



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES December 16, 2020

In Attendance

- Trustees: Barak Bar-Cohen, Robert Ginsberg, Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Jennifer Jang, Mayor Liz Lempert, Ruth Miller, Yamile Slebi, Pam Wakefield
- Not Present: Robert Ginsburg
- Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Lisa Ham, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley
- Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends), Chiara Goldenstern (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep), Eleni Staikos (Teen Rep), two members of the public

At 5:03 p.m. Ms. Miller called the meeting to order and noted that notice of the meeting was given as required by the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S. 10:4-6 et seq). The notice was posted in the library, published on the library's website, and sent to the municipal clerks, the *Princeton Packet*, *Town Topics*, and *Trenton Times* and distributed to the standard distribution list.

Consent Agenda

- Nov. 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- Final November Bills
- Preliminary December Bills
- Resolution 2020-20: Cleaning Services Contract Change Order

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

Board Materials

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

Friends of the Library Report

Ms. Bradley noted the second event in the Beyond Words benefit series went very well and the third, and final event, will be on Jan. 9 with Kate Anderson Brower in conversation with Kevin Kruse. She noted that the Friends met in preparation for 2021. The Friends are planning a (virtual) spring event and hope to have an in-person event late in the fall.

The bookstore is doing well, the Friends will be trialing acceptance of donations in a few weeks, and are exploring on-line sales.

Ms. Bradley noted she will remain Friends President in 2021 with Mel Gryzmala and Dina Shaw as vice presidents.

Foundation Report

There was no Foundation report.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Teen Representatives – Ms. Leonard noted that the Teen Advisory Board is planning events for 2021 and they are trying more outreach through social media. They are continuing the Chapter a Day readings and in January will read Peter Rabbit via YouTube.

Ms. Goldenstern noted that TAB is running a best of 2020 competition for movies, songs, TV shows and books, with 297 votes already in. They intend to stream one of the nominated movies, and will share the competition results at the January Board of Trustees meeting.

Ms. Staikos noted that TAB continues to offer Teen Book Tuesday, promoting a book from PPL's e-library; Friday Night Live (a capella event) may be a spring event rather than a winter event in 2021 and there are a few more podcasts expected.

President's Report

Ms. Miller read the following:

The president's report this evening takes the form of a tribute to Mayor Liz Lempert who on December 31st will be stepping down as mayor and consequently stepping down as a member of the board of trustees of the Princeton Public Library.

I first met Liz when she was a member of Princeton Township committee. Seems like a long time ago. And I couldn't have been more pleased when, after the Township and the Borough consolidated, she became mayor of the new municipality of Princeton.

Her participation on the board of trustees of the Princeton Public Library has made my participation that much more enjoyable. Liz comes by her enthusiasm for libraries partly from her late father who was a staunch supporter of the San Mateo Public Library in California. She has been a constant booster of our library and, particularly after we were hit by Covid, she has found ways for the library to work with the municipality. She has been a conscientious member of the board, and attended most meetings, even when it's been difficult for her to do so because of the demands placed on her as mayor. I'm appreciative of that and hope that her retirement as mayor will give her much more time to come to the library – maybe even reading for pleasure! On behalf of the board, I wish her well and look forward to working with her in whatever new challenges she undertakes. Congratulations Liz! We will miss you.

Ms. Miller congratulated the Friends on their successful events and virtual Beyond Words, and encouraged all Board members to attend the final event on Jan. 9.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Bar-Cohen applauded the efforts of Ms. Chernik and Ms. Podolsky who used their knowledge and skills to put the library in a positive cash position at the end of 2020.

Ms. Chernik noted that for the year end, the public and general fund balances will increase in total by approximately \$100-\$150K; the Annual Appeal is doing well and will surpass the conservative estimates made. She thanked the selectors for being careful in spending and for giving their excess funds to other departments.

Director's Report

Ms. Podolsky thanked Ms. Chernik for continuing to work diligently to allow the library to come out ahead. She also thanked Mayor Lempert for being a library champion and for collaborating and supporting the library's initiative.

Ms. Podolsky noted that the reopening continues to go well and thanked the Board for supporting the staff's careful and safe reopening plan. She noted that she continues to evaluate the situation and that although the amount of visitors is steadily increasing, she is confident in the current plan and at this time there is no need to increase library hours, but consideration continues as to when the library can expand in-person services.

Ms. Podolsky noted that the library is in discussion with the Engineering Department from the municipality and Verizon regarding the placement of a 5G antenna on the roof of the library.

There was discussion about the current federal legislation and the possible placements (library roof, Hinds Plaza, adjacent to sidewalks) of the 4G and 5G poles. Ms. Podolsky noted there will be preliminary meetings before the Board is asked to make a decision. Mr. Bar-Cohen and Mr. Felten volunteered to be on a 5G committee.

Ms. Podolsky referred the Board to the 2020 Accomplishments included in their packet; she thanked the Board for being so supportive and to the staff for all of their efforts and accomplishments.

Fundraising Update

Ms. Belshaw noted although there are a few weeks remaining in the Annual Appeal, \$216,000 has already been donated from 706 donors, with additional donations of more than \$22,000 for Bridge the Digital Divide received. An endowed fund for digital and printed collections in the memory of Mary Wisnovsky, former Friends President, has so far 80 donors for \$26,000. Ms. Belshaw noted that in 2019, there were 19 major donors (those donating \$1K or more), this year there are 42 major donors, and there has been an 140% increase (approximately) of first time donors in 2020. Ms. Belshaw will provide a complete report at the January Board of Trustees meeting.

Ms. Belshaw thanked Ms. Bowers, IT Manager, for helping to provide hotspots for cardholders.

New Business

Ms. Wakefield, on behalf of the Nominating Committee (Pam Wakefield, Yamile Slebi, Robert Ginsberg), nominated the following slate of officers for 2021: Ruth Miller as President; Jennifer Jang as Vice President, and Barak Bar-Cohen as Treasurer. As Mr. Bar-Cohen has served three consecutive years as Treasurer, Ms. Wakefield noted that the Bylaws state: "If Board members believe that it is in the library's best interest, the Board may, by two-thirds vote of the entire membership, allow an officer to remain in office for longer than otherwise allowed herein."

Meeting Schedule/Adjournment

Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Jang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2021.