

- 1) At 7:32pm the meeting was called to order by Ms. Karp. Present in person were Hildy Karp, Jane Bean-Folkes, Jamie Saeed, and Marietta Zacker, Jill Faherty, Village Trustee Karen Hilton, Friends Representative Kathie Abrams, South Orange Community Member Alyssa Aronson, and Jenna Leis.
Attending virtually were Emily Brown and Tracy Carroll.
- 2) **Minutes of the September 2023 Library Board Meeting:** A motion was made by Ms. Saeed to approve the meeting minutes from the September 19th, 2023 board meeting. This was seconded by Dr. Bean-Folkes and approved by all.
- 3) **Friends of SOPL update:**
 - a. *Agreement for Tag & Books Sale:* Ms. Abrams informed the Board that the Memorandum of Understanding in regards to the tag sale was brought before the Friends. They will be calling it either the Library Community Sale or the Library Community Festival. Minor edits were made to the document last seen by the Board, the most notable being the Friends added their mission statement to the bottom of the memorandum. In terms of the next step, first Ms. Faherty or Ms. Abrams will send the new version via email to the Board and they will vote to approve it over email, after which the Friends would like it to be read out at a Village of Trustees meeting. This is not required but would be preferred by all parties. Ms. Faherty will work to get it on the December meeting docket.
 - b. *Jewelry Sale:* Ms. Abrams was excited to announce the next and last jewelry sale in the current building will be held on November 11th and 12th. They made about \$4,800 at the previous sale and Ms. Abrams expressed how generous people were during it. She let the Board know that the Friends will be removing their stored items shortly after this and Ms. Faherty has been coordinating with Friends member Sandra Dickerson to do so.
- 4) **Foundation Update:**
 - a. *Capital Campaign:* Ms. Zacker let the Board know how successful the first donor party was held at Foundation member Laura Epstein's house. While she can't share any specifics yet, a lot of people who had not yet participated are now in the process of discussing what they and their families can give. It was also announced that Ms. Epstein will be taking over the role as Foundation President and Jillian Howell will be taking over as the new treasurer. More information is to come and more parties are being planned.
 - i. *Annual Appeal:* In regards to the annual appeal Ms. Zacker reported it is full steam ahead. The goal is to send it out before Thanksgiving. They are currently in the process of getting quotes for printing. Foundation member

Eve Peterson is once again spearheading the appeal. This year they will be sending it out to all current library card holders as well as past donors, expanding on what they've done in the previous year.

The question was asked why they do not send it out to all South Orange households, which was done when the library itself ran the appeals. Ms. Zacker said that while they asked the same thing, their fundraising consults explained this is a better tiered-level approach. Eventually all community members will be asked to donate at any level but for now they are starting with a smaller pool and then expanding.

Ms. Zacker said they will be sending out 3,540 appeals. This accounts for one adult card holder per household, past donors, and a few additional to account for mistakes.

Finally, the Board was reminded to fill out their own pledge form even if they have given email or verbal pledges or if they have already given money. It is important that the campaign has these forms filled out.

5) Resolution:

- a. *Jenna Leis*: Ms. Faherty read out a resolution appointing Jenna Leis to the position of part-time Library Associate. She will be resigning from her current position as a full-time Library Assistant at the end of October. Ms. Leis informed the Board she has accepted a position at the Seton Hall University Library and would like to remain at the South Orange Library in a part-time capacity. This includes weekend and late night hours as well as the intention to finish out the 2023 year taking Board meeting minutes. She will also be finishing her masters in Library Science in the spring and at that time she and Ms. Faherty can discuss the possibility of moving her to a part-time Librarian position. The Board expressed their sadness in seeing her go but wished her well.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Saeed and seconded by Ms. Zacker. It was approved by all.

- 6) **Bills Payable:** Before voting on the bills Ms. Faherty was asked to clarify a discrepancy between the checks and the bill presented. Ms. Saeed pointed out a difference between a check for Coolio Industries and a listed line item for Name Tags Inc. Ms. Faherty explained that it is the same company and that while one may be the name of the company, they ask for the check to be made out to a different name. There was a similar question at last month's meeting and Ms. Faherty will ask the SOPL bookkeeper to include both names on line items going forward.

A motion was made by Dr. Bean-Folkes to approve the bills payable from Operating account totaling \$13,518.49 and the Trustees account totaling \$1,949.85. This was seconded by Ms. Zacker and approved by all.

