

- 1) At 7:35pm the virtual meeting was called to order by Ms. Karp. Present in person were Hildy Karp, Jane Bean-Folkes, Emily Brown, Shama Diegnan, Brian O’Leary, Ritu Pancholy, Jamie Saeed, and Marietta Zacker, Jill Faherty, Village Trustee Karen Hilton, Friends Representative Kathie Abrams, South Orange Community Member Alisa Aronson, and Jenna Leis.
- 2) **Minutes of the November 2023 Library Board Meeting:** A motion was made by Mr. O’Leary to approve the meeting minutes from the November 17th, 2023 board meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Diegnan and approved by all.
- 3) **Friends of SOPL update:** Ms. Abrams gave the Board a quick overview of a report she sent to the Board prior to this meeting with the Friends update. Firstly, the Friends are grieving the loss of member and library activist Shirley Gordon who recently passed of pancreatic cancer. Ms. Gordon was in her mid-90s.

The Friends are working on the details of their next jewelry sale. Member Sandra Dickerson has been in negotiations with the Baird Center to finalize dates so they may use the space. The first will likely take place Saturday May 4th and Sunday May 5th. They are currently revving up on soliciting and collecting jewelry donations in preparation.

There is excitement about the upcoming moving sale taking place this upcoming weekend. Many Friends have already volunteered. The Friends will also be officially moving their meetings to the second Mondays of the month from 5pm to 6:30pm and be held in the 110 Vose Community Room.

Once the library is established in its new Walton Avenue location, Ms. Faherty will be working with Ms. Abrams and Friends member Tonia Moore to set up procedures for the expanded home delivery service. They are hoping to recruit enough people to do it many days a week.

Big news, thanks to an idea from members Mary Brancaccio and Tonia Moore, the Friends are applying for an NEA grant. The Midwest National Endowment of the Arts (Midwest NEA) is offering \$5,000 - \$10,000 grants through its Big Read initiative, focusing on the theme Where We Live. The grant is given to communities to read a book together and pair it with local programming, such as book discussions, writing workshops, film screenings, art activities and live community events to celebrate diverse voices and perspectives. The grant covers the cost of purchasing books, programs, and events related to the project. The Friends will match the grant with services in kind such as donated space rentals, volunteer program teaching, etc.

Ms. Hilton said the Friends would be a good organization to lead this project. Ms. Faherty has also been wanting to do a community read project so this fits nicely. This will also help keep the Friends and the Library visible during the building's closure. Programming would take place between September 2024 and June 2025. The application

is due by January 24th. They are working to iron out the details once the application has been submitted. As always Ms. Karp extended her thanks to the Friends on behalf of the Board for all the work they do.

4) Foundation Update: Ms. Zacker also gave a brief summary of a report sent out to the Board on the latest from the Foundation. She said that the work continues and they are meeting on a bi-weekly basis.

- a. *Capital Campaign:* The campaign is currently at \$840,000 between donations and pledges. Beginning this month Ms. Zacker will be sending out quarterly updates to donors which will give a snapshot of where they are with construction and the campaign, but also point everyone to the Library and Foundation websites where the full updates will live. This is expected to start in the next couple weeks. The next neighborhood gathering is at Gaslight Commons tomorrow, hosted by community member Susan Haig. 32 people have responded they would attend.
- b. *Annual Appeal:* Ms. Zacker also gave a quick note about the annual appeal which as of today is at \$28,000. A reminder that the appeal is separate from the Capital Campaign.

5) Resolution:

- a. *Amendment - SOPL Holiday Calendar:* Ms. Faherty presented an amendment to last month's resolution to approve the 2024 library holiday calendar. When it was originally created she did not have the official Village holiday calendar and put that the library would be open on Juneteenth. The Village has since announced that they will be closed in observance of the day on June 21st and this amendment would have the library closed as well. It will add one extra holiday to the calendar. It was noted that this is right after the schools usually get out for the year but Dr. Bean-Folkes saw no issue, citing students having plenty of alternative days to go to the library. A motion to approve the amendment was made by Ms. Saeed. This was seconded by Ms. Zacker and approved by all.

6) Policy:

- a. *Collection Development and Challenge Policy:* At last month's meeting updates and edits were suggested to the library's collection development and challenge policy by Mr. O'Leary. He has not received any additional feedback on the policy since then and suggested revisiting it in the February Board meeting. Any suggestions, comments, or questions should be sent to Mr. O'Leary and Ms. Faherty in the coming weeks.

