



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES June 16, 2021

In Attendance

Trustees: Barak Bar-Cohen, Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Jennifer Jang, Ruth Miller, Eve Niedergang, Pam Wakefield

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Amanda Chuong, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, JiHae Ju, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Bonnie Sprouls, Sonja Vloeberghs

Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends), Brad Caruso (WithumSmith+Brown), Chiara Goldenstern (Teen Rep), Elizabeth Leonard (Teen Rep), Arthniel Scott (WithumSmith+Brown), Eleni Staikos (Teen Rep)

At 6:02 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 June 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.

Consent Agenda

- May 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- May 27, 2021 Emergency Meeting Minutes
- Final May Bills
- Preliminary June Bills
- Resolution 2021-14: Managed Network Services – Shared Service Agreement
- Resolution 2021-15: Network Technical Support Specialist – Shared Service Agreement

Approval of Consent Agenda: Ms. Wakefield moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Ms. Niedergang 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.

Audit Presentation

Ms. Chernik Ms. Chernik noted the audit went well with thanks to the those at the library that provide information and to Mr. Caruso, Mr. Scott and their team. Ms. Chernik referred the Board to the audit presentation included in their meeting packet. She noted, as the auditors will also, that the audit is missing information dependent on the state and not yet released; the missing information does not impact the library's financials. Ms. Chernik noted that when state provides the missing information, the audit will again be presented for the Board's review and approval at a future meeting.

Mr. Caruso, partner at WithumSmith+Brown and audit project lead, noted that they are waiting for reports from the state to complete the audit. He thanked Ms. Chernik and the team at the library for their cooperation in the audit process while on site with social distancing and remotely.

Mr. Niel Scott, CPA at WithumSmith+Brown and audit project manager, referred the Board to the results of the Dec. 30, 2020 Audit & Required Communications included with board packet. He noted the financial statements are in accordance with the State of NJ Department of Community Affairs basis of accounting.

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 noted the two open items: the management representation letter which will be provided upon approval of the audit report; and the footnote disclosures from the State of NJ Pension/OPEB Report which will be included in the audit as soon as the State of NJ releases the audit reports to update that information.

Mr. Caruso reviewed the financial statements with the Board. Mr. Bar-Cohen asked if there were any issues related to the pandemic that influenced the treatment of any accounting or financial matters that would continue for next year. Mr. Caruso and Mr. Scott said there were not.

Staff Spotlight – Amanda Chuong

Ms. Chuong noted that as a YS librarian, her primary responsibilities are the youth technology programming, the world language collection for children which includes approximately eight languages: Chinese (simplified and traditional), French, Korean, Japanese, Italian, Hebrew, Spanish, Russian; teen nonfiction collection, works with Teen Services librarian on middle school and high school engagement and outreach. She noted she has been with the library since 2013, and earned her library degree while working at the library.

Friends Report

Ms. Bradley noted the Book Store sales continue to increase with approximately \$7,000 in items sold in May. The Friends are planning their annual book sale in November and they have set up dollar book tables in the lobby of the library. Although the Friends giving was reduced to \$75,000 for 2021, they were able to make an early payment of \$45,000. Ms. Bradley noted the Friends are accepting book donations; however, they are running out of space and may suspend donations for a short time. The Friends helped out at the Pride Picnic and will help out at some of the library's summer events. They are working on Beyond Words which will include author Omar El Akkad and hope to have two virtual speaking events and an in-person cocktail party in October. Ms. Bradley noted that she and Mr. Hill continue to discuss the merging of the Friends and the Foundation; they have asked Ms. Slebi to be the liaison to the Trustees.

Foundation Report

There was no foundation report.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Teen Reps

Ms. Goldenstern, Ms. Leonard and Ms. Staikos noted that the Teen Advisory Board is winding down for the academic year; I Read This Book was a success with 46 people attending (the recording is posted on the library's YouTube channel); TAB participated in the Pride Picnic; a podcast featuring local author Megan McCafferty will be available in a few weeks followed by a podcast by previous PPL Teen Services Librarian Jocelyn Jimenez, and then a podcast by Caleb Roehrig; and that summer reading, Reading Colors Your World, has begun and to encourage teens to sign up; they can win prizes.

They thanked Ms. Chuong as she was an important part of TAB and I Read This Book could not have been presented without her.

Ms. Goldenstern, who will be attending the University of Amsterdam and Ms. Leonard who will be attending Vassar College in the fall, said that being teen representatives has been an incredible experience; they have such a love for the library. They have enjoyed attending BOT meetings and that the library has shaped their lives in so many different ways; they feel lucky to have had this experience. They thanked the Trustees for letting them attend the board meetings and report on TAB.

President's Report

Ms. Miller's report was as follows:

The library is taking steps to reopen fully, although with an abundance of caution, according to protocols set by the state and the local health department. But the first floor is beginning to look familiar again and it feels as if we can breathe when we come in to check out a book. I believe that many of the routines adopted during Covid will remain because of their practical implications and many which are popular with the public such as curbside check-ins will be difficult to stop. But there is light at the end of the tunnel for which I am truly grateful. Mostly, I remain grateful for Jennifer and her staff, who have performed yeoman's duty for the past eighteen months (who knew it would be so long?).

