Library Board Minutes
March 10, 2025
Bethlehem Area Public Library
Meeting conducted in a hybrid form of in-person and virtual attendance via Zoom.

President Joyce Hinnefeld called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

ATTENDING: City of Bethlehem – Marty Beatty, Anne Felker, Nicole Gencarelli, Joyce Hinnefeld, Christie Jacobsen, Hilary Kwiatek, Ron Williams
Bethlehem Township – Carolyn Harper, Peggy Salvatore
Fountain Hill – Will Rufe
Hanover Township – Telly Diacogiannis

Staff – Josh Berk, Sarah Phillips, Erin Poore, Sue Schirripa
Other – Alison Diefenderfer (Bethlehem Township alternate), Terence Faul (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul)

ABSENT: None

BOARD MEMBER VACANCY:

Newly appointed Board Member, Marty Beatty, was welcomed by other Trustees. Director Berk extended greetings and plans to share access information in addition to relevant documents with Mr. Beatty soon. The Board Member listing will be updated with Mr. Beatty's name.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. An amendment to the February minutes was noted for correction, and will remove a duplicate word. No objections, minutes accepted as amended.

APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUNDS:

1. Director Berk explained there is a slightly different format for the financial documents Trustees received, as created by the library's new accountant. President Hinnefeld called for a motion to approve the January operating funds subject to audit. Motion to approve the January operating funds, subject to audit, made by Ms. Felker, seconded by Ms. Salvatore; motion approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT:

Director Berk reported that the South Side Branch is closer to returning to full regular hours and is doing well. Branch Adult Services Technician Nayeli

Hance has been hosting popular art events, including a program where attendees painted pictures of adoptable dogs from the Humane Society. The paintings are then used to help advertise dogs up for adoption. He also complimented Lauri Miller, the new South Side Branch manager, for doing a great job.

Next Director Berk shared information about LinkedIn Learning. He is considering adding access to this service for library patrons. It could be utilized with adult education and professional development. President Hinnefeld asked if Mango was still available, the language learning app. Director Berk confirmed it was and described how that app works for library patrons.

At this point, President Hinnefeld reordered the meeting agenda items in order to deal with Old Business ahead of Community and Committee reports. The goal was to ensure adequate time for discussion and voting on Board business needing attention.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. The application for the “Young Lungs at Play” program needed approved minutes to proceed. Director Berk will take it from here and receive signage for the library declaring the exterior property a tobacco-free zone.

2. Ms. Felker will share the final version of the Proposed Tuition Policy. Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

3. Trustees donated towards a Buy-A-Book in honor of Dr. Hunt's children. It was mentioned how Dr. Hunt would still like to contribute time to BAPL by giving some programs.

4. The proposed change for the Board's monthly meeting schedule was discussed. Solicitor Faul clarified there did not need to be anything added to the Bylaws in order to call a special meeting of the Board. Motion to approve new meeting schedule was made by Ms. Felker, seconded by Ms. Kwiatek; motion approved unanimously.

COMMUNITY REPORTS:

There was discussion about removing Community Reports as a meeting agenda item. Discussion points included:

How a monthly report from each municipality is not obligatory;
Municipality updates and information could be shared during Courtesy of the Floor;
Could simply generalize this agenda item by removing bullet points for participating municipalities.

Board members supported the concept and intent behind this proposed change.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. President Hinnefeld adjusted committee Board members and distributed the updated listing.

2. There was discussion about changing the name of the Marketing and Advocacy Committee to either Outreach or Community Relations. The idea of one representative from each municipality serving on this committee was agreed upon. Ms. Kwiatek, Mr. Diacogiannis, Mr. Rufe and Ms. Diefenderfer will serve at this time. Other discussion points included:

   The committee determining goals for all the participating municipalities;
   Having at least four meetings per calendar year;
   Encouraging the BAPL staff involved with marketing to contact the committee.

   Ms. Kwiatek and Mr. Rufe shared ideas and examples of an "Outreach Kit" that could be created for each municipality, potentially containing general information, a cheat sheet for common questions, brochures, flyers, other items to capture necessary information from interested people to be followed up on and encouraged.

   Mr. Rufe suggested using a tagline of "Here, There, and Anywhere."

   Director Berk added how beneficial it is for BAPL, when people who are not library employees, contact their municipality or the state to advocate and brag about the Library.

   President Hinnefeld also reminded members about contacting donors and planning fundraising events.

3. President Hinnefeld appointed a convener for each committee. Each convener will manage the scheduling of a committee's meeting time. They will not necessarily be the point person in charge of running a committee meeting. Trustees assigned are:

   Mr. Williams for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion;
   Ms. Salvatore for Finance;
   Ms. Felker for Governance;
   Mr. Rufe for Human Resources;
   Mr. Diacogiannis for Community Relations, formerly known as Marketing and Advocacy;
   Ms. Jacobsen for Strategic Planning.

4. Looking ahead for a Strategic Plan refresh, Director Berk will schedule time with Cathi Alloway. He noted part of a Plan refresh will probably need information gathered from outside of the Library Board.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Director Berk presented a request for approval of a waiver from Pennsylvania State Library Standards for District Centers. As part of the District Center Library Report to be submitted to the State, it was noted that BAPL does not meet the minimum required standards in two identified areas (Hours of Service and minimum number of meetings of the District Advisory Council). District Consultant David Dunlap is in the process of reforming the District Advisory Council. BAPL's hours of operation are currently at 58 weekly open hours, instead of the required 64 hours a week. Hours were changed many years ago because of reduced funding.

   Motion to request these two waivers of State Standards was made by Mr. Rufe, seconded by Ms. Felker; motion approved unanimously.

2. Director Berk also wanted to remind the Board that the Lehigh Valley Book Fest will be happening on March 28 and 29. The End, a bookstore in Allentown, partners with BAPL and organizes this annual festival. This year, planners wanted to host a "Banned Book Bingo" at the library in partnership with a group called “Red, Wine, and Blue.” Because of state law, a bingo license would be required to host this game and give prizes. If the Library does not get the license, they could possibly still do bingo as a game for entertainment purposes only, with no prizes given. Obtaining a one-time bingo license is also an option. There was discussion about the group “Red Wine and Blue” who is co-hosting their event. They are active in opposing book bans and have in the past been opposed by “Moms for Liberty,” raising the possibility of protests being held at the “Banned Book Bingo.” Director Berk stated that the library would navigate this carefully and make plans for all contingencies.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Felker. President Hinnefeld adjourned the meeting at 7:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Felker (Secretary) and Sarah Phillips (BAPL Staff)