7) Bills Payable: Before voting on the bills Ms. Faherty informed the Board that the moving company did send a bill for more than the originally quoted costs, about \$25,000.

She is in the process of fighting this and for this month's bills only the original price is included. They had brought the cost down by removing book packing from the services and had the staff do it themselves but now these costs are unexpectedly back in the bill. She will be meeting soon with their manager to discuss it.

A motion was made by Ms. Brown to approve the bills payable from Operating account totaling \$43,409.84 and the Trustees account totaling \$869.75. This was seconded by Ms. Zacker and approved by all.

8) Committee updates

- a. *Finance*: Mr. O'Leary provided an email summary to the Board prior to this meeting on what was discussed at the most recent Finance Committee Meeting. He and Ms. Saeed met with Ms. Faherty where she walked through her review for the proposed budget for 2024. The committee felt that the budget, which will be presented to the village on January 20 as part of a day-long set of department updates, balanced operational requirements and fiscal responsibility.

Ms. Faherty mentioned to the Board that small reductions in the budget were made in the areas of staff and operating costs. The former being on part-time staff and evaluating the hours open. It will not be ideal but the library can operate sufficiently with the staff it has. In operating costs there is a temporary cut in cleaning costs and HVAC costs. The Walton location already has their own cleaning services covered by the Village. These costs will go back up once the construction is done but that will be dealt with at a later date.

Ms. Hilton encouraged Board members to attend the budget presentation as it will be nice for the Village Trustees to get to know them. Ms. Faherty will send out more information to attend as well as the virtual link.

The committee also briefly discussed work required to create a forecast for the post-renovation library. It was agreed that it will need to wait until the final plans are created in the first half of 2024, as staffing, in particular, will vary based on the design and planned operating hours of the new facility.

It was also noted that the committee would welcome new members. Up to two members of the board could be added. Meetings are typically held for one hour by Zoom on the first Tuesday of each month. If interested, please contact Ms. Saeed or Mr. O'Leary for more information.

- b. *Personnel*: Since the completion of Ms. Faherty's review surveys the Personnel Committee has not met. Mr. O'Leary mentioned that he will follow up with Board Member Tracy Carroll about meeting soon.
- c. *Building Advisory (BAC)*: Ms. Karp gave a brief update in addition to an email summary sent to the Board prior to the meeting. The BAC continues to meet weekly with the Architects and Village. Plans have been submitted to the cost estimator and are awaiting their report. This cost estimate is at 50% design

completion and will give a good indication about how close to the budget the current design is. The original budget was developed prior to submitting the grant to the state and time and other factors have had an impact on costs. The Architects have done a very good job looking for ways to save without compromising the needs of the community. The cost estimator's report is in and it is found to be within budget, approvals and a public presentation will move forward.

Things continue to be more or less on schedule. The asbestos abatement in Connett is slightly delayed. There was little work between the holidays and they found more asbestos. Once everything is out of the main library building, asbestos testing will be completed and abatement can begin so that construction is ready to move forward.

In addition to the summary Ms. Hilton brought up that they are working to find someone who will be able to provide LEED certification for the building. This will be an additional contract to come but nothing is settled yet. As of the last time the committee met, the project seemed to be on track for silver rating which was the intention stated in the original grant proposal.

9) Director's Report:

a. Relocation Update:

- i. 65 Scotland Rd:* Ms. Faherty gave an update on the relocation plan so far. The Scotland Rd. building officially closed on December 11th to the public. The staff got to packing the books immediately and had all the books moved to the Walton location the following week and then started unpacking them there. In total about 55,000 books were packed and moved. The moving company was a great help in moving and setting up the shelves and furniture in Walton. Board members are encouraged to come by and check out the set up. It is set to accommodate a little more than half the collection, which was expected, and will be open to the public on January 25th. The second half of the collection is in storage at Walton where it is taking up a lot of the work space. This will be remedied once the Baird is open and a portion of the collection can be moved there.

As of now everything needed has been removed from the Scotland location. Anything left will be a part of the moving sale being held by the Friends on January 19th-21st from 10am to 4pm. Items will be available for purchase at suggested prices. This includes furniture, lamps, picture frames, games, keyboards, CDs, books, and more. People are encouraged to see this as taking home a piece of the library. Ms. Faherty would love to have the Board either stop by or volunteer to work the sale. Volunteers are coming from the Foundation and Friends and a few library staff members will be working.