We have started a series of get-togethers to introduce Jennifer to members of the community who she would have gotten to know less formally in a different year with no pandemic. If any trustees have individuals who you feel Jennifer (and the library as a whole) would benefit from knowing, please don't hesitate to let me know. The schedule is being maintained by the Development Office (no, these are not occasions to ask directly for financial support, but rather to introduce Jennifer to long-time and new members of the community). Each one of the trustees will know individuals in the community who would enjoy meeting Jennifer and vice versa, so please don't hesitate to bring their names forward. For example, I know that Bob had talked about members of the School Board, and I'm sure others have equally relevant names.

Last night, some of us enjoyed I Read This Book, which is always an impressive event mounted by the Teen Advisory Board. It was yet another stellar event for which we should all be proud that our three TAB board members did a great job coordinating as well as participating. Reading is clearly a priority for Princeton's teens and that bodes well for the future.

Treasurer's Report

There was no Treasurer's Report.

Director's Report

Ms. Podolsky encouraged the Trustees to read the Director's Report included in their Board packet. Ms. Podolsky noted:

- The library is open, near to pre-pandemic hours – there has been increased traffic, customers are staying longer, most are following the mask policy, and Study Rooms will reopen on Monday, June 21.
- The following increases: active borrowers: 11% in April 2021, 46% in May 2021; from April 2021 to May 2021, there has been a 37% increase in gate count and a 4% increase in circulation, with a 17% decrease in overall circulation compared to 2019.
- Allison Trimarco from Creative Capacity will be leading the Strategic Planning process following the Adaptive Planning method.
- The library has hired Janet Simon as a part-time project manager to lead and assist on the highest priority projects: restroom sink replacement, Community Room Phase 2, service desk refinishing, evaluating the air filtration system and replacing end of life equipment for the IT department.
- Verizon 5G negotiations are underway; she met with the consultant leading the negotiations with Verizon, as well as with Barak Bar-Cohen and Ed Felten. She will provide an update soon.

Fundraising Update

Ms. Podolsky shared the Fundraising report provided by the Development Office.

- The 2021 Annual Appeal, as of June 14 raised \$45,018 from 129 gifts compared to 2020: \$65,030 from 241 gifts, and 2019: \$58,000 from 205 gifts.
- The 2021 Impact Report is complete and will be mailed to donors this week; donors that gave \$1000 or more in 2021 (approx. 150) will also receive a signed note from Jennifer.
- Spring Appeal solicitations will be sent to cardholders at the end of June.
- Resuming lunches with Jennifer and selected donors; thank you to Ms. Wakefield and Ms. Miller for their assistance.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business:

Resolution 2021-16: Approval of 2021 Operating Budget - Ms. Chernik noted that in September a \$5.6M budget was presented to the Board. The following adjustments have been made to the budget now being presented at \$5.5M:

- Reduction of \$102,000 in the request to the municipality (these funds will be taken from the \$180,000 public fund balance, which was earmarked to be used for building maintenance and repairs that will be put on hold.)
- Reduction in revenue and expenses due to the temporary closing of the library building in January and reduced hours lasting longer than estimated. Original budget assumed resumption of normal hours starting January 1, 2021.
- Increase in revenue due to FEMA awarded grant, 100% reimbursement in eligible COVID expenses, totaling \$12,552.

Ms. Chernik noted that personnel costs were \$45,000 higher due to the cost of living adjustment awarded in November 2020, not in original 2020 budget – those increased salaries are included in the 2021 budget, offset by staff transition which reduced health benefits, and an increase of pension

liability, actual was higher than budget. She noted there was a \$16,000 savings in insurance due to our brokers renegotiating with our providers, talking to new providers and getting new quotes.

Ms. Niedergang moved approval of Resolution 2021-16: Approval of 2021 Operating Budget of \$5,530,520; Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2021-17: Employee Compensation 2021: Cost of Living Adjustment

Ms. Jang moved approval Resolution 2021-17: Employee Compensation 2021: Cost of Living Adjustment; Mr. Felten seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session

Ms. Jang motioned to enter into a closed session to discuss the investigation of violations or possible violations of the law. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Board entered closed session at 7:07 p.m.

Ms. Niedergang moved to reconvene in open session at 7:42 p.m. No action was taken as a result of the closed session. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Open Session

The Board reconvened in open session.

Meeting Schedule/Adjournment

Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Jang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

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



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CLOSED SESSION MINUTES
June 16, 2021**

At 7:07 p.m., from the June 16, 2021 Open Public Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Princeton Public Library that was properly noticed on June 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,

Ms. Jang moved to enter closed session to discuss certain matters relating to the item or items authorized by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(6). Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board convened in closed session that was limited only to consideration of an item or items with respect to which the public may be excluded pursuant to section 7B of the Open Public Meetings Act. The general nature of the subject discussed was:

An investigation of violations or possible violations of the law.

The following were present in the closed session meeting: Trustees: Mr. Bar-Cohen, Mr. Felten, Ms. Jang, Ms. Miller, Ms. Niedergang, Ms. Wakefield, and Library Executive Director, Jennifer Podolsky.

The matter discussed will be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Ms. Niedergang moved to reconvene in open session at 7:42 p.m. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board reconvened in open session. No action was taken as a result of the closed session.

Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Jang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.