BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
Sept. 20, 2023

In Attendance

Trustees: Holley Barreto, Robert Ginsberg, Jeffrey Liao, Eve Niedergang, Stephanie Oster, Keisha Smith-Carrington, Sebnem Tuzun, Chris Van Buren

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Laura Bishop, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, Kim Dorman, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley

Others: Rosalind Muir (Friends & Foundation), Douglas S. Zucker (library’s attorney)

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 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 – Ms. Oster moved approval of the Consent Agenda. Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- July 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Final July Bills
- Final August Bills
- Preliminary September Bills
- Resolution 2023-16: Authorization for Professional Services Agreement for Architectural Services

Board Materials – Ms. Podolsky mentioned the August/September Monthly Director’s Report and the Monthly Statistics for July and August that were included in the Board packet. There was no discussion on the included materials.

Staff Spotlight – Ms. Podolsky and Ms. Bess introduced Laura Bishop, Head of Adult Services. Ms. Bishop noted she has been at the library for four months. She has previously lived in the area, working at The Hun School for seven years. She felt Princeton Public Library was a good fit. She has been working with her staff on building trust and relationships with a three-year goal which is to create a substantial signature program.

President’s Report – Mr. Ginsberg acknowledged the fabulous summer programs, and those that participated in the 5G cell tower discussions for their time and contributions. He also noted the
Evaluation Committee will meet the first week of October, will report at the end of October and ask for Trustees’ input by the end of December.

**Friends and Foundation** – Ms. Muir noted the Beyond Words benefit to be held on Oct. 21 with Curtis Chin at the Nassau Presbyterian Church and dinner at the Quadrangle Club. She noted there will be a silent auction with 40 auction items and Evenings With Friends will return with approximately 10 evenings scheduled. The Friends have exceeded their corporate sponsorship goal. There are approximately 30 tickets remaining and they will be offering a talk only ticket for $50. The Friends need help to set up at the Quad; if interested, contact Ms. Muir.

Ms. Muir noted the Annual Book Sale will be held Oct. 13-15; all volunteer slots have been filled. As they plan for 2024, Ms. Muir and Ms. Naso (vice president) are surveying the board now that it has been two years since their merger of the Friends and Foundation. Ms. Muir noted there are four new board members to be presented for approval to the Board of Trustees at their October meeting. She noted the Development committee has been working with the library’s development office; there will be a stakeholder evening on Oct. 25 at the Nassau Club from 5-7 p.m., hosted by Jeff and Betsy Sands.

**Bylaws and Policies Committee** – Ms. Oster noted the committee met last Monday and discussed revisions to the code of conduct and to the filming and photography policy that were suggested by Mr. Zucker. The committee also discussed revisions to the bylaws.

**Employee Appreciation** – Ms. Tuzun noted that the committee considered holding a draw for the staff with donated items held; Trustees should contact Ms. Tuzun if they are interested in donating.

**Finance** – Mr. Van Buren noted the committee met last Monday; they reviewed the draft operating budget for 2024.

**5G Cell Tower** – Mr. Van Buren noted the committee met and discussed the 5G cell tower project.

**Fundraising** – Ms. Podolsky noted interviews for the development director position have concluded and she expects the position to be filled shortly.

**Director’s Report** – Ms. Podolsky noted there have been great summer programs and mentioned several of them, including a book brunch with former staff member and author Claire LeGrand. She noted teen summer volunteers contributed 1700 hours; Princeton Student Film Festival is in its 20th year; September is library card sign-up month; Ed Felten will introduce the panel discussion of “Creativity in the Age of ChatGPT” on Oct. 3; the Children’s Book Festival will be held on Oct. 7 on Hinds Plaza – using the entire plaza.

**Bylaws Revision** – Mr. Van Buren moved to approve the amendments to the bylaws; Mr. Liao seconded the motion. Ms. Oster noted that the amendment added time limits to the public comment portion of the meeting. There was discussion about the time limits and the bylaws were revised to read: “...the Board shall not discuss personnel matters with the public and shall not respond to comments made by the public regarding personnel matters.” Mr. Van Buren accepted the revision to the amended bylaws; Mr. Liao seconded. The motion, as revised, passed unanimously.

**Code of Conduct Revision** – Ms. Niedergang moved to accept the revisions to the Policies and Procedures Manual, specifically the Code of Conduct; Ms. Barreto seconded the motion. There was discussion about the revisions. The motion passed unanimously.
Filming and Photography Policy Revision – Ms. Niedergang moved to accept the proposed revisions to the Filming and Photography Policy; Ms. Barreto seconded the motion. There was discussion about First Amendment Audits and the Filming and Photography Policy. The motion passed unanimously.

2024 Proposed Operating Budget – Ms. Chernik requested the Board’s approval to submit the proposed operating budget to the municipality for review and approval. Ms. Tuzun moved to accept the proposed budget; Mr. Liao seconded the motion. Ms. Chernik highlighted several items in the budget, such as state-mandated increases to both health benefit costs and the library’s contribution to the pension plan, Friends and Foundation’s increased contribution for 2024, escalating costs for repairs in Building & Equipment and rising technology costs. Ms. Chernik noted that costs for salaries & benefits, along with building & equipment, will account for 84% of the total operating budget. The library is asking for a 3.25% increase from the municipality to help support some of the significant cost increases. Municipal funding represents approximately 74% of the operating budget.

2024-2029 Capital Plan – Mr. Van Buren moved to accept the proposed five-year capital plan; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee for 2024 Board Officers Appointment – Mr. Ginsberg appointed Ms. Niedergang, Ms. Tuzun and Ms. Barreto as the Nominating Committee for the 2024 Board Officers.

Closed Session – At 7:21 p.m., Mr. Van Buren moved to adjourn the open session meeting and enter into closed session to discuss contract negotiations with counsel; Ms. Oster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Open Session – At 8:23 p.m., Ms. Niedergang moved to adjourn the closed session meeting and enter into open session; Ms. Barreto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 2023-17: Consenting to 5G Equipment – Ms. Tuzun moved to approve Resolution 2023-17; Ms. Oster seconded the motion. Ms. Niedergang abstained; Mr. Felten was not present; the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment/Meeting Schedule – Ms. Tuzun motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Oct. 20, 2023.