

## **Library Board Minutes**

May 9, 2022 (Amended)

Bethlehem Area Public Library

Vice President Joyce Hinnefeld called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

ATTENDING: City of Bethlehem – Jane Gill, Joyce Hinnefeld, G. Christopher Hunt, Delia Marrero  
Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth, Dale Sourbeck  
Fountain Hill – Will Rufe

Staff – Josh Berk, Amresse Farrow, Sarah Phillips, Erin Poore  
Other – Terence Faul (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul), Rachel Leon (City Council Liaison for City of Bethlehem)

ABSENT: City of Bethlehem – Anne Felker, Emil Signes, one open seat  
Hanover Township – Jeff Warren

Before moving to the agenda, council members and meeting attendees introduced themselves and welcomed newly appointed members.

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

Rachel Leon reported Bethlehem City Council will hear the proposal for South Side development near the Library's South Side Branch on May 18. She mentioned that the Historic Conservation Commission appreciated everyone who attended the meeting, including the letter read by BAPL Board President Anne Felker.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

1. Motion to approve the April minutes was made by Dale Sourbeck, seconded by Jane Gill; motion approved, with Will Rufe abstaining.

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

1. Vice President Hinnefeld called for a motion to approve the operating funds. Motion to approve the March operating funds, subject to audit, made by Jane Gill, seconded by Dale Sourbeck; motion approved unanimously.

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

1. Director Berk distributed copies of the 2021 Annual Report. This report is also online and uses graphics from Books on the Hill this year. He requested members share the report with their respective communities. Director Berk also reminded members of the Board Information area on BAPL's website, projecting the image to demonstrate how to navigate it. The Board

Information area includes things like: Policies and Procedures, Officers, Historical Documents, Strategic Plans, Business Contacts, Municipal Contracts, and State Library Contacts. The area is password protected, and he will send Board Members information needed to access it.

2. Patron attendance at the library remains unpredictable. Some statistics are still not settled, but many service measures are getting back to pre-pandemic levels.
3. Ms. Hinnefeld asked Amresse Farrow about the Google Ad Grant. Ms. Farrow began by explaining the concept of co-working marketing. The goal is to increase community contacts through partnerships with other local groups with similar service focus and objectives. She and Director Berk have met with multiple groups recently. Co-working space Venture X was interested to learn about the bike-share program and wants to have an Outreach librarian visit their Bethlehem location along with a shareable book cart from BAPL. Touchstone Theatre will have a writing workshop at the library. Ms. Farrow also met with Valley Youth House for a discussion focused on how both organizations can use their resources to help.
4. Ms. Farrow was excited to share that BAPL got a Google Ad Grant. As a nonprofit organization, the library can apply to Google for up to \$120,000 each year, resulting in access to \$10,000 in search ads each month. Dr. Hunt asked for more clarification, Mr. Sourbeck asked for an example, and Ms. Marrero asked if this will help with SEO's. Ms. Farrow said yes, it will help with search engine optimization. She mentioned statistics of 60 percent organic traffic and 45 percent direct search to the library's website. Ms. Farrow has begun adding keywords to the ad grant project to capture searches appropriate for BAPL. She gave the example of a person searching online for a safe space to work. When words such as "free Wi-Fi", "work for free," or "bike program" are googled, BAPL's ad will appear at the top of the page. Funds will be utilized for five separate business pages, instead of two. Five pages will cover the Main Library, South Side Branch, Studio11, plus the Coolidge and Books on the Hill locations. Ms. Hinnefeld likes how this could increase millennial connections for the library. Ms. Farrow also wants to increase program attendance. Based on a young person's comment from 11Fest, she will be considering if the Discord app would be another marketing tool.

## **COMMUNITY REPORTS:**

1. City of Bethlehem – Rachel Leon followed up on water damage at the South Side Branch. Recommendation is to work with the Chief of Police. Director Berk said there is evidence of trespass and vandalism. Garbage is thrown onto the roof of the South Side Branch and beer bottles end up in the downspouts, which contributes to more water runoff issues. He knows the building is owned by Praxis Real Estate. Mr. Sourbeck suggested setting up

cameras. Ms. Marrero suggested leaf guards for the gutters. Mr. Rufe suggested applying zoning pressure to the property owner. He theorizes that Lehigh University quietly monitors where their students live off-campus. Ms. Leon will mention the situation to Lehigh's president again. She also plans to ask the Chief of Police to speak with Lehigh's police department. The community asks Lehigh to enforce the Community Behavior Agreement signed by Lehigh students. Mr. Faul asked for the address for Praxis Real Estate and he will try to locate a local representative.