7) Committee updates

- a. *Finance:* Ms. Saeed summarized that in the previous finance committee meeting they discussed things such as payroll, personnel, and hours of operations for when the library is in two spaces. Ms. Faherty provided an Excel sheet with a breakdown of these hours to the Board. It showed the projected hours of operation needed while understanding that these can be changed based on the needs of the community. It is unclear at this time when the Baird will be open to the public but the projection is February. If the Baird is not open and ready the library will still proceed with moving and operating out of the Walton location.

Amongst Board concerns, Ms. Hilton shared that she and Ms. Faherty have been repeatedly assured that by Pete Travers that the Recreation Department will be out of the Walton Ave. location during the first week of December. If they cannot move into the Baird they are prepared to move their stuff into storage so the library may take the space. The Board was still wary of this plan as none of these assurances are in writing but Ms. Hilton is confident that the Baird is in a good spot to at least move staff into the building by then. She does understand the Board's concern and will inquire about getting things in writing but does not think that will be until late November.

Other concerns shared by the Board and Ms. Hilton are that the Baird will not be open for services on time. The Baird is the planned location for most programming as well as teen and children's services which is concerning to have not available for over two months. Ms. Faherty did assure the Board that other temporary locations to have these services are in the works. This includes the Skate House and local business, such as Elitist Coffee to host things like story time. A formal letter is being prepared to send out with the SOPL's plans and intentions. She also explained that it is normal for the library to take a break in programming from mid-December to late January.

One thing Ms. Faherty pointed out that the library has always done, and will continue to do to keep momentum with students, is to go directly into the schools. This extends to the daycares, local schools, and public schools. Head of Youth Services Keisha Miller and part-time Children's Librarian Nashaya Lyon-Watson have been meeting with Dr. Bean-Folkes and working to continue to support children's needs. They will continue to go into schools at all levels to maintain the connections and promote the library and overall literacy.

In regards to using the Skate House for programming in case the Baird is not ready it was suggested the library put itself on the calendar asap to use it. The Skate House was already being looked at for potential programming but this would also include moving a small amount of the collection there for limited browsing while not being able to use the Baird. Ms. Faherty will work on getting

a Memorandum of Understanding from the Village to guarantee use of the Skate House in the event that the Baird is not ready for library services.

Looking back at the proposed hours, Ms. Faherty said there is double the hours because the services are spread amongst two locations. They would like to start being open as much as possible and then tweak things as user needs are assessed. The library will also be reopening as a BCCLS library and the staff are working on becoming a master at that service. It will be open with a total of 460 staff hours. This comes to 10 full time librarian staff and the remaining 137 hours will be filled by part-time staff. In terms of personnel costs Ms. Faherty said it equals out to roughly the same amount as current spending. She said that despite there being less of a need for desk time there is more going on behind the scenes especially with more individualized customer service for patrons and BCCLS.

Parking concerns were also brought up in terms of both space and lighting. Ms. Faherty will continue to look into working with the Village on some sort of additional lighting for the area. She also stated the policy that during late nights there will be at least three staffers there so that no staffer will be leaving at night alone. They will also examine to see how busy the Walton location is at night to see how long it should be open. It is expected for the Baird to be the busier of the two locations and therefore they may pivot to being open later there more often. For parking there are concerns as the library will be sharing the lot with other Village services such as Parking Authority. Ms. Faherty will also continue to work with the Village on a solution for such limited spots for both patrons and staff.

While no formal approval was needed from the Board for these hours, the Village did want their stamp of approval. Ms. Karp said the Board is in agreement in these hours and give Ms. Faherty the authority to adjust as deemed based on how the spaces are being utilized.

- b. *Personnel:* Mrs. Carroll informed the Board that the Personnel Committee did receive feedback from the full-time library staff and stake holders for Ms. Faherty's review. They just need feedback from the Board now. Mrs. Carroll has prepared a summary of Ms. Faherty's accomplishments during the time period being reviewed for the Board to look over before completing their feedback forms. The Board should receive the link tomorrow to the online form. The content is the same as previous years but just being done through Survey Monkey online. It her suggestion that the Board read through all of Ms. Faherty's accomplishments before starting the survey in order for the tool to not count them as a responder twice. It should only take about 20 to 25 minutes to be completed and the Board will have until Monday to do so. Following the submission of all feedback the Committee will schedule time to meet and review everything before sending the Board the results.

- c. *Building Advisory (BAC)*: Ms. Karp told the Board much of the BAC updates will be discussed in Ms. Faherty's director's report so it was skipped over.

