

## **Library Board Minutes**

November 14, 2022

Bethlehem Area Public Library

Meeting conducted virtually via Zoom

President Anne Felker called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

ATTENDING: City of Bethlehem – Anne Felker, Joyce Hinnefeld, Rachel Leon, Delia Marrero  
Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth  
Fountain Hill – Will Rufe

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

ABSENT: City of Bethlehem – Jane Gill, G. Christopher Hunt, one open seat  
Bethlehem Township – Dale Sourbeck  
Hanover Township – one open seat

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

1. Ms. Phillips inquired about the Board appointing another member to serve as Secretary. Discussion determined the current arrangement is sufficient for the time being.
2. Ms. Hinnefeld complimented 11Fest and the Vonnegut event. The reading of *Slaughterhouse-Five* was fun. President Felker also liked 11Fest and remarked about the electric ukulele.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

1. Motion to approve the October minutes was made by Ms. Leon, seconded by Ms. Blauth; motion approved. Mr. Rufe abstained.

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

1. President Felker called for a motion to approve the operating funds subject to audit. There was a short discussion around copy service figures and how they are estimated. Motion to approve the September operating funds, subject to audit, made by Ms. Leon, seconded by Ms. Hinnefeld; motion approved unanimously.

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

Director Berk highlighted a few things from his written report. First, he talked about a new mural unveiled at the Banana Factory in September. He spoke about this project on Olga Negrón's radio show as well. October's Trunk-or-Treat was one of the biggest events we have ever had. The huge success

included the Bookmobile, city vehicles, fire trucks, and Tug from the National Museum of Industrial History. This popular event will also be planned for next year again. Fountain Hill's Books on the Hill is celebrating its one year anniversary. The Liberty High School yearbook project has been completed, and Director Berk also mentioned a new subscription to JSTOR for library patrons. This is a scholarly research tool, typically only found in academic libraries. Ms. Marrero suggested notifying other local nonprofits and offered to share her nonprofit contacts to help spread the news. President Felker rode the book bike to the YMCA on Election Day for kids who were off from school. Director Berk noted they use the book bike primarily to give out children's books that have been donated and are still in excellent condition. He is looking for volunteers for a holiday hut along Main Street that has been donated for the library use. High school students can receive community service hours. Board members were enthusiastic and plan to also help with coverage. Director Berk will send a sign-up for those who are interested.

### **COMMUNITY REPORTS:**

1. City of Bethlehem – President Felker has asked the City for another Board candidate. Increasing South Side representation would be ideal. Ms. Marrero asked about a minimum age requirement. While Board members should be age 18 or older, teenagers could be wonderful assets to serve on library committees.
2. Bethlehem Township – none
3. Fountain Hill – Mr. Rufe reports that the Borough's budget has been approved. People who are using Books on the Hill love it, and he wants to see what else can be done to encourage more usage. Director Berk confirmed Mr. Kratz is the best contact for the Borough. A music event to be held in summer 2023 was discussed as a potential joint venture. Mr. Rufe mentioned Jeanne Johnson as a good contact for the recreation committee.
4. Hanover Township – President Felker has asked the Township for another Board candidate.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee – Ms. Farrow covered the planning process thus far to obtain formal DEI training for BAPL. She reported reaching out to a few organizations that do this work in addition to FACES International, who has submitted a proposal. There are some challenges in getting additional proposals, as several local organizations have non-compete clauses in this work, they are not taking on new clients, or they do not provide the type of robust training we are looking for. The library did receive a bid from the National Diversity Council, so the committee has two bids to consider. Ms. Marrero noted that this committee has not met since the previous Board meeting. Ms. Blauth asked to have a copy of the FACES

proposal. Ms. Farrow asked if two bids were enough to present to the Board. President Felker replied that as many bids as possible to consider would be best, and any bid information should be shared in writing.

2. Finance Committee – none
3. Governance Committee – President Felker reported this committee had not met and needs more members.
4. Human Resources Committee – none
5. Marketing and Advocacy Committee – Ms. Farrow wants to have a December meeting. 11Fest was wonderful, and there is one more upcoming book sale (November 30 and December 3) before the end of the year to promote. She also reported that the Lehigh Valley Book Festival will be held the last weekend in March next year. Also the capital campaign will be launched soon to raise money for renovations of the Main Library's first floor. Ms. Farrow explained the plan is to partner with a digital marketing firm called Feathr to help launch the campaign and reach potential new donors. Ms. Leon plans to join the committee. Ms. Farrow also requested a listing of what Board members are serving on what committees.
6. Strategic Planning Committee – Ms. Blauth requested a copy of Director Berk's powerpoint presentation from the previous meeting which outlined progress in meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Board members considered the Proposed Meeting Dates for 2023. The proposed schedule has meetings scheduled every other month beginning in February. A hybrid model (Zoom plus in-person) was discussed. A concern was raised that if a committee report is missed then the information delay would be greater with every other month meetings. Some members noted that historically this has not worked well, especially when committees are not meeting regularly. Potential Zoom breakout rooms could be used to include committee meetings during Board meetings. Board members felt the Zoom option is valuable for many attendees and continuing with scheduled monthly meetings would be the best plan. Improving committee work suggestions included regular meeting times and meeting right before Board meetings. President Felker requested more input for how an in-person and Zoom hybrid meeting could be done well. This topic was tabled and will be considered during old business at the next meeting.

2. Director Berk presented the Proposed Budget for 2023 and shared a presentation about how the budget was created. Highlights included a 17% increase in State funding, district expenses being reported differently in 2023, and a one-time restoration of funding from the State of Pennsylvania for District Centers. Because of these changes and the pension settlement payments being completed in 2022, the per capita contribution for participating municipalities will remain at \$18.89 in 2023. The proposed budget includes a small (2%) inflation adjustment for staff salaries, an increase in collection spending, and the hiring of a human resources firm. The library budget is created along with the finance committee's input. There will also be an adjusted pay scale for starting salaries, which have not been increased since 2013. Existing staff will have pay rates adjusted to the minimum starting salary if they are currently below those updated hourly rates or starting salary figures. Director Berk explained how district funds are used to pay BAPL staff who perform work for district functions. District funds are also used for electronic collection (e-book) expenses to be shared district-wide. He will distribute a copy of the 2023 Budget to share with municipalities once the Library Board passes this budget. Board members discussed voting now versus waiting until the next meeting and decided not to postpone. Mr. Rufe made a motion to approve the 2023 Budget as proposed, Ms. Marrero seconded; motion approved unanimously.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Hinnefeld, and President Felker adjourned the meeting at 6:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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