



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES October 21, 2020

### In Attendance

- Trustees: Robert Ginsberg, Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Yamile Slebi (5:06 p.m.), Pam Wakefield
- Not Present: Barak Bar-Cohen, Mayor Liz Lempert
- Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Lisa Ham, Janie Hermann, Kristin Friberg, Andre Levie, Janice Painter, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Sonja Vloeberghs, Marissa Warren
- Others: Doug B (member of the public), Andrea Bradley (Friends), Brad Caruso (WithumSmith+Brown), Chiara Goldenstern (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep), Arthniel Scott (WithumSmith+Brown), Dina Shaw (Friends), Eleni Staikos (Teen Rep)

At 5:01 p.m. Ms. Miller called the meeting to order and noted that proper notice of the meeting, as required by the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S. 10:4-6 et seq), was posted in the library, published on the library's website, sent to the municipal clerk, the Princeton Packet, Town Topics, the Trenton Times and to the standard distribution list.

### Consent Agenda

- Sept. 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- Final September Bills
- Preliminary October Bills
- Resolution 2020-17: Q3 Restricted Gifts
- 2021 Holidays and Closings Schedule

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** Mr. Ginsberg moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously; Ms. Slebi was not present for the vote.

### Board Materials

Ms. Miller mentioned the Board Materials included in the Board packet. There was no discussion on the included materials.

### Audit Presentation

Ms. Chernik introduced Mr. Brad Caruso, partner at WithumSmith+Brown and audit project lead, and Mr. Niel Scott, CPA at WithumSmith+Brown and audit project manager.

Mr. Caruso thanked the team at the library for their cooperation and for making efforts to ensure the audit could be conducted during these challenging times. He noted the financial statements are in accordance with the State of NJ Department of Community Affairs basis of accounting. Mr. Caruso referred the Board to the results of the Dec. 31, 2019 Audit & Required Communications included with board packet.

Mr. Scott read the required communications and comments; the comments noted there were no challenges, indications, findings or other problems reported and there were no material weaknesses related to internal control over financial reporting based on the audit. He reviewed the financial statements with the Board who had no questions. He noted the audit is substantially completed with the signed management representation letter to be provided upon approval of the audit report.

Mr. Caruso pointed out that the audit includes a statement regarding the disrupted normal operating revenues in 2020 due to the library closing because of the coronavirus public health emergency.

Mr. Scott and Mr. Caruso thanked the team at the library and noted that the auditing team received full cooperation from the management and staff of the library.

Mr. Ginsberg motioned to accept the 2019 Audit as presented by WithumSmith+Brown; Ms. Slebi seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Chernik referred the Board to the Budget vs Actual in their Board packet. She noted although there remains reduced revenue, there has been continued support from annual giving and hopes that will continue through the end of the year. Ms. Chernik noted there were some savings, mainly due to the current situation: building cleaning services, cleaning and office supplies, utilities, unfilled open staff positions, fewer building repairs and maintenance, and staff being thoughtful about spending.

Ms. Chernik noted that the library hopes to end the year with a positive fund balance which will help with cash flow as the library awaits a decision from the municipality on its request for a 1.75% increase.

#### **Friends of the Library Report**

Ms. Bradley noted:

- The bookstore opened today and sales went very well.
- Jane Nieman, bookstore manager, has resigned but will continue as a Friends volunteer; the Friends are currently interviewing to fill the position.
- Donations are not being accepted, but they continue to work on plans to make that happen. Ms. Podolsky has agreed to give the Friends some space in the Community Room to quarantine books, and as they continue to sell books, space is freed up on the fourth floor.
- The Friends received an unusual donation, a book with an autograph and cartoon by Charlie Chaplin 1925; the estimated assessment is \$3,500-\$5,000.
- Ticket sales continue for Beyond Words. Nov. 7 is the first event with David Remnick and two colleagues from The New Yorker, on Dec. 5 - Bakari Sellars in conversation with Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, and on Jan. 7 Kate Anderson Brower in conversation with Professor Kevin Kruse.
- In an effort to support local businesses and create a strong community event, the Friends purchased books for Beyond Words through Labyrinth Books, and are highlighting ten local restaurants and food purveyors on all three Beyond Words evenings as Food for Thought.

- Two Friends Evenings in the next few weeks are: Oct. 28 with Deborah Portiz and Nov. 3 with Sam Wang, with additional events scheduled.

