



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES April 21, 2021

In Attendance

Trustees: Robert Ginsberg, Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Eve Niedergang, Yamile Slebi, Pam Wakefield

Library Staff: Lisa Belshaw, Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Kim Dorman, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Bonnie Sprouls, Sonja Vloeberghs

Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends), Mark Freda (Mayor), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep), Eleni Staikos (Teen Rep), one member of the public

At 6:03 p.m. Ms. Miller called the meeting to order.

Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act –Ms. Miller 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 April 12, 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. Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- March 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- April 15, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes
- Final March Bills
- Preliminary April Bills
- Resolution 2021-13: Café Contract Extension

Board Materials - There was no discussion on the included materials: Monthly Report, Quotes for Products and Services, Quarterly Statistics, or Budget vs Actual.

Mayor’s Remarks – Ms. Niedergang gave a brief bio of Mayor Freda: born and raised in Princeton, a longtime Princeton Fire Department volunteer, an active volunteer at Princeton Fire and Rescue, co-chair of the Spirit of Princeton, and involved in many other civic commitments during his life in

Princeton. Ms. Niedergang noted that Mark and his wife, Beth, have two children and a dog; now two dogs commented Mayor Freda.

Mayor Freda thanked the Board and the staff at the library. He stated that the library was a true treasure in Princeton and that the vast number of people understand that. Mayor Freda commented that he was pleased to be at the meeting to listen, and offered his assistance to Ms. Miller or Ms. Podolsky if it was ever needed.

Responding to Ms. Miller's question as to whether he frequented the library when he was young, Mayor Freda said he used the library in elementary, middle and high school, and as an early reader he remembers coming into the children's section of the library, taking out stacks of books.

Staff Spotlight – Ms. Miller introduced Kim Dorman, Community Engagement Coordinator. Ms. Dorman noted that, although she was not born in Princeton, she has lived here, growing up in the house her father was born in, since she was six months old. She has worked at the library since 2010, as a library associate for the Adult Services department and the Programming team, becoming the Community Engagement Coordinator in 2016. She noted she promotes all the good work the library does, collaborating with many organizations in town, listening to other people and organizations and discerning whether the library may be able to support their work.

Mayor Freda stated that Ms. Dorman clearly reflects the treasure the library is in our community. In response to Ms. Niedergang question as to what she has learned that surprised her, Ms. Dorman noted that she never ceases to be amazed at how many people love the library and that the library is a reason people move to Princeton.

Ms. Dorman noted that because of the diversity of what the library offers and an administration that considers what may be possible, the library can be flexible, as an example in one instance, taking library resources and applying them to different situations, such as the PrincetonCovid website.

Princeton Environmental Film Festival – Ms. Miller introduced Susan Conlon. Ms. Conlon noted the festival exceeded her and Ms. Dorman's expectations, and expect that in the future the festival will be a combination of virtual and in-person viewings. This year, Ms. Conlon, Ms. Dorman along with Ms. Bowers and Ms. Chuong, learned and used the platform Eventive for the film festival and loved it and will be using it for other events. 2250 tickets were "sold" (no charge) for 19 films shown in six days, with seven Q&A sessions. There were 1779 attendees from NJ/NY/PA; 110 from 31 other states and 110 watching internationally.

Ms. Dorman noted the library is the underlying sponsor of the festival, and with the continued support from Church & Dwight and Whole Earth Center, the library is able to offer the films for no charge to the viewers. She noted "Observatory" filmed by Gaspar Bakos, from Princeton University's Department of Astrophysical Sciences and directed by Jared Flesher had 138 people attend the Q&A.

Friends Report – Andrea Bradley, Friends President, noted the unusual donation - a book with an autograph and cartoon by Charlie Chaplin dated 1925 – the Friends received in Oct. 2020, sold with another rare book by Swann Gallery, for over \$6000.

Bookstore sales are increasing; the Friends sold over \$5000 from the used bookstore in March.

The Booklovers Luncheon will feature Erin French, owner/chef of The Lost Kitchen restaurant in Freedom, Maine, in conversation with Doris Friedensohn on April 29 at 11 a.m. The Friends partnered with Labyrinth Books, and with Occasions by Cintron to provide a boxed lunch.

Ms. Bradley noted the Friends are working on an October Beyond Words, it may be a series event held virtually, possibly with an in-person cocktail party. One of the speakers will be Omar El Akkad author of “American War” written in 2017, with a new book expected in the fall. The Friends are seeking additional speakers.

