



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES March 17, 2021

In Attendance

Trustees	Barak Bar-Cohen, Robert Ginsberg (6:07 p.m.), Edward Felten, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Eve Niedergang (6:35 p.m.), Pam Wakefield
Library Staff	Lisa Belshaw, Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Janie Hermann, Stephanie Oster, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Sonja Vloeberghs
Others	Andrea Bradley (Friends), David Hill (Foundation), Chiara Goldenstern (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep), Eleni Staikos (Teen Rep), four members of the public

At 6:03 p.m. Ms. Miller called the meeting to order and announced that in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and State regulations governing remote public meetings, adequate and electronic notice of this meeting were provided on March 8, to the Municipal Clerk, Princeton Packet, Town Topics and Trenton Times, posted in the library, on the library's and municipality's websites, on the door of the library's main public entrance, and distributed to the standard distribution list. She stated that because of the state of emergency in NJ regarding COVID-19, the meeting was being held via Zoom and indicated where on the library's website the public could find the meeting agenda, the instructions for accessing the meeting and for making public comment prior to and during the meeting. Ms. Miller explained the audio muting function for those providing public comment via computer, mobile device and telephone. She included standards of conduct to be followed by members of the public making comments and indicated a three-minute time limit allowed per comment.

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

- Feb. 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Feb. 17, 2021 Closed Session Minutes
- Final February Bills
- Resolution 2021-11: Emergency Temporary Appropriations

Board Materials – There was no discussion on the included materials: Monthly Report, Princeton Public Library Risk Fraud Assessment

Staff Spotlight – Ms. Miller introduced Stephanie Oster as this month's staff spotlight. Ms. Oster gave a brief description of her job, reporting to the Development Office, the Friends and to the Foundation. She talked about why she enjoys working at PPL and a bit about her life outside of PPL. Mr. Hill and Ms. Bradley commented on the fabulous job Ms. Oster does.

Friends Report – Andrea Bradley, Friends President, noted the Spring Booklovers Luncheon will feature Erin French, author of “Finding Freedom: A Cook’s Story; Remaking a Life from Scratch” on April 29 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. She noted they are working on an October Beyond Words event which they hope will be an in-person event, but will plan a virtual event, if necessary.

Ms. Bradley and Mr. David Hill, Foundation President, noted they will be working on the possibility of merging the Friends organization and the Foundation.

Foundation Report – Mr. Hill noted the current assets of the endowment are approximately \$16.5 million.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Teen Representatives – Ms. Leonard noted that the Teen Advisory Board are still working on the same projects; Trivia Thursdays, among others. Ms. Goldenstern noted that TAB is working on 1st Line Fridays in which they post the first line of a book, and they are preparing to set a date for I Read This Book. Ms. Staikos noted that TAB will be introducing a Day in the Life which will, every other week, portray favorite hobbies and books of a TAB member.

President’s Report

My report begins with our concerns about municipal funding of the library. The municipal budget is now being prepared and there are indications that the library, along with other organizations and commissions funded by the municipality, will have its budget cut. All fingers are crossed but it is hard to be optimistic. If there is an appropriate occasion, I hope that Trustees will be willing to attend a virtual Council meeting and be willing to speak out to emphasize the important place that the library occupies in the life of our town. I’m sure that Jennifer will advise us of any developments.

In the meantime, the first week of April will be National Library Week and as all Trustees know, we are mounting an effort to show support for the library’s staff, who have borne an outsize share of the difficult year that has been starting in February 2020. I won’t go into too many details here, but it has been an all-trustee effort and I believe an important one, showing appreciation for our outstanding staff.

I want to bring attention to a new podcast started by trustee Ed Felten, on the increasing role of A.I. in our society. The podcast is titled “A.I. Nation” and is a joint endeavor by Princeton University and radio station WHYY.

I’m looking forward to the library’s being open on Sundays and I expect that Jennifer will give us more information about the new extended hours.

Finally, Princeton Public Library was featured prominently in a report on public libraries authored by The New America Foundation, whose Executive Director, Anne-Marie Slaughter, is a Princeton resident and a long-term supporter of PPL. We hope that the report will lead to increased funding and support from other organizations.

Treasurer’s Report – As there has been no change, Ms. Chernik, speaking on behalf of Mr. Bar-Cohen, noted there is nothing to report.

Director's Report – Ms. Podolsky noted the following:

- She and Ms. Chernik will be presenting a brief overview of the library's budget to the Town Council on March 22. She noted that they met with the Council's Finance Committee and provided an overview of the library's budget and answered questions. She asked that those that were interested in joining could change their name when they joined to "Library – name" to show support for the library.
- The library was mentioned in a New America report, "Public Libraries and the Pandemic." While speaking with Anne Marie Slaughter, Princeton resident, library supporter and CEO of New America, Ms. Slaughter told Ms. Podolsky that her staff reached out to library staff while writing the report, unbeknownst to her, and she was delighted that the library was mentioned in the report.
- There has been no update on the 5G proposal.
- The library is expanding its hours and opening on Sundays from 1-5 p.m. beginning March 14. The occupancy levels have also increased. She and staff have been reviewing the hours during which visitors come to the library, the services required, when those services are required, staffing needs and budgets. She expects there to be another interim of expanded hours before the library opens to pre-pandemic hours.
- The strategic planning committee will meet soon to review proposals submitted by consultants to assist with the strategic plan. It's a good time to get community and stakeholder feedback.
- Princeton Environmental Film Festival will be from April 13-19.
- The library is celebrating Women's History Month; staff have created a variety of programs, exhibits and interactive challenges highlighting achievements of women over the years.
- The NJ State Library has received money for NJ Libraries and the state librarian is asking for suggestions on how that money should be spent. Ms. Podolsky asked the Board if they had ideas to submit them to her.

Ms. Niedergang noted that the municipality will be receiving money from the government; however, this money will have spending restrictions and will not solve the town's budget issues. She noted the town's budget will be introduced on March 22, with a public hearing on April 12.

Fundraising Update – Ms. Belshaw noted Library Giving Day is April 7 during National Library Week. The Development Office has been working on the Spring Appeal; which will be digital rather than with a letter. Ms. Miller noted that Trustees should all try to donate on Library Giving Day.

Election of Foundation Board of Directors Statutory Members – Ms. Podolsky noted that as per the Foundation Bylaws, the Trustees are asked to approve new members to the Foundation Board of Directors (there are no new members this year) and statutory members. Mr. Ginsberg moved to approve the following statutory members to the Foundation Board of Directors: Executive Director of the library, Jennifer Podolsky, a member of the Friends, Mel Grzymala, and the President of the Board of Trustees, Ruth Miller – who designated Ms. Slebi as her representative. Mr. Felten seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Revisions to Policies and Procedures Manual – Ms. Podolsky noted that changes were made to the Policies and Procedures Manual due to the addition of lending: Library-in-a-Box, mobile hotspots, Chromebooks, and mobile internet kits. Mr. Ginsberg moved to approve the changes to Sections 2.4, 2.5 and the Fee Schedule in the Policies and Procedures Manual. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Comments - Mr. Ginsberg thanked Ms. Bess for sharing the library's quarantine protocols that the Princeton Public Schools will be using for their libraries. Mr. Ginsberg and Ms. Belshaw both acknowledged Ms. Oster for the work she does.

Meeting Schedule/Adjournment

Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Jang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2021.