BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
April 19, 2023

In Attendance
Trustees: Holley Barreto, Ed Felten, Robert Ginsberg, Jeffrey Liao (on phone), Eve Niedergang, Stephanie Oster, Keisha Smith-Carrington (6:05 p.m., on phone), Chris Van Buren

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Susan Conlon, Janie Hermann, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley, Lakshmi Ramesh, Cheryl Shroff, Sonja Vloeberghs

Teen Reps: Lily Dodds, Sophie Feldman, Mitalee Pasricha, Emma Tully

Others: Rosalind Muir (Friends & Foundation)

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 public meetings, adequate and electronic notice of this meeting were provided on April 12 to the Municipal Clerk, Princeton Packet, Town Topics and Trenton Times, posted in the library, on the library’s and municipality’s websites and distributed to the standard distribution list.

Approval of Consent Agenda (6:02 p.m.) – Mr. Van Buren moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Ms. Niedergang seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- March 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- March 15, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes
- Final March Bills
- Preliminary April Bills
- Resolution 2023-10: Acceptance of Designated Gifts and Grants 1Q 2023

Board Materials – Mr. Ginsberg asked if there were any questions regarding the following Board Materials: Monthly Director’s Report, Monthly Statistics, Quotes for Products and Services – 1st Qtr 2023 and Budget vs Actual - 1Q 2023. There were no questions or discussion.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Staff Spotlight – Ms. Podolosky introduced Ms. Lakshmi Ramesh. Ms. Ramesh is a full-time library associate in Lending Services. She told the Board about her responsibilities, one of which is she creates displays to involve the community (e.g., recipe exchange, grateful notes). She is also responsible for merchandising and ensures that the displays are tied to the current events (e.g., Mother’s Day, National Library Week, Pi Day). Ms. Ramesh works with jaZam’s who provides many library-related items for sale. She enjoys working with the Lending Services team who are nice and also supportive. Ms. Vloeberghs commented that Ms. Ramesh also keeps the Lending Services department (and other departments) focused on wellness; during COVID, Ms. Ramesh initiated meditation available to all staff members.
President’s Report – Mr. Ginsberg welcomed Ms. Smith-Carrington who is the Superintendent’s designee for the remainder of the year. He noted that next week is National Library Week.

Friends and Foundation Report – Ms. Muir noted the Friends & Foundation held an appreciation event for their volunteers - about 25 volunteers attended; the bookstore raised approximately $12,000 and volunteers contributed more than 250 hours in March. The Book Lovers Luncheon will be held on April 28 at the Nassau Inn with author Lynne Olson; Beatrice Bloom sponsored the event providing books for all attendees. Beyond Words is being planned for Oct. 21; there will be one venue for the talk and one venue for the dinner; F&F is actively seeking sponsors for the event. Mel Grzymala is stepping down from the F&F Governance Committee. A temporary replacement (for the remainder of the year) will be presented to the Trustees at their May board meeting. Ms. Gordon’s last day was March 31 and Mariem Mahmoud has been filling the role temporarily.

Ms. Podolsky noted that Ms. Grzymala will be guest bartending at The Ivy Inn on May 10; all tips will go toward the library. She noted this is not a library event.

Ms. Oster asked for an update on the endowment; Ms. Muir said she will provide one next month.

Teens Report – The teens reported they’ve posted TAB’s interview with Nicola Yoon on March 13 and posted video footage on newly-launched YouTube channel; receiving 54 views and 25 plays on Spotify. They will be publishing the interview with author Sarah Glenn Marsh on Friday; see KeepingtabsPPL on Spotify. They’ve interviewed Lamar Giles, author of ya mystery, sci-fi and fiction which is to be posted in the next few weeks.

Although TAB is closing for the summer; they are helping the library to find prizes for the summer reading challenges and preparing Teen Book Tuesday Post to keep up engagement over the summer. TAB applications for the next school year will be open soon.

Teens will be helping at Herrontown Woods with hiking, educational workshops, crafts, etc. and they are helping the library prep for the pride picnic. They are organizing activities and take home crafts for mental health month (May).

Mr. Ginsberg recommended the teens to consider authors Gita Varadarajan (PPS teacher) and Keisha Smith-Carrington (PPS supervisor).

Bylaws and Policies Committee Report – Ms. Oster noted the committee met and discussed the changes to the Bylaws proposed by the library’s attorney. They’ve finalized the Bylaws for approval by the Board. The committee briefly discussed a few issues with the room rental policy and will return to look more closely at that policy at their next meeting.

Finance Committee Report – Mr. Van Buren noted the Finance Committee met and reviewed the financials put together by Ms. Chernik. Ms. Chernik noted that the first quarter budget vs actual included in their packet uses the budget from last September. The Council is expected to approve their 2023 budget next week after which time Ms. Chernik and Ms. Podolsky will adjust and prepare the library’s budget for approval by the Board. She noted there were no red flags in the first quarter budget vs actual, and noted that revenue received was high, at 50% of the budget, due to the receipt of second quarter allocation from the municipality to cover the annual pension payment and the second quarter unrestricted endowment distribution.

Staff Appreciation Committee Report – Mr. Ginsberg gave the report in Ms. Tuzun’s absence. He noted a letter of appreciation from the Trustees was sent to the Town Topics and to the Princeton Packet.
committee is planning treats (made by Ms. Baretto) and a small gift for each staff member to recognize National Library Workers Day as part of National Library Week.

**Fundraising Report** – Ms. Podolsky noted the Impact Report with targeted letters will be sent to donors in the next few days. The Development Office is also working on the Book Lovers Luncheon and Beyond Words.

**Director’s Report** – Ms. Podolsky informed the Trustees that the library’s cooling tower will be replaced the week of May 15-22. During this time the cooling system will be shut down which could result in the temperature in the library being too hot, thus requiring the library to close. Programs and events will be rescheduled. Permits have been submitted to the township for the replacement of the actual cooling tower on May 16 on which the library will be closed (pending approval by the BOT) for safety reasons. The IT department will complete recabling for the network switches on the same day. Per Ms. Muir, the Friends and Foundation will consider holding a virtual board meeting that week.

Ms. Podolsky noted: the Paul Robeson exhibit (in partnership with the Historical Society of Princeton) will be in the library until April 30; on Monday, the Council will read and present a proclamation to the library for National Library Week; Local Author Day is April 29; Yarn Bloom, a community-wide public art event in which there are several ways to participate, will be installed in town mid-May.

Ms. Podolsky noted the library is still interviewing for the Development Director position, the Humanities Coordinator will be announced soon and the Head of Adult Services is to start on May 1.

**Revisions to Bylaws** – Ms. Oster moved approval of the Bylaws. Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. A grammatical error was noted and will be corrected. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Appointment of Board Secretary** – Mr. Ginsberg nominated Mr. Liao as Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Niedergang moved to approve the nomination. Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. There were no objections. The motion passed unanimously.

**Library Closing for Cooling Tower Replacement** – Ms. Oster moved to close the library, on or about May 16, for the replacement of the cooling tower and installation of new cabling required for the relocation of the network switches; Mr. Felten seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Comments** – Ms. Oster invited all to attend the program on April 24 in the Community Room, “‘Toni Morrison: Site of Memory’: The Making of an Exhibit.”

Mr. Ginsberg referred to an article he sent to the Trustees “Pornography’ on the shelves at Roxbury High? Librarian sues residents for defamation,” by The Daily Record’s William Westhoven and made note to include discussion at the May meeting on how the Trustees can advocate for the library.

There was discussion about relocating the May 17 meeting due to the cooling tower replacement.

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment** – Mr. Van Buren motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Niedergang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2023.