

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

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

Not Present: Leslie Brown-Witt

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:32 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 page, 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, <https://bernardsvilleLibrary.org/home/board> for March 16, 2021
- They are also at the Library’s circulation desk on Monday, March 15, and Tuesday March 16, during regular Library hours.
- 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.

Approval of Minutes: Several non-substantive amendments will be forwarded and incorporated. Amy DeMilt submitted minutes as amended, seconded by John Bertoni.

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

1. ROUND 2, LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION BOND ACT

Deadline: June 4

Purpose: Construction of Library, addition to Library, land or building acquisition for use as a Library, rehabilitation of Library, repair of mechanical systems or components, or elimination of barriers

Refurbishing (carpet, paint) and custodial building maintenance is ineligible

Matching funds: 50% match required

Application: May need a building and community analysis prepared by architect or consultant

Questions: May be submitted between March 29 and April 23

2. CARES ACT MINI-GRANTS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The minimum grant amount is \$1,000, the maximum amount is \$10,000.

One grant per Library

Purpose: Close the digital divide. Areas of focus for a project may be connectivity, device access and/or digital literacy.

Deadline: April 19, 2020

3. COVID-19 GENERAL UPDATE:

Overview: 3,058,178 doses (both 1st and 2nd) administered in NJ as of 3/16/2021 (33% of the population). 67% of population still has not been vaccinated, therefore Covid restrictions and protections (social distancing, masks, etc.) will still need to be in place.

Quick review: As a reopened Library the following was minimally required:

- **Governor’s Administrative and Executive Orders (“E.O.”)**
 - E.O 157 allowed the Library to reopen (June 26)
 - With capacity limits that have now been updated
 - Installing plastic barriers where feasible
 - Requiring social distancing of 6 feet
 - Requiring provision of hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes
 - Requiring masks, gloves
 - E.O. 192 reiterated E.O. 157 with the following changes
 - Required health checks prior to each shift (questionnaire, temperature)
 - Changed gloves from required to permitted
 - March 19, 2021
 - Will increase indoor capacity to 50% (permitted, not required)
 - Other mitigation requirements still in effect (masks, social distancing)
- **Bernardsville Library policy additions and temporary changes:**
- *Workplace Covid-19 Infection Prevention Policy*
 - Requires masks, social distancing
 - Forbids shared food, in-person meetings or gatherings
 - Encourages other mitigation behavior
- *Temporary update to various Library policies (approved 6/16/2020, reaffirmed December 15, 2020. Sunset date June 30, 2021)*
 - Patron Rules of Conduct

- Social distancing, capacity limitations, masks, forbidding patrons with obvious respiratory illness
 - Community rooms and smaller meeting rooms closed
 - Director mediates procedures governing public computers to allow for safe and equitable use.
 - Unattended children
 - Requires that children under 15 must be under the supervision of someone 21 years or older
 - Borrowing Policy
 - Director mediates procedures governing borrowing rules and procedures to allow for safe and equitable use.
 - Food & Drink
 - Patrons may not consume food or drink in the Library
- **Phased Plan for Reopening the Bernardsville Library**
 - Developed by a committee of trustees and Library management in June 2020 in anticipation of reopening
 - Everyone was thinking in “phases”
 - Currently in Phase 2.5
 - Building open to public with limitations
 - Photocopiers, computers, and ILL/demand management available
 - Staff and hours restored, regular policies regarding borrowing, fines, etc. in place
 - Continue to restrict volunteers, meeting rooms, and on-site programming.

Challenges going forward:

- **Site restrictions**
 - Building was designed so that staff would share almost all workspace, Covid restrictions present some challenges:
 - Some space, such as circulation, was extremely limited even before Covid
 - The only way to distance staff (primarily full-time staff) is to utilize small meeting room areas
 - Social distancing requires fewer chairs and tables which need to be stored somewhere
 - These take up remaining meeting room and community room space
- **Policy and rules enforcement**
 - Until pandemic is accepted as being “over,” rules enforcement will likely become increasingly difficult to enforce

- Must engage staff in this discussion as well as monitor community expectations, as they must be here working.
- **Staffing – unexpected loss of staff**
 - Quarantine requirements are the most difficult challenges

Moving Forward:

- The Library is reviewing further quarantining of materials
 - ALA, Chatham microbiologist literature review, Canadian CDC all of opinion that quarantining materials may not be necessary
 - Discussing with staff - if the staff have no concerns, will discontinue as of April 1 – expect at least two other area libraries to do the same
- **Policy Committee** needs to review temporary changes to policy in time to address current June 30 sunset date
 - Suggest review late April/early May with recommendation in time for May meeting (so there is time for discussion or changes if necessary)
- **Policy Committee** should review Workplace Covid-19 Infection Prevention Policy
 - Suggest give greater latitude to the Director to make changes as New Jersey loosens restrictions, vaccinations increase, and infection risk decreases
 - Ms. Arnold is discussing with Tammy the ability to hold safe, socially distanced programs outdoors, as the Library wants to provide services to community and meet perceived need for interaction
- Until the Governor relaxes social distancing and mask requirements, unlikely to be significant changes to Library interior
 - Chairs and tables set up for easy monitoring of rules
 - Distancing requirements, combined with layout of unmovable or difficult to move or store objects, provide significant constraints

Ms. Thompson inquired as to whether there may be an increase in indoor capacity - will that impact programs in the community room? Probably not – need to move things out of community room first.

