BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 2022

In Attendance

Trustees: Edward Felten, Robert Ginsberg, Edwina Hawes, Carol Kelley, Eve Niedergang, Stephanie Oster, Yamile Slebi, Chris Van Buren (6:17 p.m.), Pam Wakefield

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Addie Gordon, JiHae Ju, Valerie Ho, Janie Hermann, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley

Others: Andrea Bradley (Friends and Foundation), Allison Trimarco (Creative Capacity)

At 6:01 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 Sept. 13, 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, 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. Slebi moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- July 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes
- Aug. 15, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes
- Final August Bills
- Preliminary September Bills
- Resolution 2022-21: Mechanical Shades Upgrade Change Order #2

Board Materials – There was no discussion on the included board materials: Monthly Director’s Report; Monthly Statistics.

Public Comment – Allison Trimarco provided the Board with a strategic plan update. She noted that she met with community partners (30 people) in two sessions and heard many of the same ideas brought up in previous listening sessions. Ms. Trimarco will integrate the community feedback into structural elements and work with the staff to create clearly articulated goals. She noted Trustees will see a draft and be able to comment before the plan is finalized by the end of the year.
There was discussion initiated by Ms. Slebi as to whether there are certain goals the Council could align with the library as the library sets goals based on its strategic plan. Ms. Niedergang suggested further discussion of specific examples with Ms. Slebi. Ms. Slebi would also like to consider ways that PPL and Sustainable Princeton work together more closely.

**Staff Spotlight** – Ms. Podolsky introduced Valerie Ho, Library Assistant in Lending Services since 2019. Ms. Ho gave a brief overview of her responsibilities in the Lending Services department: checking in items, shelving, hold preparation, locating misplaced books, data entry, answering phones, helping with new library cards and working the desk. Ms. Ho noted she is a freelance translator (Japanese to English). When asked what she liked best about work, Ms. Ho said that she worked with good people who are good at their jobs, thus making her job easier. She noted she likes to read suspense and mystery books and for a breezy read, a YA novel.

**President’s Report** – Mr. Ginsberg noted that the Board will meet in the Community Room for the October meeting. He volunteered at the annual book sale and commented how friendly everyone was and that it was well organized. Volunteers and staff did a great job led by co-chairs Claire Bertrand and Jane Nieman. Mr. Ginsberg remarked on the successful donor breakfast, hosted by the Friends and Foundation which was held on Monday morning, chaired by Jane Silverman with presentations by some of the staff and a tour of the library building.

Mr. Ginsberg appointed an ad hoc committee (Ms. Niedergang - chair, Ms. Wakefield and Ms. Ginsberg) to consider nominations for three Trustee vacancies (Ms. Hawes, Ms. Slebi, Ms. Wakefield) beginning in 2023.

Mr. Ginsberg appointed the following Trustees as members of the Nominating Committee for 2023 Board Officers: Ms. Kelley, Ms. Slebi, Ms. Wakefield.

**Friends and Foundation** – Ms. Bradley noted:

- The Board met on Sept. 20.
- Approximately $20,000 was raised from the book sale.
- They hosted a Planned Giving breakfast, chaired by Jane Silverman with nearly 50 attendees and presentations by the senior staff.
- A reception, associated with a program in November being organized by Janie Hermann, is being planned for donors and Friends and Foundation board members.
- A mailer was sent to approximately 1800 donors with information about the Friends and Foundation merger and advertising for Beyond Words.
- There are tickets remaining for the benefit which will be held on Oct. 15 at Brick Farm Tavern in Hopewell.
- The benefit has a new lead sponsor – Princeton Property Partners.
- Per an Endowment Report provided by its Investment Committee, the Friends and Foundation expects to have current liquid investments available to make consistent donations to the library in 2023 and 2024. As a consequence of increased inflation and decreases in market value, the Friends and Foundation do not expect to be able to sustain the same level of giving in 2025 and thereafter. They would like to engage in a detailed discussion with the Trustees and the library about the library’s long-term needs, the level of the Friends and Foundation giving and the feasibility of increasing the endowment with a capital campaign.

**Bylaws and Policies Committee Report** – Ms. Oster noted the committee met and reviewed the proposed revisions to the library’s code of conduct. The code of conduct will be aligned with new
incident reporting software which will allow staff to better track incidents across the library, use it more consistently and provide transparency to the patrons. The code of conduct now includes expected behaviors for virtual and off-site programs. The revised draft is presented in the board packet. The committee will meet again to discuss before the final revision is presented at the October board meeting. Ms. Oster asked the Trustees to review the draft and send comments and questions to Ms. Oster, Ms. Podolsky and Ms. Rackley before Oct. 12.

