



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

### September 16, 2020

### Virtual Meeting via Zoom

#### In Attendance

- Trustees: Robert Ginsberg, Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Yamile Slebi, Pam Wakefield (5:30 p.m.)
- Not Present: Barak Bar-Cohen, Mayor Lempert
- Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Amanda Chuong, Susan Conlon, Lisa Ham, Janice Painter, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Bonnie Sprouls, Morgan Taylor, Sonja Vloeberghs, Yun-Yi Lin
- Others: Mel Grzymala (Friends), David Hill (Foundation)

At 5:02 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 September 14, 2020 proper notice was posted in the library, published on the library's website, and at 4:56 p.m. sent to the municipal clerks, the *Princeton Packet*, *Town Topics*, and *Trenton Times* and distributed to the standard distribution list.

#### Consent Agenda

- July 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- Final July Bills
- Final August Bills
- Preliminary September Bills
- Resolution 2020-16: Addendum to Café Agreement
- Rescind Oct. 10 Library Closure (Beyond Words benefit)

**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.

#### Friends Report

Mel Grzymala reported for the Friends.

- A book cart with books for sale is located in the lobby with an honor jar; since Saturday they've collected \$100.
- The Friends are coming up with creative ways to accept donations. Ms. Grzymala asked if anyone had a garage to donate in which they could quarantine donated books.
- Revenue from early supporter tickets and sales for Beyond Words is about \$17,000.
- The following are scheduled:

### **2020-21 FRIENDS EVENINGS**

- Sept. 30, 2020, 6 p.m., THE COVID-19 Pandemic: Where are we now? featuring Dr. Richard Besser, in conversation, with Heather Howard.
- Oct. 28, 2020, 7 p.m., Our Courts! Racial Disparities in Criminal Sentencing in NJ *featuring Debbie Poritz in conversation with Joseph Krakora and Alex Shalom.*
- Nov. 3, 2020, 5 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., Election Night in America, *Featuring Sam Wang.*
- Jan. 25, 2021, 7 p.m., Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Message for Our Own *featuring Eddie S. Glaude Jr.*
- Feb. 28, 2021, 11 a.m., The Toni Morrison Book Club *featuring Winnie Brown-Glaude, Cassandra Jackson, Juda Bennett and Piper Kendrix Williams in conversation.*
- March 21, 2021, 11 a.m., The Next 100 Years of the Universe *featuring James Peebles in conversation with Suzanne Staggs.*

### **BEYOND WORDS BENEFIT**

- Nov. 7, 2020: The Fragile Earth with David Remnick, Henry Finder, Elizabeth Kolbert
- Dec. 5, 2020: My Vanishing County with Bakari Sellers
- Jan. 9, 2021: Team of Five with Kate Andersen Brower in conversation with Kevin Kruse

### **Foundation Report**

Mr. Hill presented the Foundation Report. He noted the endowment is approximately 60% equities, 30% boxed and fixed income, and 10% cash. The current value is just under \$15 million.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **President's Report**

Ms. Miller noted that she didn't think she had much of a report, but "as so often happens, our library staff managed to surprise me. First, let me say that once again, our Executive Director and her staff rose to the occasion and created a mini-library in the Community Room to offer Express Service to library patrons. I was there the first day and walked in to see a family with several young children all sitting on the floor with a mom reading a story to the little ones. That's our library! It was truly a preview of what we can expect when we do open more fully, whenever that will be.

The program with Nicholas Kristoff went really well with Janie Hermann doing a terrific job of interviewing, even though she had very little time to prepare. And there are a number of additional author's programs coming up. The programming team continue to work hard to keep the library programming relevant and in the public view."

Ms. Miller noted that she signed up for Beyond Words benefit and hopes that all trustees will sign up as well. She was especially impressed by what the library has done to engage the public in National Voter Registration activities in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of the Princeton Area:

- Created a voter registration web page at [princetonlibrary.org](http://princetonlibrary.org).
- Organized three virtual events with the League focusing on voting concerns.
- Displayed fliers and provided takeaway information inside the library and will have a tented info table on Hinds Plaza on National Voter Registration Day.
- Princeton Community TV will visit Hinds Plaza to interview the League of Women Voters and the library with Jennifer representing the library.

- Coordinating a series of programming that focuses on what voters need to know about the NJ election, and on and on.

### **Committee Reports**

- Finance Committee – no report
- Reopening Committee – no report
- Appointing Bylaws and Policies Committee: Edwina Hawes, Bob Ginsburg, Jennifer Jang.
- Appointing Nominating Committee for 2021 Board Officers: Yamile Slebi, Ed Felten, Pam Wakefield

### **Treasurer's Report**

There was no Treasurer's Report.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Podolsky referred the Trustees to the monthly board report and noted that she is impressed the by staff and the work they do. She noted the virtual Princeton Environmental Film Festival will be Oct. 12-18. She noted there are discussions about reopening more than just the Community Room which offers key services: browsing the collection, three computer workstations, printing/scanning, librarians on call, take and make crafts, and a mini bookstore. Ms. Podolosky noted that she and the staff are constantly reevaluating and watching the pandemic statistics, and will consider expanding the library hours with afterschool and evening hours.

### **Fundraising Update**

Ms. Ham noted the Development Office is planning the Fall Appeal and helping to introduce Ms. Podolsky to donors. Ms. Ham shared a fundraising report.

### **Determining Board Meeting dates**

The Board discussed and agreed to the following:

- For 2020: remainder of meetings, 5 p.m. start
- For 2020: third Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m. start

### **2021 Proposed Operating Budget**

Ms. Chernik noted that the budget reflects a conservative plan considering the uncertainty of 2021 library hours and services, and with respect to revenue from fines, fees, and the café revenue. She noted the library is requesting from the Municipality, a 1.75% increase over the 2020 allocation. The Municipality is also facing uncertainty regarding 2021 revenue expectations and may provide more guidance later in 2020 or early 2021 regarding funding levels. Ms. Chernik noted that the Friends normally contribute around \$200,000 per year, but are conservatively committing to an allocation of \$75,000 for 2021. As fundraising efforts for 2021 are more clearly focused, that number may change during the course of the year. She noted the annual appeal is doing well in 2020 and the goal for 2021 is currently at \$240,000. The unrestricted endowment distribution for 2021 is \$32,000 less than in 2020. She noted there are some increases in expenses that are outside of the library's control, such as an increase in the minimum wage impacting cleaning services and increases to electricity supply rates. A spending freeze remains in effect and efforts have been made to reduce costs to offset these increases.

Ms. Chernik noted the Finance Committee has discussed several scenarios to plan for any reductions in 2021 funding, and will have offsetting savings in expenses to implement, if necessary.

**2021 Proposed Capital Budget**

Ms. Chernik noted the Finance Committee Reviewed the capital budget. A project added to the capital budget that was submitted to the board was to replace the obsolete software and controllers for the window shades.

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment**

Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2020.