said she supports that because there may be questions that come up about site and safety and it would be good to have an external entity monitoring that. G. Kirkpatrick said he would seek out a proposal and bring it back to the board.

C. Brancatella said the library would be using the neighborhood e-mail list to keep the people living nearby informed of anything during the process that might affect them.

#### *Other old business*

M. Walsh asked what the plan was for the items that are currently being stored in the Borthwick property. G. Kirkpatrick said that as staff weeds the collection, they will also be looking at weeding what is in there. He said the biggest challenge will be finding space for the records that the library is required to keep. He said there is some work being done to digitize them. M. Walsh asked if there should be a conversation with the Friends about potential storage needs now or in the future. J. Adams said she would relay those thoughts to the Friends.

## FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business discussed.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to enter into executive session at 6:54pm to discuss the employment history of a particular individual.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously voted to leave executive session at 7:47pm. No action was taken.

## ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by J. Adams with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:48pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
C. Brancatella, board president

## BOARD ACTIONS:

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