

Minutes of the Bernardsville Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting by Zoom February 16, 2021

Attendance: Board members John Bertoni, Rich Diegnan, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza, Terry Thompson, Christine Zamarra and Amy DeMilt were present at the meeting. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Leslie Brown-Witt, President Bernardsville Library Foundation and library staff members Laura Cole, Jill Hackett, and Tammy Shaw were also present.

Not Present: Gretchen Dempsey

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice as follows:

- In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-8 *et seq.*) 1975), written notice of this regular meetings has been sent to the following newspapers: *The Bernardsville News*, the *Courier News* and the *Star Ledger*. Written notice has also been sent to the Borough clerk, posted on the Library web site, and posted on the principal entrance to the door of the Library. The meeting will be conducted by Zoom, and the public has been invited to participate, and told how to participate via Zoom or telephone, in the notices in the Library web site and the principal entrance door.
- The agenda and documents to be discussed at this meeting are available for review on the Library’s web site, bernardsvilibrary.org/home/boardmeetings/February16
- They are also at the Library’s circulation desk on Monday, February 15 and Tuesday February 16, during regular library hours (10 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
- Members of the public are invited to comment either during the public comment period of the meetings or by submitting written or emailed comments in advance of the meeting. All commenters should identify themselves by name and address.

The notice was followed by roll call.

Committee Assignments for 2021: Forwarded by the President to the Board for review; invited comments/feedback promptly from the Board after review. If no comments or objections are received by the President, the Committee Assignments will stand.

Approval of Minutes: Two non-substantive amendments. Mr. Bertoni moved for approval as amended, seconded by Ms. Thompson.

Director’s Report: In addition to the items mentioned in her report, Ms. Arnold presented highlights from and additions to her report, as follows:

Pre-covid schedule almost completely restored; M-W 10-8; Th-S 10-5, Sun 1-5. Hours every day, three evenings per week, weekends

The Governor increase to 35% of maximum capacity as of 2/5/2021, library has not reached 25% on a regular service day, unlikely it the max capacity will impact library in near future.

SERVICE GOALS are the following:

- Reestablish program and services to the greatest extent possible - in-person where possible by making library available for browsing and limited use; have computers available and copy services available
- Virtually when not possible, for both children and adults
- Continually monitor services by using use personal observations, feedback from patrons and statistics we provide in Board packet as well as others

MAIN

- 4 full weeks
- Circulated and renewed 5107 items in January 2021
- 685 items sent to other libraries (72.5%)
- 260 items owned by other libraries came here for circulation or renewal (27.5%)
- Further update on MAIN statistics will be provided at the March Meeting

GENERAL USE:

- Attendance up from Sept/Oct but has not reached the highs of November, December 2020; phone calls have increased; holds have more than doubled

MARKETING

- New reformatted color newsletter that calls appropriate attention to the library and the quality programs and services available was rolled out
- Subscribed to ZohoSocial which will allow more integrated posting and better statistics.
- Continue to market tutor.com and will add specialized marketing efforts for other programs in the coming year

PROGRAMS -A new array of virtual programs for adults and youth:

- Offering 2 weekly adult programs, 4 weekly children's programs, 8 special programs for adults and 8 special programs for youth
- Since the programs began at the end of January, interest and registration has climbed continuously with many programs scheduled in February at capacity
- Attendance has been 80-85% as opposed to the usual 66%

No questions regarding remarks. Kudos to the staff by Ms. Arnold for perseverance and professionalism.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Krook noted the recent estate gift to the library is in a holding pattern until the estate is fully settled. Question from Ms. Thompson, with respect to the nature of the account. Mr. Krook advised the proceeds are in an interest-bearing account, however, there will need to conduct long range planning determination as to proposed allocation and the investment strategy will be based on the Board's long range planning decision. Ms. Arnold indicated that there are actual designated investment repositories for such funds, this information will be forwarded to Mr. Krook.

Mr. Krook moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, to pay the new bills received from 02/01/2021 to 02/16/2021 and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from 1/20/2021 to 1/31/2021.

Ms. Thompson seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance: Mr. Krook indicated that a meeting was held on February 5, with the Borough – Ms. Zamarra, Mr. Krook and Ms. Arnold in attendance to discuss funding. Twenty years of legacy data was presented by the Borough. The main point of data indicated for the first 10 years 2000-2009 funding was at state mandated level; 2009 the state mandated level dropped yet funding from Borough was constant and increased over that decade. Basis for meeting, was that the past 10-year funding indicates 2% growth year over year. There was a request from the Borough to consider how we can address this level of continued 2% annual increase in funding. Need to consider level of service, programs, etc., that may result in a decrease in the coming years.

Additional observation from Ms. Zamarra is that other communities have designated community centers, teen centers, senior citizen center, etc. we should consider the library as multi-faceted: providing extra community services beyond library such as an adult center, warming center, and teen center, etc. Perhaps direct the narrative to identify the services offered beyond the traditional library which may assist in the funding discussions.

In response to Mr. Orza's question, Mr. Krook indicated that last year we were about \$185,000 above state mandate. We have a surplus right now - \$130,000 underspend.

Mr. Krook suggested we should align the services, needs and offerings. Proposed action – asked Ms. Arnold to begin to consider what the library would be like with any reduced funding. A finance committee meeting will be scheduled next week to discuss the numbers, direction and a proposal agreeable to the community.

Personnel: No meeting.

Policy: No meeting.

Planning: No updates.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library: Nancy Verduin, for the Friends, reported that individually wrapped baked good from Priscilla's Pantry was given to the Staff. FBPL intends to continue the like monthly for Staff appreciation in lieu of the annual luncheon. There was

discussion of a potential May outdoor event, more to come on this. Presently the Friends' budget should not be significantly impacted without a major fundraiser this year.

Bernardsville Library Foundation: Leslie Brown-Witt, for the Foundation, reviewed finances briefly; as well as endowment figures. There will be a fund-raising meeting in March to discuss plans for 2021.

Potential new data base was presented to the Foundation which would help on several different analytic factors; the Foundation Board voted to engage Boomerang. Shika Myers was approved as a new member.

Communications: Nothing of significance per Ms. Arnold. Reference was made to the tabbed comments in the packet which reflects positive community engagement and feedback.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

- Library Door Project –Ms. Arnold indicated we need to assign a project general manager. due to the need for technical expertise in the final phase. Proposal to have Dan Lincoln be the designated PM.
- Additional funding for PM usually percentage, however it was suggested that an alternative hourly payment verses a project commission would be more appropriate for the project.
- Ms. Arnold will have further discussion with Mr. Lincoln with respect to the cost and a proposed hourly rate.

Library has sent flowers on behalf of the Board and Library staff to Jerry Fischer's family.

At 6:37 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy DeMilt, Secretary