Ms. Arnold indicated the MAIN interface takes some getting used to, but more simplified. Lot of material in and out. Needs to generate word of mouth benefits: great system, easy access, etc.

Treasurer’s Report: Mr. Krook noted that the proposed budget for 2021 was included in the packet (see further discussion in Finance Committee notes).

We are still operating under a preliminary budget for 2021; and overall, we are well underspent, this underspend is a tribute to Ms. Arnold and her staff.

Mr. Bertoni inquired with respect to the janitorial services which appear to be almost 50% below budget. This is a lag which is a result of the billing method employed by the janitorial service, it will ultimately be on par with prior year's budget.

Mr. Orza noted that the number of patrons through the door from 2 years ago appears to be in significant decline. Ms. Arnold responded that while fewer people are coming through the door this has not significantly impacted materials circulating.

Mr. Orza also inquired with respect to restrictions on unrestricted funds – there are 3 by our own creation: computer, employee, and construction reserve. With respect to restricted gifts to the Library these come with direction for use - typically donor stipulations associated with the gift – i.e., types of books. Ms. Arnold has spent accordingly, however the Covid pandemic has delayed expenditure – there is a backlog on purchasing restricted fund materials which will be addressed.

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 2/17/2021 to 2/28/2021. Ms. Thompson seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance:

2021 Budget: Mr. Krook advised that there have been a number of external meetings with Borough and the Borough Finance committee as well as internal Finance Committee meetings. We are working with a funding assumption of \$852,082 representing \$105,000 less than prior year. The proposed 2021 Budget will work to that decreased figure. The 2021 number remains about \$120k over state mandated minimum of \$740,000.

The proposed 2021 Budget was shared with a high-level overview; unable to do line analysis given time constraints; there was a request by Mr. Krook for all members to review the proposed Budget and to submit any questions or comments by April 7th @ 4:30.

With respect to the underspend of the past year, the Borough requested that this be managed over the immediate next two-year period; the underspend will be used as reserves to establish a new level of funding from the Borough starting 2021. The \$130,000 underspend from 2020 will help ease the transition to a lower level of Borough funding over the next 2 years; 2023 will be a reset without additional reserves as the underspend will have been used.

Ms. Thompson noted the Finance committee has worked to ensure the Library stays open 7 days a week. Mr. Diegnan commented on the group effort of the finance committee especially Mr. Krook and Ms. Arnold.

Personnel: No meeting.

Policy: No meeting. Ms. Orfan will schedule the next meeting in April or early May.

Planning: No updates. Ms. Thompson would like to start planning for capital and strategic purposes, however given the changes with MAIN it may be best to work through the MAIN changes and adaptation prior to proposing strategic or capital changes at this point. Ms. Arnold agreed that holding in abeyance would be most practical.

Ms. Thompson also suggested that given the recent changes it may be time to review the Library's Mission Statement. Discussion was held, and again suggested to hold in abeyance until MAIN system further acclimated and integrated. The Mission Statement will be circulated by Ms. Thompson.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library: Nancy Verduin, for the Friends, reported that an outdoor concert in May/June in the BHS parking lot is being considered; Covid restrictions will be followed. Viability of such an outdoor concert will be dependent upon Executive Order allowing more than 50 persons to gather. The Friends drafted a letter to new homeowners (61) – with an eye towards introducing the Library and Friends; would also have an added benefit of updating the mailing list.

Bernardsville Library Foundation: Mr. Bertoni submitted the updates for the Foundation on behalf of Ms. Brown-Witt:

The steering committee has decided to have a virtual event again in September because they were not sure an indoor event would draw enough guests. The silent auction will be expanded with a wine pull and mystery bags added to the event.

The new Boomerang system is being installed and should be ready for information transfer shortly (Boomerang is a donor management system that works with the Foundation's Quick Books).

The Foundation's appeal letter has a May mailing target.

Communications: Nothing of significance per Ms. Arnold. The Library did receive a generous donation from Marilyn Yee in memory of both Jerry Fischer and Marion Kennedy.

Unfinished Business: *Library Door Project*

Dan Lincoln is interested in continuing as the project general manager ("PM"); he provided an updated proposal that was included in the packet. Ms. Thompson inquired whether the additional monies requested for PM were included within the original grant and the match – such additional outlay is confirmed to be included.

Mr. Diegnan inquires to the prior engagement of Mr. Lincoln; clarified that Mr. Lincoln's responsibilities concluded after he assisted in the documentation of the paperwork for the grant.

The new proposal submitted by Mr. Lincoln would be for preparation of and management of the bidding process. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to engage the Borough in the PM and bidding process with an eye towards efficiency and economy.

Further suggestion by Mr. Orza to have final proposed figures represent the totality of the remainder of the project as there appears to be several potential open items on Mr. Lincoln's proposal. Mr. Orza and Mr. Diegnan have offered to review the proposal more closely and report back prior to the April meeting to facilitate further discussion at the April meeting.

New Business:

At 6:42 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy DeMilt, Secretary