



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES January 20, 2021

In Attendance

- Trustees: Barak Bar-Cohen, Robert Ginsberg (joined 6:10 p.m.), Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Eve Niedergang, Yamile Slebi, Pam Wakefield
- Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley, Bonnie Sprouls, Sonja Vloeberghs
- Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends), Chiara Goldenstern (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep), one member of the public

At 6:02 p.m. Ms. Miller called the meeting to order and stated that 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). Proper 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.

Election of 2020 BOT Officers – Ms. Wakefield, as chair of the Nominating Committee, moved to approve the slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee: Ms. Miller, President; Ms. Jang, Vice President; and Mr. Bar-Cohen, Treasurer. Ms. Slebi seconded the motion. There was no discussion and no additional nominees; the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Ginsberg was not present for the vote.

Consent Agenda

- ~~Dec. 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes~~
- Final December Bills
- Resolution 2020-21: Q4 Restricted Gifts
- Annual Resolutions
 - Resolution 2021-01: Cash Management Plan
 - Resolution 2021-02: Bank Account Signatures
 - Resolution 2021-03: Vendor Contracts
 - Resolution 2021-04: Library Attorneys
 - Resolution 2021-05: Library Auditors
 - Resolution 2021-06: Open Public Meetings Act
 - Resolution 2021-07: Official Newspapers
- Resolution 2021-08: Temporary Budget

Approval of Consent Agenda – Ms. Jang requested that the Dec. 16, 2020 minutes be removed from the Consent Agenda. Ms. Wakefield moved approval of the Consent Agenda minus the Dec. 16, 2020 minutes. Ms. Slebi seconded the motion. The minutes were removed from the consent agenda. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Ginsberg was not present for the vote.

Approval of Dec. 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Ms. Jang requested the Dec. 16, 2020 minutes, under New Business, be revised to include, that Mr. Bar-Cohen served three consecutive years as Treasurer. Ms. Wakefield moved approval of the Dec. 16, 2020 minutes as amended. Ms. Jang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Ginsberg was not present for the vote.

Board Materials – The 2020 Statistics Report and Q4 Report will be presented at the February Board meeting. There was no additional discussion on the included materials.

Friends of the Library Report - Ms. Bradley noted the Friends have started the year on a positive note. Sales from the bookstore were approximately \$2500 and book donations are now being accepted by appointment. She noted the Friends are busy planning the Spring Book Lovers Luncheon, thinking about the next Beyond Words, and considering ideas for other events.

Ms. Bradley noted there are events planned for February and March and two Friends events remaining in January:

- Jan. 25 - Eddie Glaude Jr in conversation with Amani Perry; they will discuss Mr. Glaude's new book, "Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Message For Our Own"
- Jan. 30 - Richard Cordray and Ralph Nader in conversation with Carl Mayer. Special guest Andy Shallal will prepare dishes from Mr. Nader's recently released cookbook.

Foundation Report – There was no Foundation report; Mr. Hill was not at the meeting.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Teen Representatives – Ms. Leonard noted that the Teen Advisory Board continues to expand its social media presence: Mockapella on Instagram; Keeping TABs podcast; Teen Book Tuesday on Instagram. She noted they are planning programming for Black History Month. Ms. Goldenstern noted that TAB is auditing all of their programs and working with local groups and businesses, and collaborating with local organizations to reach the underserved community.

President's Report

First let me wish you all a happy and healthy new year and a happy inauguration day!

I'd like to welcome Eve Niedergang to the board of trustees. Eve is the representative of Mark Freda, the new mayor of Princeton. She is no stranger to the library, having served for many years on the board of the Friends, and having helped run the book sale, also for many years. So she has contributed to the library in many ways and I'm delighted that we have yet another opportunity to be grateful to her!

I'd also like to congratulate Ed Felten who was re-appointed to the board for a full term – Ed had been filling the term left by Andrew Erlichson, which expired at the end of 2020, so I am very happy that he will now have a full term on the board.