2. Bethlehem Township – none
3. Fountain Hill – Will Rufe highlighted how happy residents are with the Books on the Hill location. Borough Council wants to make it a cornerstone for the community, along with an increase in Little League Baseball. It remains to be seen if their public pool closure will be permanent or temporary. The programming done at Books on the Hill has been successful.
4. Hanover Township – none

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Ms. Blauth commented that President Anne Felker was waiting for new board members before re-working the committees. Ms. Hinnefeld asked for this evening's reports to include an overview of what is involved. She also noted that committee members are not limited to board members and would like to see increased community involvement.

1. Finance Committee (Gill) – Ms. Gill reported on current committee members, how often they meet and topics they discuss. She is grateful to Director Berk for finding that BAPL's investment funds are not invested in Russia.
2. Governance Committee (Blauth) – Ms. Blauth reported the history of recent committee projects.
3. Human Resources Committee (Gill) – Ms. Gill reported on current committee members and that they manage mostly through email.

Ms. Farrow asked if there is a limit to the number of members who can serve on committees. She observed that committees are also an opportunity to increase diversity. Ms. Marrero noted it would help build the pipeline for future trustees as well.

4. Marketing and Advocacy Committee (Hinnefeld) – Ms. Farrow reported the next meeting date. She noted since this will be the first meeting of the year, there will be lots of information to cover. Ms. Hinnefeld reported on current committee members.

5. Strategic Planning Committee (Blauth) – Ms. Blauth reported there is not much happening now, since the plan has begun. The Board receives quarterly progress reports.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Ms. Farrow asked for an update on the Social Media Policy. Director Berk reported that it is still in review by the Governance Committee. Mr. Sourbeck agreed to join that committee. Dr. Hunt asked for a history of hate speech postings on BAPL's Facebook page. Director Berk gave an overview, explaining why clear guidelines must be in place before engaging online. Ms. Farrow supported other Staff Members needing to know such guidelines. Mr. Rufe asked about allowing comments versus no comments allowed. Ms. Farrow replied that not allowing comments would negatively impact the library's data algorithm and counter marketing efforts. Dr. Hunt commented on his understanding and emphasized the need for a policy to address, and deal with, hate speech. Ms. Farrow suggested a side site, "unofficial" forum where negative commenters could be directed.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Director Berk reported on work towards the Strategic Plan's goal of increasing the library's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). He and Ms. Farrow met with FACES International and received a quote of \$6,000 for multi-phased staff DEI efforts. Phase 1 would focus on staff training and Phase 2 would be an audit of where we are. Director Berk suggested using funds from the Yoshida Endowment. Ms. Farrow also plans to apply for grants to support future efforts. She is very excited for this initiative to begin. Ms. Marrero asked if they had looked at other local companies and mentioned the Campaign for Racial and Ethnic Justice. She and other Board Members wanted additional quotes to compare. Additionally, Ms. Marrero wants to be certain any training will be sensitive to asking people of color to lead this emotionally taxing work of training a primarily white audience. Director Berk asked if there could be a motion to allocate funds from the Yoshida Endowment without specifying a training provider. Mr. Sourbeck asked how long Ms. Farrow has been working at BAPL. She replied it has been four months and he complimented her on how quickly she has gotten involved. Ms. Farrow also wants to get the DEI Committee and work groups started as soon as possible. Ms. Marrero suggested a motion for up to \$10,000, so the Board can compare multiple quotes and determine the best group to utilize for DEI training. Director Berk explained the Yoshida Fund. Mr. Faul asked if this should be a Board motion or if it is part of the budget. Director Berk believes it is not a budget item. The Board decided to table this discussion for a future meeting.
2. Ms. Gill cautioned everyone about two spam fishing-style emails she received from what appeared to be another Board Member's email address.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dale Sourbeck and seconded by Randi Blauth. Vice President Hinnefeld adjourned the meeting at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Phillips (BAPL Staff) and Joyce Hinnefeld (Vice President)