

Library Board Minutes

October 12, 2020

Bethlehem Area Public Library

Meeting conducted virtually via Zoom

President Anne Felker called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ATTENDING: City – Anne Felker, Jane Gill, Joyce Hinnefeld, Olga Negrón
Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth
Fountain Hill – Annamarie Jordan
Hanover Township – Jay Finnigan

Staff – Josh Berk, Julia Brennan, Brenda Grow, Dana Hoy, Jodi Keim, Regina Kochmaruk, Rayah Levy, Catherine McCafferty, Sarah Phillips, Janine Santoro, Sue Schirripa

Other – Terence Faul (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul), Michael Prendeville (Hanover Township Alternate)

ABSENT: City – Emil Signes, Sharon Yoshida, Julie Zumas
Bethlehem Township – Dale Sourbeck

Staff – Erin Poore

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER: Dale Sourbeck, representing Bethlehem Township, was not present this evening and will be replacing John Merhottein, who has resigned from the Board.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR: Mike Prendeville asked about his request for a monthly “pace report” for the budget. President Felker said we can ask for this once the Finance Committee has met with Director Berk. This can happen once we have a new treasurer (to replace John Merhottein) and the committee meets. Prendeville also requested a copy of the business plan for the Coolidge Building in Bethlehem Township.

Randi Blauth reminded us of recent media coverage of the Library’s “Black Bethlehem” project (she sent an email to Board members about this on October 11): a segment on Channel 69 News called “History Headlines” and an interview with project director Rayah Levy on the ALA website: [Black Bethlehem: Documenting the Black Experience in a Majority-White Town](#).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion to approve the September minutes was made by Randi Blauth, seconded by Annamarie Jordan; motion approved.

APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUNDS: A motion to approve the August operating funds, subject to audit, was made by Annamarie Jordan, seconded by Jane Gill; motion approved.

DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT:

1. Director Berk expressed particular appreciation to the library staff for finding ways to keep the Summer Reading Program intact this summer both outside and online. The newer Adult Summer Reading Program also had to be reconfigured. A lot of writing happened as well, with many shared stories from the community. Thanks to the staff for all this work. Randi Blauth asked if the number of participating kids this summer (900) is typical. It is a bit lower than the usual 1,300-1,600, but still a good turnout considering the difficulties of the summer. As the weather turns, there will be continued efforts to get creative with library programming. Good plans are coming together for the fall.

REPORTS:

1. City of Bethlehem – none
2. Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth noted that she was not aware that President Felker and Director Berk would be present at the recent Township Board meeting; Felker noted that this was a rather last-minute thing. The goal was to make the Township Board aware of the BAPL Board and invite input. Director Berk and President Felker also attended a Hanover Township supervisors meeting, for the same reason. Randi Blauth supports this and suggests that this should happen annually.
3. Fountain Hill – Annamarie Jordan asked about what is happening with Books on the Hill. Director Berk noted a number of delays (a couple moves, HVAC and electrical changes needed prior to interior renovations). HVAC workers are just now getting to the necessary work. Once the interior climate is stabilized, the next steps can happen. There have been a number of donations, including t-shirts from Lehigh Valley Apparel Company. Santoro's Franks & Chili offered to sell the t-shirts from their shop. Now they will be available for sale at the library. President Felker asked whether Santoro's might provide a good model for businesses in other parts of the community that might support the library in this way. If anyone has ideas about businesses in our municipalities, send ideas to Director Berk.
4. Hanover Township – none
5. Friends of the Bethlehem Area Public Library – Director Berk reported on Sharon Yoshida's behalf that the Friends annual mailing went out, and there has been a great response so far. President Felker has spoken with the president of the Friends and urges all of us to encourage active library users that we know to get involved with the Friends.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Finance Committee – No meeting.
2. Governance Committee – No meeting and will meet this month.

3. Human Resources Committee – No meeting, but there have been some email exchanges. Jane Gill hopes to arrange a meeting with Director Berk before the end of the month. Work is taking place.
4. Marketing and Advocacy Committee – No meeting.
5. Strategic Planning Committee – Randi Blauth noted that Cathi Alloway was ill and unable to meet with Board members at the time planned for. Board members were asked to respond to a second scheduling poll to try to arrange a new meeting time. Cathi Alloway will meet with all BAPL staff virtually this Friday, October 16, regarding the strategic planning process.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Resolution for the Waiver of State Standards: This year 100% of libraries will not meet the required State of Pennsylvania Office of Commonwealth Libraries standards for funding because of not being open for the required number of hours. So, BAPL needs to join other libraries in applying for this waiver (due to COVID). A motion to submit an application for a waiver of State OCL Standards, signed by Board President Anne Felker, was made by Olga Negrón, seconded by Randi Blauth; motion approved. Still no word on a precise date for the arrival of State Funding; projected to arrive by the end of this month.
2. Nominations for Treasurer: Since it is late in the year to appoint a new treasurer, President Felker recommended waiting to appoint a new treasurer until we appoint other new officers in the new year. She recommended appointing an interim treasurer, Jane Gill, until that time. A motion to approve appointing Jane Gill as interim treasurer until January was made by Annamarie Jordan, seconded by Joyce Hinnefeld; motion approved. This means that Jane Gill will be convening the Finance Committee for work on the budget. She noted that she was already on the Finance Committee, so will be able to work with previous materials.
3. Olga Negrón noted that Bethlehem City Council would like information on City programming related to social justice, etc., for the Community Engagement Calendar. She commends BAPL staff for the programming they have arranged and urges them to share programming with her for the calendar.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jane Gill. Meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Hinnefeld, Secretary