

Library Board Minutes
Monday, April 13, 2020
Bethlehem Area Public Library

President Anne Felker called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

ATTENDING: City – Anne Felker, Jane Gill, Joyce Hinnefeld, Sharon Yoshida, Julie Zumas
Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth, John Merhottein
Fountain Hill – Annamarie Jordan
Hanover Township – Jay Finnigan

Staff: Josh Berk, Erin Poore, Liz Saraceno, Matt Wolf, Kate Racculia, Dawn Fritz, Valerie Mann, Julia Brennan, Regina Kochmaruk, Andrew Krebs, Sarah Phillips.
Other: Terence Faul and Keely Collins (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul); Mike Prendeville (Hanover Township alternate); Deb Messling (public).

ABSENT: Olga Negrón, Emil Signes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. March

Motion to approve March minutes made by Jay Finnigan, seconded by Randi Blauth.

APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUNDS

1. February

Motion to approve operating funds subject to audit made by Annamarie Jordan, seconded by Jane Gill.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

1. February

2. Oral

Director Josh Berk expressed pride in the way the staff has risen to the challenge of providing programming remotely (author visits, yoga, etc.); the newsletter is a good way to keep up (email Josh if you don't receive it). Staff are also involved in catching up on projects, research, planning, and interacting with patrons as well as possible. It's a challenging time, but staff members are rising to the challenge.

Josh has been forwarding messages from Harrisburg (Dept. of Ed, Office of Commonwealth Libraries to members of the Board); also following CDC guidelines to stay up to date on what will need to be done before reopening.

Sharon Yoshida: noted appreciation of the movies available through Kanopy. Randi Blauth has attended two online author talks and noted that Kate Racculia is an excellent interviewer.

COMMUNITY REPORTS

1. CITY OF BETHLEHEM - Felker, Gill, Hinnefeld, Negrón, Signes, Yoshida, Zumas

None

2. BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP - Blauth, Merhottein

Looking at bookmobile numbers, to see if additional stops are needed.

3. FOUNTAIN HILL - Jordan

None

4. HANOVER TOWNSHIP - Finnigan

None

5. FRIENDS OF THE BAPL – Yoshida

Friends have a meeting next week to decide what to do about the postponed fundraiser in April; fall will probably be a difficult time for rescheduling. Sponsors are coming in. Sharon will provide further updates following the meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE COMMITTEE (Merhottein)

None

2. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (Felker)

None

3. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE (Gill)

Working online using Google docs; thanks to extraordinary work from Sharon in particular, this is about ready to go.

4. MARKETING AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE (Jordan)

None

5. STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (Zumas)

Julie needs to connect with Cathi Alloway since the May 7 board retreat will presumably be postponed. She plans to do so closer to the end of the month, when more may be known; she will connect with Board members after speaking with Cathi. All strategic planning interviews were in. Cathi was supposed to do local conversations on March 27 (canceled). Background data (census data, United Way reports) have been uploaded for her.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Matt Wolf noted that it's been interesting to get things up and running for online programming. The library is now operating as one virtual branch, which means they have had to create a flowchart for who would handle what. As part of this new programming he's needed to learn to use both Zoom and Facebook Live. He's been organizing poetry prompts for National Poetry Month, along with a separate "Favorite Poem" project (audio, video, or text). There are

additional plans to add a mindful listening program, arts & crafts projects, etc.; Elizabeth did a “Kindness Rocks” program, and there was a successful cooking program.

The Main and South Side branches’ staff know each other, but are working with each other more frequently; it’s been necessary to combine in this way, in order to avoid duplication in programming. Liz Saraceno noted that the staff at South Side is smaller and likely to know Main staff members; this forced collaboration is making it possible for Main branch to get to know more South Side staff. Innovative and creative programs have come from this collaboration. Southside painted a sign (“Stay safe, stay strong, keep reading”) that’s hanging in the windows above Fourth Street; South Side branch is also making efforts to post information on places where help is available to those in need outside the branch. Julia Brennan highlighted the availability of ebooks on Overdrive and Kanopy titles at this time; Erin Poore confirmed that resources are being shifted to enhance offerings in these areas. Matt noted that Julia is adding graphics that are improving the poetry programming. Kate Racculia noted that great poems and other responses are coming in from the community.

Additional announcements from Board members:

Sharon Yoshida noted that April 20 is the beginning of National Library Week.

Anne Felker described a neighborhood Little Free Library, but also a pantry including fresh-baked bread (with poems!), in her neighborhood.

Randi Blauth: Hispanic Center of the L.V. could use monetary donations; their food pantry is low.

No further new business.

Motion to adjourn made by Annamarie Jordan at 6:34 PM.

An EXECUTIVE SESSION began following adjournment.

Returned to regular Board meeting session at 7:25 PM for a vote on the following:
The Board directs our legal counsel to convey to Hanover Township that we do not consent to any reduction in the amount to be paid by Hanover Township and that the Board expects the Township will pay the contracted amount.

Vote was 6 in favor, 1 opposed.

Motion to adjourn: Annamarie Jordan; seconded by Randi Blauth.