Next, we should all be very proud that Princeton Public Library received the highest possible rating, 5 stars, from The Library Journal, a publication for library professionals. This is the fifth consecutive year or our library to achieve this prestigious recognition and we are the only library in New Jersey to be so recognized. I want to express my gratitude to Jennifer and to our outstanding staff. It is a real tribute to their hard work, particularly during this most difficult past year.

Now that the prospect of vaccine delivery is in sight, we need to start thinking about the library's reopening in full later this year. At least we can start thinking about it, even if we are a long way from contemplating a date. I would like to start by naming a sub-committee to undertake a process for

thinking about what innovative steps the library could consider for the future. If you would be interested in serving on such a committee, please email me or call me to let me know your interest.

I'd also like to let you know about JerseyConnect, the network and technology services program provided by the New Jersey State Library. This program offers free technology solutions to all New Jersey libraries. This year they have introduced new services to help with remote work and social distancing. I assume that our library staff are familiar with these developments but I thought that, as trustees, you would all be interested in knowing what services the State Library offers.

Finally, I wanted to tell you that one of our own is being honored this year. Pam will be receiving one of the 2021 Tribute to Women Awards presented by the local Y for her work as a community advocate. This is a real honor and we can be very proud of Pam's selection.

Committee Reappointments – The following agreed to participate on the committees listed below:

- Bylaws and Policies Committee: Edwina Hawes (chair), Ed Felten, Robert Ginsberg
- Finance Committee: Barak Bar-Cohen, Pam Wakefield, Jennifer Jang (no chair identified)
- Nominating Committee: Pam Wakefield (chair), Yamile Slebi, Robert Ginsberg

Ms. Podolsky reminded the committee members to schedule meetings through Ms. Rackley and/or Ms. Podolsky and each chair should prepare a report (oral or written) for the monthly board meetings.

Ms. Miller noted that Trustees interested in participating on a Strategic Planning committee and/or a Blue Skies (library innovation) committee should contact her.

Ms. Podolsky noted there has been no further information from the Municipality regarding the 5G tower; she anticipates creating and meeting with a subcommittee to discuss the proposal when more information is available.

Treasurer's Report – Ms. Chernik noted that the Finance Committee will meet prior to the Board meeting in February. She noted the library ended the year with a net positive for both the General and Public Funds. The higher than expected increase in General funds was due to the Annual Appeal raising \$314, 000 (\$286,000 in unrestricted gifts; \$28, 000 for Bridge the Digital Divide).

Director's Report – Ms. Podolsky welcomed Ms. Niedergang to the Trustees, and welcomed back Mr. Felten who was reappointed for a full five-year term. She congratulated the Friends on a very successful third installment of Beyond Words. She noted the five-star Library Journal rating and that she was proud of the staff for this accomplishment.

Ms. Podolsky noted that the library's careful approach to reopening has allowed a slow but steady increase in visitors. As COVID numbers increase, Ms. Podolsky said the library hours will remain as is, while she and the staff continue to reassess and reevaluate the situation and explore expansion of hours.

Ms. Podolsky congratulated Ms. Painter, head of Access Services, on her retirement from the library after more than 23 years. She noted that Ms. Painter will be missed and that all at the library wish her well when she retires at the end of January.

Fundraising Update – There was no fundraising report; Ms. Belshaw was not at the meeting.

Board Comments

Mr. Ginsberg asked if a staff member would give a report at the February Board meeting on the partnership between the library and the public schools for Black History Month.

Ms. Miller noted that she had a brief conversation with Mr. Landau concerning the remaining merchandise at his store; there was a brief discussion among the Trustees. Ms. Podolsky will follow up.

Ms. Wakefield thanked Ms. Podolsky for her first year with the library. Ms. Wakefield enquired about the Bridge the Digital Divide initiative; Ms. Bowers noted the donations to this initiative allowed the library to purchase 20 Chromebooks and 15 wireless hotspots. The library will lend five wireless hotspots, ten Chromebooks, and 11 kits (wireless hotspots and Chromebooks).

Meeting Schedule/Adjournment

Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2021.