

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (COMMUNITY ROOM)  
Monday December 9, 2024

PRESENT: Caroline Brancatella  
Laura DiBetta  
Sarah Patterson  
Gail Sacco  
Lisa Scoons  
Michelle Walsh  
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer  
  
Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director

EXCUSED: Mark Kissinger

GUESTS: Phil Berardi, assistant director/head of Circulation and Technical Services  
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk  
Jennifer Crawford, confidential secretary  
Robert McDonnell

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

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously approved the minutes from the Tuesday November 12 regular board meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT

*Treasurer's update*

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 November 2024 (Checks disbursed in November 2024 based on pre-approval \$367501.90; Checks disbursed in November 2024 relating to payroll \$325,865.45; Checks being submitted for approval \$90,883.77; CapProject Fund Checks \$95,705.00; Total: \$879,956.12).

PERSONNEL REPORT

G. Kirkpatrick said he was requesting to backfill a part-time clerk position whose current occupant is retiring. The board noted the personnel report.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

On a MOTION by L. Scoons with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to approve the following positions:

- Library Clerk, part-time, permanent, 9.8 hours/week, \$18.19/hour or per contract

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- G. Kirkpatrick said he has heard a lot of positive feedback about the trustee office hours and thanked the board members for making themselves available.
- The Bethlehem Historical Association's hay press program is available on YouTube.
- Adult video circulation continues to drop.
- Door count continues to increase as well as eBooks.
- G. Sacco said she was at the library recently during office hours and was struck by the number of grandparents chatting in the children's area. She also said it was nice to see people of all cultural traditions and English language fluency interacting happily in the same space.
- L. Scoons said her office hours experience has been very positive, and it might be something the board considers doing periodically moving forward.
- G. Kirkpatrick directed the trustees' attention to the individual NYLA reports from the staff. He thanked the board for the opportunity for those staffers to attend the conference. M. Walsh said she enjoyed reading the reports and really like the idea of a telehealth booth that was mentioned in a couple.

## UHLS REPORT

L. Scoons said that the UHLS board does not meet in December. She noted that Tim Burke will be retiring in April 2025, and a search committee was being formed to find his replacement.

## NEW BUSINESS

### *Patron ban*

G. Kirkpatrick shared a number of incident reports about a particular patron that noted misbehavior and aggressive language to children and others, as well as a recent threat of physical violence. The individual was asked to leave the library for the rest of the day following the final incident. G. Kirkpatrick said that banning a patron is not something the library he likes to do, but he asked the board to consider banning the individual for 6 months due to the threat of violence.

L. Scoons asked how it would be enforced. G. Kirkpatrick said he would communicate the information to the staff and they would be instructed to tell the individual to leave the premises, and contact the police if the request is met with resistance.

G. Sacco suggested the library ask police to also keep an eye on the building after hours.

M. Walsh asked if a 6-month ban is standard. G. Kirkpatrick said that a person cannot be banned indefinitely, and he believes 6 months is appropriate for the severity of the incident.

C. Brancatella asked if it was the patron conduct policy that such a decision could be backed up with. G. Kirkpatrick said it was a patron conduct issue, but the board has the authority to ban a patron.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to ban the individual involved in multiple incident reports for a total of 6 month.

### *Room rental agreement*

G. Kirkpatrick shared a first facility use contract proposal for an individual who want to hold a piano recital at a rental cost of \$25 per hour. They were not requesting to have the piano tuned for an

additional fee. M. Walsh asked if the piano is regularly tuned. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is but sometimes people who hold recitals like to have it tuned before those events.

G. Sacco asked about liability and said it was something that might be explored.

On a MOTION by L. DiBetta with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board voted unanimously to authorize the room rental agreement as proposed.

#### *Election logistics*

G. Kirkpatrick said library staff met with school district staff to discuss the logistics of the December 12 bond vote, which will be taking place in the library.

C. Brancatella asked if there would be results on Thursday night. G. Kirkpatrick said there would be unofficial results. L. DiBetta said that anyone in line by 9pm will be allowed to vote. She also said she did early voting at the district and that it was a simple process.

G. Kirkpatrick said he heard from some people about being automatic mailed ballots. He said there are some people who the school district clerk have on a permanent absentee ballot list, where they are automatically mailed ballots for every school district election.

#### *Other new business*

There was no other old business at this time.

#### OLD BUSINESS

L. Scoons mentioned that the policy committee was due for a quarterly review of the meeting room policy. G. Kirkpatrick also mentioned a review of the staff handbook. He said it was something that could be revisited after the holidays. C. Brancatella said that January 13 would be a good time to discuss the meeting room policy at the regular board meeting and said she invites the trustees to submit their comments. G. Kirkpatrick said he would also be soliciting feedback from the public and has a report prepared by the staff member whose job it is to manage the room requests.

#### FUTURE BUSINESS

M. Walsh said she liked the idea of trustee office hours every month and asked how they might move forward with that. G. Kirkpatrick said he likes the idea of moving it around to different times to catch different crowds.

G. Sacco asked that the board talk about the relationship between the Friends and the board as a future agenda item and perhaps have representatives from each attend their respective meetings.

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by L. DiBetta with a SECOND by G. Sacco, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:50pm.

Prepared by  
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by  
M. Kissinger, board president