During the sale Ms. Faherty will also be hosting tours of the building. There will be three held throughout the day and aim to give people insight into why the library is closing, what the construction project is about, and hopefully encourage donations.

Ms. Karp asked about where the furniture marked for the Baird location is being stored and Ms. Faherty stated right now it is held in storage at the Scotland location. Ms. Hilton will look into if there are other storage areas the Village can provide since the Scotland building needs to be empty.

Ms. Hilton wanted to let the Board know that the only thing now holding up the Baird from opening are the completion of the fire suppression system and some additional parts needed for the elevator. There is no exact date yet when this will be done.

- ii. *298 Walton Ave:* At the Walton location the internet and phones were recently all set up. BCCLS will be coming in soon to set up their computers as well. There are three office spaces that will be shared with the staff so it will be a little tight but they are making it work. Staff will be moved over to Baird once that is ready.

Ms. Faherty also informed the Board that because the Parking Authority opens the building at 8:30am, they found it easier to also open the library at this time instead of at its usual 9am. According to the New Jersey State Library, evening hours must still go until 8pm so this will just add an additional 30 minutes to the library's hours.

Finally, Ms. Karp asked if there were any plans to have a small celebration for the reopening at Walton. Ms. Faherty had not yet thought of anything but agreed it would be a nice idea.

- iii. *Review of Services:* Ms. Faherty let everyone know that they will be maintaining a majority of the library services with a few exceptions. In February programming will start back up again virtually with the goal of introducing in-person programming in March.

There will also be fewer computer terminals available. Three will be set up at the Walton location. A time limit will be implemented but discussions are still being held if it should be 20 or 30 minutes per person. It was agreed that this will need to be flexible and may change as needs are reevaluated in the months to come.

Reference and reader's advisory services will also be maintained. As for books, patrons will not be able to retrieve materials themselves from the store rooms but will be able to request items from staff who can. This will only be at the Walton location, the Baird will allow for browsing

and house materials for children's and teens. Walton will also be the hub for BCCLS. Pick up will eventually be set up at the Baird as well.

While closed completely some over the phone services have still been available for a few hours a week on certain days. This was utilized and Ms. Faherty was surprised to hear a few new library cards were set up through it.

Ms. Hilton also brought up later in this meeting that the Village has agreed to provide a vehicle to the library in order to transport books back and forth between the Walton and Baird locations. Originally Ms. Faherty stated that the staff planned to use their own vehicles but thanks Ms. Hilton for facilitating this instead.

A question was raised regarding the yearly tax volunteers hosted at the library and if a new space for them will be found. Ms. Faherty stated that library staff member Lindita Cani has been working to see what can be done as it is a very popular program. Ms. Hilton will inquire with the Village to see if the conference rooms in Village Hall can be used. A backup location was suggested to be the Skate House.

In regards to school visits, Dr. Bean-Folkes asked if there was any news. Ms. Faherty said that library staff member Keisha Miller still intends to do so but was tied up in the move. She will finish those plans with Ms. Miller and contact Dr. Bean-Folkes soon.

- iv. *BCCLS*: BCCLS has not been utilized to its full potential yet with the building being closed. Once reopen Ms. Faherty is expecting an influx of requests from other libraries and so the staff has been prepping. They will be having a refresher on BCCLS next week to brush up on the system.

Other local libraries have reported to Ms. Faherty that our patrons have been using them. It seems that the most used has been the Milburn Library. Maplewood has been used as well but is also under its own construction. West Orange was also kind enough to move up its own reopen date to be the same day that South Orange closed.

- v. *Communications Plan*: Recently the library has started to post in the Village Green. Right now it is regarding the moving sale and once that is over it will change to reopening information. Ms. Faherty also recently did an interview for the News Record. She is hoping it will go out in this week's issue prior to the moving sale as opposed to next week but she is unsure. And finally once the Baird location is open there are plans to do a direct mailing to all South Orange residents with information regarding the library's location, hours, etc.

10) New Business: Ms. Karp brought up the intent for the Board to sponsor a breakfast for the library staff to thank them for all their hard work leading up to and during the move. Ms. Faherty will talk with the staff to see when the most opportune time to host it is. She said maybe after their BCCLS refresher training.

11) Current and Upcoming: The next Board meeting scheduled virtually for February 20th at 7:30pm at the library. Meetings will continue virtually through March; after which they will evaluate a space to hold future meetings.

12) The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Leis