Strategic Planning Committee Report – Ms. Wakefield noted that Ms. Trimarco provided the update.

Finance Committee Report – Mr. Van Buren noted the committee met on Sept. 8 and reviewed information provided by the Finance Director. The budgets are on the agenda under new business.

Fundraising Committee Report – Ms. Podolsky noted that the Development Office has been working with the Friends and Foundation on the Planned Giving Breakfast, Beyond Words and the annual appeal. She noted that she is looking for ways to support the Development Office until Ms. Belshaw’s expected return in January.

Director’s Report – Ms. Podolsky thanked everyone that worked on the Annual Book Sale, particularly to Claire Bertrand. The highest door count since pre COVID was approximately 2500 on the day of the sale. She referred the Board to the Director’s Report in their packet and pointed out a few past programs and a few upcoming programs. She noted the community reading program “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” organized by Kim Dorman had six organizing partners (PPL, Witherspoon Presbyterian Church, Nassau Presbyterian Church, Not In Our Town Princeton, Paul Robeson House and Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton) and 30 community partners. There were 53 readers, including Ms. Podolsky.

Ms. Podolsky reminded the Trustees that the Trustee Institute will be held on Oct. 8, the same day as the Children’s Book Festival, and encouraged Trustees to register. Ms. Podolsky reminded the Trustees that the Board, as a whole, has seven hours of required training.

Ms. Kelley needed to leave the meeting, but thanked Ms. Podolsky and the library for supporting the “Meet the Superintendent” program at the library, which is expected to be held on a monthly basis. Ms. Kelley passed along a suggestion from the PTO that the Python classes offered at the library include 5th graders.

Closing on Dec. 8 for Staff Development Day – Ms. Niedergang moved approval to close the library on Dec. 8 for Staff Development Day; Ms. Slebi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2022-22: 2022 Capital Budget – Ms. Chernik asked the Trustees to approve the 2022 Capital Budget. Ms. Oster moved approval of the 2022 capital budget which includes the cooling tower and the stewardship money; Ms. Slebi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

2023 Proposed Operating Budget – Ms. Chernik noted that the operating budget reflects the recent State-approved health benefits increase of 23%, and the same contribution amount by the Friends and Foundation as in 2022 (with a potential increase in the endowment distribution after the Friends and Foundation board meeting in November). She mentioned other items in the budget including decreases in professional development, community relations and library materials; and increases in state-required pension contribution, 2.4% COLA, gas utility contract renewal at a 50% increase, new cybersecurity software and licenses, and an AV equipment maintenance contract.
All Trustees present approve of this 2023 proposed operating budget being sent to the municipality.

Ms. Chernik noted that although the Friends and Foundation have merged, the line item still shows Friends as this is a separate bank account and helps with auditing purposes. Ms. Bradley asked if the labels on the budget could reflect “Friends and Foundation” even though the bank account is still under the name of the Friends; Ms. Chernik agreed.

2023-2028 Capital Plan – Ms. Chernik noted that the attached capital plan, for informational purposes only, will be sent to the municipality, with the Trustees’ approval, to be included in the municipality’s 5-year capital plan.

Eve Niedergang noticed that the request for roof replacement ($350,000) is considerably less than the original request (~ $1M). Ms. Chernik noted that Janet Simon researched alternatives and found a different roofing material that significantly decreased the cost.

2022-23: Cooling Tower Replacement – Ms. Chernik noted that due to the footprint of the cooling tower and the weight limit of the roof, and after research by the library’s engineering consultant for the cooling tower, the engineering consultant recommends only one piece of equipment for this project. The Trustees must pass a resolution authorizing the special need for such proprietary goods.

Ms. Niedergang moved approval of Resolution 2022-23: Cooling Tower Replacement; Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Draft Code of Conduct – Ms. Podolsky referred the Board to the draft code of conduct included in their Board packet. She asked that the Trustees review it and send comments and questions to Ms. Oster, Ms. Podolsky or Ms. Rackley by Oct. 12.

Executive Session
Mr. Van Buren moved to enter into closed session at 7:22 p.m. to discuss personnel matters and possible contract negotiations. Ms. Wakefield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A closed session meeting was held to discuss personnel matters and possible contract negotiations. The matters discussed will be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Ms. Wakefield moved to reconvene in open session at 7:59 p.m. No action was taken as a result of the closed session. Ms. Oster 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. Oster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2022.