Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting by Zoom
Bernardsville Public Library
December 21, 2021

Attendance: John Bertoni, Gretchen Dempsey, Richard Diegnan, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza and Terry Thompson were present. Amy DeMilt and Christine Zamarra were absent. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Leslie Brown-Witt, President of the Bernardsville Library Foundation, and Nancy Verduin, President of the Friends of the Bernardsville Library, were also present.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call.

Minutes: The November minutes were approved with one suggestion from Ms. Arnold that staff members need not be listed as absent, since they are not required to be at Board meetings.

Director’s Report: In addition to her written report, Ms. Arnold reported that [a staff member] had been exposed to Covid-19 and may have exposed others, the reason for having the meeting via Zoom. The Bernards Township Health Department has been consulted and [the staff member] was advised to mask and avoid patrons. Nancy Verduin mentioned that the State of New Jersey was sending out free Covid tests, to be administered on a Zoom call. Mr. Bertoni asked about whether the Simplex panel was the Borough’s responsibility; Ms. Arnold said that it was, and expressed her appreciation for John Macdowell’s attempts to mitigate disruption to the library. She also confirmed that the library had not been cold despite the issues with some of the electric heat. JCP&L will attempt to get a final bill to the library by the end of the year, Jill Hackett has been working diligently to accomplish this. She was asked about possible accrual, but Mr. Krook said that this would not be necessary.

Treasurer’s Report and Bills: Mr. Krook presented the Treasurer’s Report and bills, noting that we have completed 11 of the 12 months and are tracking appropriately to the end of the year, with a $25,000 contribution from the Foundation. We will be underspent against the budget again this year, because of reduced headcount. Mr. Krook noted that one of the bills was the last for MAIN. He moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report, to pay the new bills received from December 1-21, 2021, and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from November 16-30, 2021. Dr. Dempsey seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Mr. Krook discussed the final audit report, which was uncritical except for the difference between GAAP and municipal accounting in New Jersey, an issue that is raised every year. The auditors asked that we split the MAIN reserve from the cash reserve, not an issue. The Finance committee will meet on January 13 at 4:30 pm to discuss the draft budget to be presented to the borough.

Personnel: to be discussed in executive session.

1 We are happy to report that [the staff member] has since tested negative and is back in the library.
Policy: Mrs. Orfan presented four policies for updating. She recommended rescinding the Digitization Policy and the E-Book Reader policy as no longer necessary, replacing the Document Retention Policy with a Records Retention Policy following State Library guidance, and simplifying the Equipment Borrowing Policy. Mr. Bertoni suggested adding “if available” to the Equipment Borrowing Policy, and Ms. Thompson suggested changing its title to “Equipment Loaning Policy”. Mrs. Orfan accepted both suggestions and moved her recommendations. Mr. Krook seconded the motion, which carried.

Planning: Ms. Thompson said that the survey had been completed and the results would be sent to the Planning committee. There is one proposal for the two public bathrooms, with two more to come. The bathrooms will need to be done separately, so that one can be available as a public unisex bathroom (one user at a time) while the other is being worked on. Ms. Thompson would like to have a Planning committee meeting between January 4 and 7.

Public Participation:

Friends: Nancy Verduin reported that the Friends had a concert and a movie; their campaign so far has raised half of the prior year’s total. They will discuss the mini-golf event in January.

Foundation: Leslie Brown-Witt said that their appeal has raised $41.2 thousand and the virtual event netted $22 thousand. The Foundation will give the library over $25,000 this year. The Foundation board voted to allow terms to be extended one additional year, and she presented what she expects to be the slate of officers, to be voted on in January. The Foundation will move $25,000 into the endowment in 2022 and will reassess at the end of the first quarter of 2022.

Communications: in the board packet.

Unfinished Business: to be discussed in January.

New Business: Ms. Thompson moved to decommission the server listed in the agenda as no longer needed for public service; Mr. Diegnan seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote. Mr. Bertoni moved the execution of the MAIN agreement, seconded by Ms. Thompson, which carried unanimously.

At 6:37 pm, Ms. Thompson moved to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Orza seconded the motion, which carried. At 6:48, the executive session ended and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson, for Amy DeMilt