



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES February 16, 2022

In Attendance

Trustees: Robert Ginsberg, Edwina Hawes, Eve Niedergang, Stephanie Oster, Yamile Slebi, Chris Van Buren, Pam Wakefield

Library Staff: Lisa Belshaw, Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Addie Gordon, Janie Hermann, JiHae Ju, Sundari Kishore, Andre Levie, Mariem Mahmoud, Jennifer Podolsky, Tim Quinn, Karen Rackley, Bonnie Sprouls, Sonja Vloeberghs

Teen Reps: Mitalee Pasricha, Emily Saunders

Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends and Foundation), Rosalind Muir (Friends and Foundation), Eileen Palmer (LMxAC), Allison Trimarco (Creative Capacity), 1 member of the public

At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Ginsberg 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 Feb. 7, 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. Mr. Ginsberg 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. Mr. Ginsberg included standards of conduct to be followed by members of the public making comments. Mr. Ginsberg explained the audio muting function for those providing public comment via computer, mobile device and telephone.

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.

- Jan. 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Final January Bills
- Preliminary February Bills

Board Materials – There was no discussion on the included materials: Monthly Report, Monthly Statistics, Budget vs Actual – Year End 2021.

Staff Spotlight – Mr. Ginsberg introduced Mariem Mahmoud. Ms. Mahmoud noted she started working at the library in August 2021, having previously worked in the Monmouth County Library in Manalapan. Ms. Mahmoud noted she helps the IT department answering helpdesk tickets, setting up equipment such as laptops and printers, and has helped to document internal procedures, e.g., computer and printer set up,

as well as assisting in the launch of the IT Helpdesk intranet. The Board asked Ms. Mahmoud a few questions about her work and her hobbies.

Public Comment - There was no public comment.

Strategic Planning Update - Allison Trimarco, the library's strategic planning consultant, provided an update on the status of the strategic plan: interviews with stakeholders continue, a draft of a community-side survey is in review, and she hopes to schedule a strategic planning session in early April. Ms. Trimarco noted a resounding concern among those that provided feedback collected thus far was to ensure the library changed to meet the needs of the demographics and audiences in the community.

LMxAC Presentation – Eileen Palmer gave a presentation on the Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium which is one of four library consortia in New Jersey. The presentation was a follow-up to a patron question inquiring why the library was not part of a consortium. The Board asked Ms. Palmer several questions about the consortium and agreed to have the staff research some pros and cons of joining LMxAC.

Ms. Slebi left the meeting.

President's Report – Mr. Ginsberg remarked that the staff have been very helpful since he's been the Board president. While visiting, Mr. Ginsberg was pleased to see the amount of people using the library. He noted that he recently met with Alex White, the library's first teen representative (approx. 16 years ago).

Friends and Foundation Report – Ms. Bradley and Ms. Muir noted that the Friends and Foundation have been organizing their committees, assigning chairs, and scheduling and holding committee meetings. Ms. Bradley noted they are busy working on the Book Lovers Luncheon scheduled for May 12 with Julia Glass, "Three Junes," and on Library Giving Day, April 6, as part of National Library Week.

Teen Representatives' Report – Ms. Saunders noted that the Teen Advisory Board has created a TikTok account called PPL.teens, and have changed their Instagram handle to the same. TAB has been identifying rules and formats for posting information and researching book- and library-related content. They continue to work on the 60-sec Teen Hack videos. Ms. Pasricha noted that TAB will meet in person on March 1 and they are preparing for a hybrid format for "I Read This Book."

Bylaws and Policies Committee Report – Ms. Hawes noted the committee met to look at the Bylaws. They looked at samples of bylaws from other libraries and are looking to prepare a code of ethics statement for all Trustees to sign. Ms. Bradley noted the Friends and Foundation will share their ethics statements with the committee.

Strategic Planning Committee Report – Ms. Wakefield noted the committee has not yet had reason to meet; Ms. Podolsky noted she will reach out to the committee in the near future.

Finance Committee Report – Mr. Van Buren thanked Ms. Chernik for the work she does and for being a great teacher. He noted the committee met and discussed year-end results and the 2022 proposed budget. Ms. Chernik referred the Board to the Budget vs Actual report found in their packet. She noted due to increased donations that surpassed goals and from cost savings realized from reduced staff and public on site, the library was able to end the year \$89,000 net positive. She noted the committee discussed the 2022 budget including capital projects and the operating budget, and noted that she and Ms. Podolsky will meet with the municipal business administrator and the chief financial officer next week to discuss the library's budget and the municipality's expectations. The committee discussed the significant increases in costs to

pension and health benefits and Ms. Chernik noted the library is constantly managing the proposed budget, adjusting when necessary - based on rising costs and cost savings - to limit budget increases when possible.

Fundraising Report – Ms. Belshaw noted the Development office has been busy helping the Friends and Foundation working with Sarah Waterbury, chair for the Friends and Foundation’s Development Committee. The Development Office is preparing for Library Giving Day, April 6, which will be the start of the spring annual appeal, working on an impact report and rethinking the corporate partner program.

Director’s Report – Ms. Podolsky highlighted several programs and services: a comprehensive resource guide for Black History Month, the Great Backyard Bird Count, a very popular class on how to get photos off of your phone and the Library of Things demonstration in the Discovery Center on Feb. 24 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. She reminded the Board to sign up for the Tech Newsletter.

Temporary Code of Conduct: Mask Mandate – Mr. Ginsberg noted the school system and the library, which has been following the schools, maintain a mask mandate and he noted as of March 7, schools can make their own determination. Mr. Ginsberg invited comments about mask wearing and whether the library should follow the school’s decision. Board members commented, acknowledged staff comments that were submitted to the Board regarding a mask mandate and considered the possibility of metrics. The Board agreed that no action was necessary at this time.

There was no new business, board comments or proposed agenda items.

Adjournment - Ms. Wakefield motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Oster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2022.