Ms. Bradley noted that she and Mr. Hill, Foundation Board President, continue to discuss the restructuring and merger of the Friends and the Foundation. More details and updates will be shared with the Trustees, Friends Council and Foundation over the next few months.

Foundation Report – There was no report.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Teen Representatives – Ms. Leonard said that it was an honor to meet the Mayor. She noted that Ms. Goldenstern was unable to attend this evening’s meeting. Ms. Leonard shared that April was and is her favorite month at the library – Poetry Month - remembering when she was younger, she could ask a librarian on the third floor to read a poem. TAB is working poetry trivia featuring Black poets into Trivia Thursdays. During Children’s Book Week, May 3-9, they will be adding children’s book and games into their social media content and trivia. “I Read This Book” will be held on June 1 or 15; details to follow.

Ms. Staikos noted TAB is continuing 1st Line Fridays on Instagram, generating interest for new and upcoming authors, posting the first line of their books with a poetry theme for April, as well as environment, climate change and natural disasters. In May they will feature Asian Pacific American month and Mental Health Awareness; June will feature Pride month, the LGBTQ community and Juneteenth. Ms. Staikos noted that TAB is strengthening their connection with the Go Between club, whose middle school members typically become TAB members. TAB applications will be open soon.

President’s Report (Ms. Miller): *The Trustees acknowledged the superhuman effort by the whole library staff over the past year by celebrating them during National Library Week at the beginning of this month. Each staff member received a wooden planter of succulents with a personal note of gratitude from a Trustee. These were very well-received. During the same week, the Friends gave each staff person a box of two cupcakes from Bent Spoon. These were devoured enthusiastically, which I assume was not the case with the succulents.*

Undeterred by COVID restrictions, but observing them strictly nonetheless, the library’s always-welcomed Environmental Film Festival took place, again with great enthusiasm. Some of the films were truly outstanding.

And the library is now open on Sundays which is a step towards a return to normality. Not there yet, but on the way, appropriately cautiously.

And fellow trustee Bob Ginsberg is recovering from rotator cuff surgery. Get lots of rest Bob and we will look forward to your joining us in person one of these days.

The municipality will report to the public on its budget on April 26 and we look forward to hearing the results of their deliberations.

Bylaws and Policies Committee Report – Ms. Hawes noted the committee met and are thankful that Mr. Ginsberg is part of the committee having been on the committee when the bylaws were last updated. The committee plans to read the library’s current bylaws and compare them to similar library’s

bylaws; they will be work in connection with the strategic plan committee and use resources from the NJ State Library and NJ Library Association.

Finance Committee Report – Ms. Chernik noted the committee met and reviewed the 1st quarter budget vs actual reports which the committee approved. There was a negative impact on general revenue due to the building being closed for three weeks; expenses were fairly low in most categories, as there has been reduced staff and limited public in the building.

Strategic Planning Committee – There was no report; they will be meeting soon.

Director’s Report – Ms. Podolsky thanked the Trustees and the Friends for recognizing the staff during National Library Week. She noted:

- The Annual Report is now online for viewing and sharing. Thanks to the Development office and the Office of Marketing and Communications for the quick turnaround; the report looks fabulous.
- On April 7, Library Outreach Day, Kim Dorman and Tim Quinn formed a group of staff members and went door to door in the Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood dropping off library information door hangers. The staff also teamed up with the Health Department and manned a table outside the Pannell Center, helping people sign up for library cards and for vaccination appointments.
- April is Poetry Month and the library offers a different poem read by library staff each day.
- Thanks to Becky Bowers and the IT team for working with the public schools to promote Sora Library Connect that allows students to access the library’s Overdrive collection from their PPS Overdrive Sora accounts. One login now gives students access to two e-book collections.
- JiHae Ju, Digital Collections Coordinator, has been promoted to head of Access Services, filling the position vacated when Janice Painter retired at the end of January.
- Morgan Taylor, Head of Adult Services has taken a position as Director of the Worth-Pinkham Memorial Library in Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ. The library is seeking applicants for that position.
- The library is also looking for a Humanities Coordinator, a position vacated by Hannah Schmidl who moved to Texas with her family.
- The library continues to move forward with a careful and safe expansion of library hours and services. Additional hours will be announced soon and the library will continue to reduce the quarantine time.

Fundraising Update – Ms. Belshaw noted that on Library Giving Day, during National Library Week, the library received 40 gifts for \$11, 300. She noted her office is working on an impact report and on the Annual Appeal that has received 127 gifts for \$53K thus far in 2021.

Meeting Schedule/Adjournment – Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 19, 2021.