



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES November 17, 2021

### In Attendance

Trustees: Robert Ginsberg, Edward Felten, Edwina Hawes, Ruth Miller, Yamile Slebi, Chris Van Buren, Pam Wakefield

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Addie Gordon, JiHae Ju, Andre Levie, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Cindy Sottung, Bonnie Sprouls, Sonja Vloeberghs

Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends), David Hill (Foundation), Emily Saunders (Teen Rep), Eleni Staikos (Teen Rep), Gavin Yang (Teen Rep), 3 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 Nov. 9 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.

### Consent Agenda / Approval

Ms. Miller asked that the October minutes be removed from the Consent Agenda. Mr. Ginsberg moved approval of the Consent Agenda minus the Oct. 20, 2021 minutes. Ms. Slebi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- October 2021 Final Bills
- November 2021 Preliminary Bills

**Revision / Approval of Oct. 20, 2021 Minutes** – The minutes were removed from the agenda and revised to read: "Ms. Bradley noted she believed it was due to the Friends IRS status at that time. Janet Simon, former Development Director, and Dawn Frost, Development Associate, have been involved in discussing the operational impact of the consolidation." Mr. Ginsberg moved approval of the revised Oct. 20, 2021 minutes. Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Board Materials**

There was no discussion on the included materials: Monthly Director's Report, Monthly Statistics.

## **Staff Spotlight**

Ms. Miller welcomed Cindy Sottung, this month's staff spotlight. Ms. Sottung noted she started working for Lending Services six years ago, then worked in the Access Services and on the desk for Adult Services, and now works full time for Access Services receiving books, cataloging books, working on clean up projects, invoicing and supply orders. She enjoys working with all the departments in the library as part of her job, and loves opening boxes of new books, "it is like Christmas every day."

## **Friends of the Library Report**

Ms. Bradley noted the Friends held the second of their three part Beyond Words events: Omar El Akkad with Debra Amos. On Dec. 3 the third and final event will feature Jean Hanff Korelitz. The Friends book sale was held over the weekend raising approximately \$17,000. The daily book sales have been terrific; October bookstore sales were approximately \$13,000. Proceeds from both allow the Friends to make an additional gift to the library. The Book Lovers Luncheon is being planned for May 12.

## **Foundation Report**

Mr. Hill noted the Foundation Board of Directors had their quarterly meeting last week and the investment committee met shortly before that. The current value of the endowment is slightly more than \$18 million. The Foundation is keeping cash on hand for two years' full distribution to the library which is consistent with the Foundation's investment and distribution guidelines.

## **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **Teen Representatives**

- Emily noted that in October, TAB posted with short elevator pitches featuring one thrilling, mystery, horror, or suspenseful YA title on their Instagram story. They will continue posting each month, possibly with different themes for different months. TAB is planning an in-person, teens only, a capella night on Dec. 10.
- Gavin noted that Trunk or Treat was rained out; the theme was Pirates of the Caribbean which will be used next year. Teen Book Tuesday continues as the staple of their Instagram account with presentations over the next few weeks by Lilly, Eleni and Nathalie.
- Eleni noted that TAB have been working with the library's consultant on providing input for the strategic planning process. The teens are honored to advocate for and suggest their hopes for the library and how the library can better serve the Princeton teen community.

## **President's Report / 2022 Board Meeting Dates**

Ms. Miller did not have a report this month. She referred the Board to the list of 2022 Board Meeting dates found in their packet. Ms. Miller noted that June 16 should read June 15, and that the August date is included in the list of 2022 dates, but as in the past, will most likely be removed from the list later in 2022.

## **Director's Report**

Ms. Podolsky noted the following:

- The café reopened on Nov. 16 at 10 a.m.; café hours will be Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. with the hours being reevaluated as necessary.
- The library was 1 of 12 chosen for the Ready for Anything Grant by LibraryLinkNJ. It will support "Power Up Princeton," a project that will provide portable power stations and crank radios

available during power outage emergencies, and emergency preparedness disaster planning education for library staff and the public.

- Another grant received by the library, the Access Navigator Grant will provide the library with a skilled trainer that will provide individualized assistance related to digital literacy, resume and job searching, and support for entrepreneurs seeking to launch their new business.
- Fall Fest was a huge success and concluded the library's partnership this year with the Princeton Shopping Center.
- A vaccine clinic was held at the library with people lined up to receive a COVID vaccine, booster, or flu shot.
- On Oct. 24, the library launched a parking validation machine for cardholders to validate their own parking tickets – once per day for up to two hours for non-expired library cards.

