

## **Library Board Minutes**

January 10, 2022 (Amended)  
Bethlehem Area Public Library

President Anne Felker called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

ATTENDING: City of Bethlehem – Anne Felker, Jane Gill, Joyce Hinnefeld,  
Emil Signes  
Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth, Dale Sourbeck  
Fountain Hill – Will Rufe

Staff – Josh Berk, Amresse Farrow, Sarah Phillips  
Other – Terence Faul (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul)

ABSENT: City of Bethlehem – Rachel Leon and two open positions  
Hanover Township – Jay Finnigan

### **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:**

Board members and meeting attendees introduced themselves to the new Fountain Hill Library Board representative, Will Rufe. There was discussion about the two open Library Board positions for the City of Bethlehem.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Randi Blauth asked that the December minutes add clarification for the retreat offered for Pennsylvania library boards in 2022. Mr. Faul provided additional clarification to amend the minutes. A motion to approve the December minutes as amended was made by Joyce Hinnefeld, seconded by Jane Gill; motion approved with Randi Blauth, Dale Sourbeck, and Will Rufe abstaining.

### **APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUNDS:**

President Felker called for a motion to approve the operating funds subject to audit.

Mr. Sourbeck asked about the Fidelity credit card. Director Berk explained that Fidelity is the bank that processes credit transactions BAPL accepts from patrons. A number of times a year, funds from that Fidelity account are moved into the library's main operating account at Truist (formerly BB&T).

Mr. Sourbeck also asked about "Elan" on the accounts payable for \$28,000. Director Berk will ask the accountant for an explanation.

Motion to approve the November operating funds, subject to audit, made by Dale Sourbeck, seconded by Jane Gill; motion approved unanimously.

## **DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT:**

Director Berk reported how pleased he is with the success of November's 11Fest concert. He described it for members who were not present at the December meeting. Amresse Farrow commented that she is looking for more ways to serve veterans in the library's borrowing area.

Director Berk continued by noting 2021 was an unpredictable year with high staff turnover, staff changing positions, and difficulty hiring. Programming remains unstable, defying predictability due to the pandemic. It is unprecedented.

Dale Sourbeck asked for clarification about the ABE consortium. Director Berk explained that years ago it was initially created for Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton libraries to share a database, which then became a shared catalogue and then a combined decision to share materials and hire a daily delivery driver. The consortium allows patrons to pick up and return items at any of the three libraries. The van was purchased with grant funds. All three libraries contribute to the driver's salary.

Finally, Director Berk officially introduced the new Marketing and Development Specialist, Amresse Farrow. Ms. Farrow previously worked for the library as a freelancer with her company, Lab212. Board members welcomed her. Ms. Farrow spoke about how she looks forward to working with everyone and especially the Marketing and Advocacy Committee.

President Felker asked if there is talk of another COVID shutdown from the state level. Director Berk responded no, it would be a local decision. He noted that BAPL is still keeping things small, not renting rooms, and holding storytimes and other events outside whenever possible.

## **COMMUNITY REPORTS:**

1. City of Bethlehem – none
2. Bethlehem Township – Dale Sourbeck asked for more copies of the strategic plan.
3. Fountain Hill – The new Board appointee from Fountain Hill, Borough Councilman Will Rufe, was welcomed by the other Board members.
4. Hanover Township – none
5. Friends of the Bethlehem Area Public Library – Director Berk will share contact information with the new Friends president, Krista Best. Amresse Farrow plans to meet with the group and also with Friends Board member Kate Racculia. Ms. Farrow will also include President Felker in communications.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. Finance Committee (Gill) – none
2. Governance Committee (Blauth) – Randi Blauth asked about the Social Media Policy. Director Berk and Ms. Farrow said there are a few changes being made. They will share the revised version with the committee to review and ask for a legal opinion next.

BAPL needs to be able to control content posted on its site without infringing on anyone's First Amendment rights. Will Rufe asked what level of participation does the library want. Director Berk wants people to tag their friends and share information, like events, since it is a great way to spread the word about library happenings. Ms. Farrow understands how turning off the commenting functionality of social media affects the spread of information. Director Berk also talked about the ability to hide comments. Ms. Farrow agreed and suggested keeping paper copies of "inappropriate" hidden comments on file near Circulation and Reference. Copies could be made available upon request. This method allows for image control while keeping the information available to the public.

Director Berk shared that there have been some occurrences, nationally, of people asking for libraries to remove certain books from their collections. He would like a discussion to be prepared for this potential possibility. Perhaps this should be the next policy reviewed by the committee. Jane Gill remembered there was a form already in existence for someone to request removal of a title. It is called "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" and available on the library's website.

3. Human Resources Committee (Gill) – None, but Ms. Gill is in the process of pulling the committee together.
4. Marketing and Advocacy Committee (Hinnefeld) – Joyce Hinnefeld will share names of committee community members with Ms. Farrow.
5. Strategic Planning Committee (Open) – none
6. President Felker clarified about how committees will be formed for 2022. She wants to keep the same Board members that are currently serving and in place. Then can fill in where needed with new, incoming Board members.

Randi Blauth asked if the City of Bethlehem knows they need to fill two positions. Director Berk will connect with the City Clerk to make sure of it.

Terence Faul brought up the idea of a Nominating Committee to create a slate of officers for February's meeting. President Felker asked Joyce Hinnefeld to head up this committee and she, President Felker, will help.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. The action item of adopting the Plan for the Use of State Aid 2021-22 was described by Director Berk. The majority of the \$392,171 in State funding goes towards salaries and benefits with a percentage of the funds used for purchasing books and other materials for the library collection.

Randi Blauth made the motion to approve the Plan for the Use of State Aid 2021-22, Dale Sourbeck seconded the motion; the motion unanimously approved.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dale Sourbeck. President Felker adjourned the meeting at 6:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Phillips (BAPL Staff) and Joyce Hinnefeld (Board Secretary)