BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
November 20, 2019

In Attendance

Trustees: Barak Bar-Cohen, Andrew Erlichson, Audrey Gould, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Yamile Slebi, Pam Wakefield

Not Present: Robert Ginsberg, Mayor Liz Lempert

Library Staff: Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Janice Painter, Bonnie Sprouls, Morgan Taylor, Sonja Vloeberghs

Others: Josephine Dodge (Teen Rep), Helen Heintz (Friends), Madeleine Freundlich (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep)

At 7:00 p.m. Ms. Wakefield called the meeting to order and asked if proper notice of the meeting was given as required by the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S. 10:4-6 et seq). Ms. Vloeberghs confirmed that proper notice was given. On November 11, 2019 proper notice was posted in the library, published on the library’s website, and at 3:08 p.m. sent to the municipal clerks, the Princeton Packet, Town Topics, and Trenton Times and distributed to the standard distribution list.

Consent Agenda

1. Oct. 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes
2. Final October Bills
3. Preliminary November Bills

Approval of Consent Agenda: Ms. Miller moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Ms. Slebi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Materials

There was no discussion on the included materials.

Friends of the Library Report

Ms. Heintz noted the Beyond Words Benefit net profits were $173,874. She thanked Audrey Gould and Audrey Egger for their contributions.

Nov. 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes
Ms. Heintz noted that the 2020 Beyond Words Benefit will be on Oct. 10, 2020 and the speaker will be Gary Trudeau, creator of Doonesbury cartoons.

She noted there are a few upcoming Evenings with Friends events with openings. She also noted the Friends will host a Trivia Night on Feb. 15.

Public Comment

Kim Dorman noted that as part of the staff that helped get the library back to normal after the event this year and in the past, the cleanup went much quicker this year due to the hiring of movers.

Teen Representatives

The teens noted that the Teen Advisory Board are hosting a few upcoming events: a capella Night on Dec. 6; a Rom Com movie marathon over Winter break, and an Indoor Snowball Fight for elementary school children. They also shared that the library has saved over 3,092 water bottles as a result of the newly installed bottle fillers.

Staff Presentation on Civic Engagement

Hannah Schmidl, Public Humanities Coordinator, and Kim Dorman, Community Engagement Coordinator, spoke about the civic engagement work at the library. They mentioned current and past programs presented (by or with) the library, and noted that extra efforts are being made to look at new and different ways that the library could facilitate civic engagement and help bolster the kind of social infrastructure that libraries inherently build. Civic programming considerations include:

- Building and promoting information literacy and community awareness
- Community building through discussions at programs - opportunities to meet each other and have facilitated discussions so that people can have a welcoming space to explore different perspectives.
- Empowering people to become more civically engaged in their community
- Frame issues in accessible ways so that people see relevance to their community

They noted that there are programs specifically for adults, and for youth and those that are cross-departmental collaborations. As well as the events and programs presented by the library, there are several upcoming projects – Engage Princeton.org and a Civics Matters exhibit-based feature that will be behind the Welcome Desk and will initially focus on building information literacy, and eventually include other topics and issues of interest.

Some upcoming events that are civic engagement-related: Steve Kornacki on Jan. 8; African-American Read In, collaborating with the public schools, on Feb. 1.

President’s Report

Ms. Wakefield noted that the Board is in conversation with a candidate about whom they are enthusiastic.

Nov. 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes
As recommended by Ms. Wakefield, Mr. Bar-Cohen asked the Board to think about ways the library could stay leading edge. He noted that it has been a while since the library was tied to a big idea which was tied to the community. One idea Mr. Bar-Cohen introduced was responsible living. There was discussion about the library’s role in the community and how it relates to, for example, responsible living, sustainable living, and civic responsibility. There was discussion about what the library could do, ways forward and what the library is already doing.

Ms. Wakefield noted that she and Mr. Bar-Cohen would put together some ideas and present them to the Board at the January Board meeting.

**Fundraising Update**

Ms. Wakefield noted that Ms. Ham reported Annual Appeal letters are being sent out next week with a target of $130,000 to meet the goal for the year. Ms. Miller noted that the Development Office was moving forward with their Planned Giving program which will document bequests made to the library.

**New Business**

Ms. Miller moved to approve closing the library on Oct. 9, 2020 at 6 p.m., and on Oct. 10, 2020 all day for the Beyond Words Annual Benefit. Ms. Slebi seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

Ms. Wakefield noted that 2020 Board Meeting Dates will remain on the same schedule as the 2019 dates – the third Wednesday of every month. She suggested taking a poll to decide on start times for the meetings.

Ms. Gould noted that the Gould Lecture is tomorrow night, 7 p.m., with a speaker from the Neuroscience Division at Princeton University.

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment**

Ms. Miller motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Gould the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2019.