



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES July 21, 2021

### In Attendance

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

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Janie Hermann, JiHae Ju, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Madeleine Rosenberg, Sonja Vloeberghs

Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends), 1 member 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 July 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. She included standards of conduct to be followed by members of the public making comments. Ms. Miller explained the audio muting function for those providing public comment via computer, mobile device and telephone.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** Ms. Jang moved approval of the Consent Agenda; Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Consent Agenda

- June 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- June 16, 2021 Closed Session Meeting Minutes
- Final June Bills
- Preliminary July Bills
- Resolution 2021-18: 2021 Capital Budget Approval
- Resolution 2021-19: Q2 Restricted Gifts

### Staff Spotlight

Ms. Miller welcomed Anna Lewis. Ms. Lewis has been with the library for 17 years, starting first as a volunteer. As part of the Lending Services department, she trains new hires on collections management, manages volunteers in her department and is designated as one of the "go to" staffers on weekends and evenings. Ms. Lewis enjoys seeing the excitement of the next generation of readers, being part of the

department that typically has the first interaction with new community members and new card applicants, and loves seeing the excitement of someone getting a library card.

Ms. Wakefield, Ms. Miller and Ms. Niedergang all commented on Ms. Lewis' demeanor - radiating serenity and calm, and is welcoming to all that come to the library.

### **Friends Report**

Ms. Bradley noted:

- The conversation between the Friends and the Foundation continues to make progress as they consider an attorney and implementation of the merger. She noted that when there is documentation to review, she will share it with the Trustees.
- Discussions continue regarding the 2022 Budget with the assumption of a consolidated organization; they have had meetings with Sudeep Das, Foundation Treasurer and Nicky Katz, Friends Treasurer.
- The 2021 Beyond Words benefit includes an in-person reception on Oct. 9, and two virtual speaking evenings: Omar El Akkad, author of the recently-released "What Strange Paradise" and the award-winning 2017 novel "American War" and novelist Jean Hanff Korelitz, author of "The Plot," "You Should Have Known," which was made into the acclaimed HBO mini-series "The Undoing," and "Admission," which was made into the popular 2013 movie of the same name. The Friends understand the format for the in-person reception is contingent on the circumstances of the time.
- The Friends Administrator, Stephanie Oster, left PPL to work at the Firestone Library at Princeton University on their library communications team. The full-time position has been posted internally and will post the job publicly at the end of the month.
- On Sept. 27 the town will be recognizing our volunteers at one of their meetings.
- Book sale numbers for June were almost \$10,000, nearly the same as pre-pandemic sales.
- Dawn Frost, Development Associate, has been doing an incredible job in the Development Office including helping the Friends during the benefit preparations.

### **Foundation Report**

There was no report.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **President's Report**

Ms. Miller noted that this was Jennifer Jang's last meeting as a Trustee, as she has resigned to attend to personal matters.

Ms. Miller noted that aside from Ms. Jang being the vice president, she has been willing to step up to every committee and every chore she has been asked to undertake. Ms. Jang volunteered and was instrumental in the effort to thank all staff members with a gift (plant) of appreciation, and has contributed enormously to the library. Ms. Miller said, "You have been a valuable contributor to this library and an important member of the Board of Trustees and we will miss you."

Ms. Jang thanked Ms. Miller and the Trustees and said that it has been her great pleasure to serve as a Trustee. She said that there is no place in town of which she is fonder and the Trustees have all been great to work with.

### **Finance Committee Report / Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Chernik referred the Trustees to the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Budget vs Actual documents in their packets. She noted there are no major concerns and the library is currently on track to use fund balance, the amount used dependent on the end of year giving from the annual appeal. She also noted there was a reduction in revenue due to reduced hours and lessened foot traffic, but also an increase of savings in expenses, partly due to staff transition.

Ms. Chernik and the staff began working on the 2022 budget that will be presented to the Board in September.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Podolsky referred the Board to the Director's Report in their packets and noted the following:

- In-person storytimes returned on July 15 and are being held at the Princeton Shopping Center.
- Camp chairs with the library logo are now for sale (\$35) and she encouraged Trustees to show their support.
- The library hired a new Humanities Coordinator, Madeleine Rosenberg.
- The State Library is distributing funds from the American Rescue Plan including renewing Zoom subscriptions and Brainfuse.
- The per capita state aid has not increased in years, PPL receives approximately ~\$15K per year. This year the state aid has been increased by \$1M which will be divided between those libraries that qualify for state aid.
- Jennifer Nelson, the new State Librarian, will be visiting the library on Tuesday, July 27.
- Strategic Planning is underway with the consultant, Allison Trimarco, conducting interviews. She will speak with all Board members over the next few months, and will meet with senior staff at their August meeting.
- No updates on 5G; there is a meeting tomorrow to discuss their proposal and our counteroffer.
- Jennifer Weiner book signing at the Princeton Shopping Center has been rescheduled to July 28 due to weather.
- In September, the library hopes to return to near normal pre-pandemic operations including returning to full staffing for which Bonnie Sprouls, HR Director, has been busy interviewing and hiring; hours and staffing continue to be dependent on the COVID situation. Curbside pickup will be discontinued as part of the return to normal operations, noting that we can no longer operate from the back door as it is a fire exit.
- The statistics in the packet are monthly statistics, not quarterly statistics as stated on the agenda. Please provide comments or suggestions to Ms. Podolsky. Ms. Niedergang noted that monthly stats will be interesting to watch as we move out of COVID.

Ms. Wakefield asked about the use of the Community Room. Ms. Podolsky noted that once the Friends' book sale books are removed, the first priority will be for staff programming, board meetings and resuming meeting room rental space.

### **Fundraising Update**

Ms. Chernik noted the year to date amount of donations was \$84,000 which is comparable to last year and above historical amounts. As the Development Office is short-staffed, Ms. Podolsky asked that she be contacted directly with any questions regarding the Development Office.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business.

**Temporary Code of Conduct – Age Restriction**

Ms. Podolsky referred the Board to the Temporary Code of Conduct and recommended, with the support of the Youth Services department, removing the age restriction as stated in the Temporary Code of Conduct: “Children, age 12 and younger, must be accompanied by, and under the direct supervision of a guardian, age 18 and older, at all times.”

Ms. Niedergang moved approval to remove the age restriction from the Temporary Code of Conduct and revert to the age restriction(s) as stated in the Policies and Procedures Manual; Mr. Felten seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Temporary Code of Conduct – Mask Policy**

There was discussion about the mask policy. No motions were made to change the mask policy as stated in the Temporary Code of Conduct, “Library visitors, age two and older, must wear a face covering that covers both the nose and mouth at all times while in the library.”

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment**

Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2021.