Ms. Podolsky asked the Trustees to complete the Strategic Planning Survey by Nov. 18. Ms. Slebi noted that she hopes for the opportunity to provide additional detail for the strategic plan beyond the survey. Ms. Podolsky noted there will be additional opportunities.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Chernik noted that year to date numbers at the end of October show the library is still on track to end the year positive.

#### **Fundraising Update**

Ms. Podolsky noted that the fall annual appeal is ready to be sent out, and that she has been participating in donor lunches with Ms. Miller, Ms. Wakefield and donors.

#### **New Business: Correspondence**

Ms. Podolsky noted the library, at times, receives correspondence requested to be read by or directed to the attention of the Trustees. The library received an email from someone asking why the library does not belong to a consortium. Ms. Podolsky noted, for the December meeting, she will provide pros and cons of joining a consortium, and the cost and convenience factors. She also noted she would contact the sender of the email.

Ms. Podolsky referred the Board to two additional pieces of correspondence in their board packet that relate to fines and fees. There was a brief discussion among the Board regarding fines and fees. Ms. Podolsky noted that she hopes to be able to have a presentation for the Board at the December meeting.

#### **New Business: Hinds Plaza Plaque**

Ms. Podolsky noted that Shirley Satterfield, president of the Witherspoon-Jackson Historical and Cultural Society discussed the placement of a plaque, representing Albert E. Hinds Plaza as part of the Heritage Tour, at the plaza or on the library. The WJHCS are currently working with the municipality. There was discussion on the plaque.

Ms. Wakefield moved approval that the placement of the Albert E. Hinds Plaza plaque be allowed on the library to the right of the front door and to the left of the Community Room. Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **New Business: Early Closing of the Library**

Ms. Podolsky asked the Board for approval to have an early closing of the library for a holiday celebration for library staff on Dec. 17.

Ms. Podolosky noted that in light of the teens' preparation for a capella night, the library would like the Board's approval to close early, if necessary, on Dec. 10.

Mr. Ginsberg moved approval to close the library early on Dec. 17 and to close the library early with the approval of the Executive Director, if necessary, on Dec. 10. Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **New Business: Friends and Foundation Merger**

Ms. Bradley thanked the Trustees for allowing time for the merger discussion, Mr. Hill for his help over the past year, and to Allen Porter for providing pro bono legal work as it related to the proposed merger.

Ms. Bradley referred to four documents included in the Board packet regarding the merger of the Friends and Foundation: a description of the restructuring plan, a plan of merger, proposed bylaws for the new organization based on the Foundation's bylaws, as well as a marked-up copy of the Foundation's bylaws.

Ms. Bradley explained the restructuring of the new organization, and noted the name of the new organization will be the Friends and Foundation of the Princeton Public Library. She provided a brief history of the Foundation, which was formed in 1997, and of the Friends which was incorporated in September 1961 noting it is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends organization. Ms. Bradley mentioned the 2012 proposal to create a combined organization between the Friends and the Foundation that was unsuccessful.

Ms. Bradley noted the Description of the Restructuring Plan lists advantages of the merger, and shared several disadvantages of the merger: the Friends lose their independence in appointing board members, the Friends administrator position will now be a development administrator position, two volunteer non-profits with boards will merge resulting in one non-profit with one board thus less board member; however, the non-board members will be able to serve on committees, and the effort required to organize the merger caused distraction to the Friends, the Foundation and the development office. She noted there are operational issues that are being considered and addressed.

Ms. Bradley covered the approvals needed by the Trustees which are included in the Description of the Restructuring Plan. She noted that the Friends and the Foundation both voted unanimously to approve the merger contingent on approval by the Trustees. She noted that she and Rosalind Muir will be co-chairs of the new organization for the first year.

Ms. Bradley thanked Janet Simon, Dawn Frost and Addie Gordon from the Development Office, as well as to Stephanie Oster, for their help. The new organization will work with the library's Office of Marketing and Communications on a communication plan, including thanking the Friends for their 50 years of service and contribution, ensuring that the current volunteers feel valued and encouraging new volunteers.

There were several questions from the Board which were answered by Ms. Bradley and Mr. Hill.

Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve the Plan of Merger and the Bylaws of Friends and Foundation of the Princeton Public Library. Mr. Felten seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Slebi left the meeting prior to the vote, but expressed her approval of the merger.

Ms. Bradley noted that the nominations for the Friends and Foundation of the Princeton Public Library will be presented at the Dec. 15 Board of Trustees meeting.

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment**

Mr. Van Buren motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2021.