### **Foundation Report**

There was no report.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Teen Reps**

The teen reps introduced themselves: Elizabeth Leonard, senior at PHS and a returning Teen Rep, Chiara Goldenstern, senior at PHS, and Eleni Staikos, junior at PHS.

Ms. Leonard noted the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) has had two meetings and have a podcast called “Keeping Tabs” – which currently has two episodes, one interviewing author Riley Sager, and the other, with local author, Megan McCafferty.

Ms. Goldenstern noted that TAB are planning virtual programs, keeping up their presence on Instagram with information on voting and will be doing Teen Book Tuesday which highlights a different book each week from the library’s virtual collection. They are also planning their yearly a capella night, or Friday Night Live, as a virtual event.

Eleni Staikos noted there 28 TAB members from four local high schools, Princeton Day School, The Pennington School, Princeton High School, and The Stuart School. They are excited about the TAB program, Chapter a Day, and are expanding their YouTube channel.

Ms. Conlon noted that Marissa Warren, Teen Services Librarian, works with TAB, and created pairs of members: returning members with new members. Being a teen representative Ms. Conlon noted, not only gives the teens an opportunity to see firsthand how a nonprofit board operates and highlight the work the group is doing, it is building a bridge between the teens and the library.

### **President’s Report**

Ms. Miller remarked that today was a memorable day for the library as all three floors were open to the public for the first time since March. She congratulated the entire staff for the work done to make the library safe for patrons and staff while maintaining its familiarity and inclusiveness.

Ms. Miller congratulated Susan Conlon and the PEFF team for putting on an outstanding virtual environmental film festival that included many outstanding films and discussions about issues concerning the environment and how so many aspects of the natural world are being threatened.

Ms. Miller noted that she attended the virtual Trustee Institute last Saturday, held by the New Jersey Library Trustees’ Association and thought it was excellent. She encouraged other Board members to visit the NJLTA website and participate in one of their virtual events.

Ms. Miller reminded the Board that the duties and obligations of a board member include securing adequate funding for the operation of the library. She noted that although the library is fortunate to have a financial officer, Susan Chernik, and a fundraising staff, led by Lisa Ham, who do an excellent job of securing funding for the library, it is the Trustees’ obligation to be sure that funding is in place. She also reminded the Trustees that they should know with the names of all Princeton’s elected officials and be familiar the library’s mission and bylaws, as well as have knowledge of current library legislation and the professional organizations that assist libraries and trustees.

Mr. Felten, Ms. Slebi, Ms. Hawes and Ms. Podolsky also attended the Trustee Institute. Ms. Podolsky will share the recordings of the event with all of the Trustees. Ms. Slebi suggested coordinating a staff presentation led by the speaker that discussed library security during the pandemic. Ms. Podolsky had the same thought and began arrangements for an all-staff presentation.

### **Committee Reports**

- Finance Committee – no report.
- Reopening Committee - Ms. Jang had no report.
- Bylaws and Policies Committee – Ms. Hawes, who agreed to be the chair at their meeting on Oct. 14, noted the committee will review current bylaws, submit edits to the Board and welcome comments.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Podolsky also thanked Susan Conlon, Kim Dorman and everyone involved in the successful presentation of 21 films and six Q&A sessions for the Princeton Environmental Film Festival.

Ms. Podolsky noted that she and many others were excited that the library reopened today, with Ms. Miller being the first customer. She thanked the Board for all of their support through the many changes and difficult months, and for their support in keeping the staff and customers safe. She also thanked the Board for the lovely bouquet of flowers that is on display at the Lending Services desk, and all staff behind the desks and those that helped prepare the building for reopening.

The library expanded contactless hold pick up hours, noted Ms. Podolsky, and the library hopes to continue to provide virtual services and programs even as it begins to provide in-person services again. She noted the staff are doing a phenomenal job managing and balancing in-person and virtual services.

She referred the Board to the end of the Board report and the photo of a special visitor – a squirrel – that made its way into the Quiet Room and safely out of the library all on its own.

### **Fundraising Update**

Ms. Ham noted that the development office is on track with the fall annual appeal, and are busy preparing for the Beyond Words benefit. She noted that in the fall appeal, they will be asking for additional gifts for digital content.

### **Meeting Schedule/Adjournment**

Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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