



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES February 19, 2020

### In Attendance

- Trustees:** Barak Bar-Cohen, Robert Ginsberg, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Yamile Slebi, Pam Wakefield
- Not Present:** Andrew Erlichson, Edwina Hawes, Mayor Liz Lempert
- Library Staff:** Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Lisa Ham, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley, Hannah Schmidl, Bonnie Sprouls, Morgan Taylor, Sonja Vloeberghs
- Others:** Josephine Dodge (Teen Rep), Andrea Bradley (Friends), Madeleine Freundlich (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep)

At 7:01 p.m. Ms. Miller 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. Rackley confirmed that proper notice was given. On February 11, 2020 proper notice was posted in the library, published on the library's website, and at 9:58 p.m. sent to the municipal clerks, the *Princeton Packet*, *Town Topics*, and *Trenton Times* and distributed to the standard distribution list.

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

### Consent Agenda

- January 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- February 11, 2020 Emergency Meeting Minutes
- Final December 2019 Bills List Revised
- Final January 2020 Bills List
- Resolution 2019-32: Cancellation of Unexpended 2019 Appropriation Balances
- Resolution 2020-09: Cleaning Services Contract Renewal and Change Order #2 with attachment

### Board Materials

Ms. Miller referred the Board to the monthly report and the 2019 year-end statistics and summary that were included as part of the Board Materials. There was no discussion on the included materials.

### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## **Friends Report (Andrea Bradley, Friends President)**

Ms. Bradley noted the following:

- the Friends are forming a new committee, External Communications, designed to help the Friends become a more integrated part of the library.
- Trivia Night was held this past Saturday with 90 people in attendance. There was discussion about having trivia night for teens.
- A special history book sale is being held this coming Saturday from 1-5:30 p.m.
- The Friends are working with Erin Metro from Princeton University to provide donated books that may not be suitable for sale, but may be good and still readable, to local organizations, e.g., Princeton Young Achievers, Cornerstone Community Church, Mercer Street Friends.
- On May 7, the Book Lovers Luncheon with Dani Shapiro will be held at Jasna Polana. 60 tickets have been sold; they are hoping to sell more than 120 tickets.

## **Teen Representatives**

Ms. Leonard noted that the teens participated in “This is Why We Heart You” on Feb. 14, an activity for young children to make valentines and crafts. Ms. Freundlich noted that the Teen Advisory Board is working with the HiTOPS Teen Board to create a mini-magazine focusing on healthy relationships to educate the teens in the community. Ms. Dodge reported that “I Read This Book” will be held on March 10 at 7 p.m.

## **President’s Report**

Ms. Miller read the following statement:

*First of all, I want to thank the Trustees for electing me president of the board. Although I don’t have the grace and outstanding leadership skills of Pam, I do love this library as she does and I have a long history of supporting it in any way possible. This is one of the country’s great libraries, small by some measures but remarkable by many others. We value its extraordinary staff who have kept it running at peak performance over the course of this last year, difficult though it has been without an Executive Director, but not missing a beat. I feel that we are about to enter a new period of excellence with the arrival of our new Executive Director, Jennifer Podolsky. Under Pam’s leadership and with outstanding help from Bonnie and our Interim Director, Jim Hecht, we have been fortunate to identify and welcome a first-class librarian to move us forward into the new decade. I am so optimistic that Jennifer along with our fabulous staff, our foundation and our Friends, will shepherd our beloved library into new and even greater heights.*

*I grew up in New Zealand in a family of readers. My parents had no formal education but reading was paramount. Indeed, after my mother’s death, my father moved from New Zealand to Princeton with his clothes and 14 cases of books. He asked us to find him a place to live that was within walking distance of the post office and the library. He came here every day, to read the papers and to check out the latest books on the shelves. I couldn’t be more appreciative of what the library did for this old man. As I said, he had no formal education but without doubt he was the best-read person I have ever known.*

*So now we move onto the next stage with gratitude for Pam’s leadership, the staff’s excellence and the bright light of our new Executive Director. It’s going to be a great new decade for the Princeton Public Library.*

## **Treasurer’s Report**

Ms. Chernik referred the Board to the 4Q19 Operating Budget vs Actual Summary. She noted the Finance Committee met last night and reviewed everything in detail. Ms. Chernik noted that the library had a good year somewhat due to short term disabilities, staff transitions, unspent funds from the ED search, fewer than expected repairs to the building and savings in technology. Due to the reduction in expenses, the library

purchased a new software package, Communico, that will provide solutions for event calendaring, room booking, mobile apps, digital signage and a website builder.

Ms. Chernik noted that for revenue the development office exceeded their budgeted amount and raised \$246K. Fines and fees were on average; there was an increase in room rentals, and restricted fund donations of \$26K not in the original budget. She noted that with the excesses in revenue and the savings in expenses the net revenue excess was just under \$189K.

The 2019 general fund balance exceeded the year's target of \$515k, ending the year at \$580k.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Podolsky thanked the Board for hiring her and said that she was happy to be at the library.

Ms. Podolsky noted:

- Phase 1 of the chiller project is complete. The library will close on Monday so that the chiller can be crane lifted to the roof. Ms. Podolsky thanked the building and IT staff for running everything smoothly and safely. Phase 2 will connect the electrical hookups and software integration installation. The project is ahead of schedule; the library expects to start the chiller in April.
- She and Ms. Bess met with Deanna Stockton, Municipal Engineer, to discuss the library's input for the Witherspoon / Hinds Plaza Redesign project. The library's recommendations were to keeping flexible space on Hinds Plaza, ensuring ample electricity, resolving flooding issues, and providing better coordination regarding when the Plaza is being used.
- For the library to qualify for State Aid, the Trustees must have seven hours of Trustee education amongst all Trustees. Ms. Podolsky provided several suggestions on how to obtain their training. She suggested a few of the Trustees attend the Trustee Institute seminar on Oct. 17.

### **Fundraising Update**

Ms. Ham noted that the Development Office is working on the following: corporate sponsorship brochure, Spring Appeal, Madeleine Albright event, Beyond Words, Planned Giving, a new Development Committee with the Foundation, and introducing Ms. Podolosky to the community.

Ms. Ham thanked the Friends for their close working relationship and for doing so well this year.

### **Foundation Update**

Ms. Miller will suggest to the Foundation Board that one of their members attend a Board of Trustees meeting periodically.

Ms. Slebi, as the liaison between the Trustees and the Foundation Board, noted:

- the Foundation has a large and diverse Board
- while reviewing their budget, the allocation for a consultant for an endowment campaign needs to be discussed with Ms. Podolsky.
- The Foundation uses a broker to manage their accounts: Steve Shay, Roundview Capital, a prior Investment Committee member, manages the Foundation accounts pro bono.
- There is currently \$15 million in the endowment, of which \$13 million is held in passive investments with Fidelity, the remaining with the Princeton Area Community Foundation.
- The Foundation's allocation to library remains the same.

**Old Business**

The Board agreed to consider new meeting start times; Ms. Rackley will poll the Trustees.

Ms. Wakefield mentioned the upcoming PEFF and how wonderful the festival is; she encouraged all Trustees to attend as many films as possible. Ms. Conlon noted the film portrayed on the cover of Connections magazine will be held at the Garden Theatre on April 13. It is one of two free-ticketed events; tickets will be available on April 1; "The Story of Plastic," the second free-ticketed event will be held on April 18 at Hopewell Theatre. The remainder of the 25-30 films will be held at PPL or on Princeton University campus.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment**

Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Ginsberg the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2020.