

Library Board Minutes

May 8, 2023

Bethlehem Area Public Library

Meeting conducted in a hybrid form of in-person and virtual attendance via Zoom.

President Anne Felker called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

ATTENDING: City of Bethlehem – Anne Felker, Joanne Garcia, Jane Gill, Joyce Hinnefeld, Rachel Leon, Delia Marrero
Bethlehem Township – Randi Blauth
Hanover Township – Telly Diacogiannis

Staff – Josh Berk, Amresse Farrow, Sarah Phillips, Erin Poore, Sue Schirripa

Other – Terence Faul (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul)

ABSENT: City of Bethlehem – G. Christopher Hunt
Bethlehem Township – one open seat
Fountain Hill – Will Rufe

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Motion to approve the April minutes, as amended, was made by Ms. Gill, seconded by Ms. Blauth; motion approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUNDS:

1. President Felker called for a motion to approve the operating funds subject to audit. Motion to approve the March operating funds, subject to audit, made by Ms. Marrero, seconded by Ms. Blauth; motion approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT:

Director Josh Berk spoke about two items. He was pleased with how the renovations for the Main Library first floor have progressed. Some new furniture was delayed and a donor wall will be added, but overall the project has moved along nicely. An Open House was held on April 29 to celebrate the re-opening of the first floor and it was wonderful. President Felker inquired if the new floor plan was functioning as planned. Director Berk said it was going well. It is good to have the Reference desk close to the entrance, and there are better sightlines throughout.

Next he shared that patron-use statistics for the South Side Branch and Coolidge location increased during April, as expected, while access to the first floor at the Main Library was limited. The South Side Branch was the busiest location during that time.

COMMUNITY REPORTS:

1. City of Bethlehem – Ms. Leon reported that she wanted the Board to be aware of development and zoning on the South Side since BAPL had taken a position on potential development occurring next to the South Side Branch. That situation brought zoning to the forefront for City Council. She will keep the Library Board up-to-date on anything affecting library locations in the City. Secondly, Ms. Leon welcomed Joanne Garcia to the Library Board as a new representative from the City of Bethlehem. Ms. Garcia is an Education Coordinator at ArtsQuest. She has studied at Lehigh University and grew up in Bethlehem. She and her family are fans of the library.
2. Bethlehem Township – Ms. Blauth suggested conducting a Bookmobile survey to better understand current usage of that asset. In light of the success of the Coolidge location for Bethlehem Township, perhaps it makes sense to consider having fewer stops in that area of the Township and maybe more in other areas. Director Berk will ask Bookmobile Driver Mike Henninger and the Reference librarians for data and patron feedback. He also noted patrons are very vocal about changes to the Bookmobile schedule. Typically they are unhappy if stops are changed or reduced. They agreed collecting updated data would be a reasonable next step.
3. Fountain Hill – none
4. Hanover Township – Mr. Diacogiannis reported that the Community Center kiosk is empty and the machine will be removed from the Township building. He continues to work towards the next option for the library in Hanover Township. He would like to hear BAPL's professional opinions for next options. Board members wondered if it is known what Hanover Township residents want for library services. Specifically, are residents content to visit the Main Library or are they looking for something located in the Township. Mr. Diacogiannis will check with Township management for any feedback they may have from residents. Board discussion included looking at usage data and questioning if another machine is the best answer for Hanover Township. Director Berk shared that a few years ago, a daycare room was considered for potential library space in the Township Building. Township managers ultimately decided to continue with a daycare space. Discussion ended with two next steps. First, determine if Hanover residents want something more from the library at the Township building or are they happy to travel to the Main Library. Second, Mr. Diacogiannis plans to get a definitive answer about physical space versus a machine or other technical solution.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee – Ms. Farrow reported that BAPL will begin introducing DEI information to staff. A draft of this information will be sent to the committee. Training can then begin about 30 days after informing the staff.
2. Finance Committee – Ms. Gill reported a meeting is planned for May 22.
3. Governance Committee – President Felker reported there is a meeting planned for next Monday, May 15. They are working on a committee mission statement, a policy to govern allocations of large donations, a policy for reimbursement for library staff pursuing degrees in library science, and a policy for addressing children's fines for late and damaged items.
4. Human Resources Committee – Ms. Marrero will be scheduling with Director Berk to coordinate with the DEI committee plans.
5. Marketing and Advocacy Committee – Ms. Hinnefeld reported there is a meeting tomorrow, May 9. There is good energy within the group and they have had general conversations about their role for the Library. Committee members are very interested in providing paper copies for monthly programs to have available at all the satellite locations. Director Berk suggested a virtual “dropbox” style set up, so the Townships can easily download and print them out also. The committee would like to do a fall apple tasting fundraiser with a local farm, potentially piggybacking with another fall market, and Lehigh Valley Read's mascot, Corey, the Apple. Mr. Diacogiannis encouraged Board members to share library information with local businesses to help spread the word.
6. Strategic Planning Committee – none

OLD BUSINESS:

Director Berk shared that Omega Protective Services will begin patrols at the Main Library later this month, with the book sale being the first event they will work.

NEW BUSINESS:

Director Berk shared the good news of a \$250,000 bequest from the Dave and Barbara Roper Estate. Part of these funds will be used towards the cost of renovation. Discussion occurred including; what else funds could be used for, the forthcoming policy to help address proper management and sending an official thank you to the family through their attorney.

The Library Board entered into Executive Session at 7:05 P.M.
President Felker adjourned the meeting at 7:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Phillips (BAPL Staff) and Randi Blauth (Secretary)