8) Director's Report:

a. *Construction Project Update*:

- i. *Relocation Plan*: Ms. Faherty shared with the Board what they are calling Project Move out. This includes a detailed timeline of the next few months. The first step she pointed out was the ongoing weeding of the collection that has been taking place and will continue right up until materials are being packed. Weeding was based on both usage reports and later condition of the books. She estimated every book in the library has been touched at least twice between last year's inventory and now the weeding. The goal now is the shift materials being taken to the new locations downstairs from the mezzanine level. This is an ongoing project. What is left upstairs will be included in the Friends tag and book sale. Books not suited for resale will be put in the Better World Book donation bin.

An overall outline of the plan includes closing, packing, moving, and relocating to the Walton space first followed by the Baird when it is ready. The intention as previously mentioned is to reopen as a BCCLS library.

The plan presented does include using movers as a backup depending on DPW's schedule. Ms. Faherty is working to get quotes from two different companies now. These quotes were asked to be itemized so that they can see how to best utilize the serves. They would like to use DPW but it is understood that they are in high demand and have other priorities first. The plan is for staff to pack and unpack the boxes but they will need help moving them, shelves, and other needed furniture. The process can be expedited a bit by using the movers.

In regards to BCCLS, a soft launch began in early October for internal library staff. As of now patrons do not have access to BCCLS. The staff has completed a portion of the training and the second part training will start on November 2nd. The data integration has also been completed. A part of this soft launch was also to find any errors in the data and fix them. The current track has BCCLS going live for patrons on November 29th. This is the earliest it can go live with everything running smoothly so far.

Going from the BCCLS start date of November 29th and the recreation departments plan to move out of Walton the first week of December, Ms. Faherty proposed postponing closing the library on

December 1st, as spoken about in the last month's meeting, and pushing it about two weeks. This will give the staff a chance to start training patrons on how to use BCCLS. It is simple to use but it is still a change for everyone.

This brings week one of the moving plan to commence on December 11th for closing the building and starting to pack. Simultaneously DPW, or a moving company, can start moving shelves and furniture over to the Walton location. Week two will consist of more of the same with packing and moving. Assuming this is all done by week three then they can focus on assembling furniture, erecting shelves, unpacking materials, and setting up things like computers, the copier, scanner, etc.

Week five has the furniture and shelves being taken over to the Baird if it is ready to be set up. This week will see staff spread amongst different locations. It will also focus on cleaning up and preparing for the Friends tag sale. The projected date for the tag sale is then in week six, following MLK day but an exact date will have to wait until approval from the Friends.

It was mentioned that if the second cost estimate for the project is ready by week seven then it could be possible to host a Town Hall in the empty library around week six or seven. The logistics of before, during, or after the tag sale are still to be worked out. Week seven will also include making sure the building is empty. Whatever does not sell at the tag sale will need to be liquidated or disposed of. This week will also include the staff doing a refresher on BCCLS to make sure they are ready to reopen.

Opening to the public is potentially set for week eight, during the last few days of January. This makes a total of seven weeks closed but as previously mentioned it may be sooner if movers are involved. The earliest opening without movers would be January 29th. This is hopeful with full staff and all hands on deck.

The goal is to have Walton open first and then have the Baird when it opens hopefully sometime in February. Walton will also be set up as the main BCCLS pick up location and the Baird will be considered a branch. Before expanding to Baird Ms. Faherty would like the staff to have 100% mastered BCCLS. In terms of services and programming, the Baird will have more of teen and children's collection. Most adult services will be retained at the Walton location.

Ms. Karp asked what the plan was to present a timeline to the public as it is important to keep them up to date on details and why this is all happening. She is sure they are working with the libraries communications consultant, Kristin LaGrua on all of this. More

information will be discussed in the communications plans later in this meeting but Ms. Faherty did say that there is a plan to communicate with a summary of the closing and what is to come. They will start releasing it on social media, the library website, and further. The communication plan will also include information on BCCLS and how patrons can pick up and request materials.

For BCCLS the library is also working to create videos for patrons to watch and provide FAQs about how to use it. They want patrons to be able to take advantage of other libraries while it is closed. During Library Card sign-up month there was a push to get people who had expiring cards to renew them and new people to sign up for ones. It was noted that new patrons will not be able to sign up for a card while the building is closed. They will have to wait until the library reopens in the new locations. There is a BCCLS courtesy card that patrons may be able to get in the interim but other libraries give those at their discretion and Ms. Faherty has to double check what the policies are on those.

The library has also been discussing if some type of hot line will be set up while closed with a staff member to answer questions on BCCLS and small reference calls. This will take staff away from packing though. The Board agreed that having limited times for calls would be beneficial to the public. There could be two days a week with a few hours during the day and two days a week with a few hours during the evening. It was also noted that patrons with BCCLS questions could reach out to other BCCLS libraries as well.

It was suggested to have a virtual ribbon cutting on November 29th to celebrate BCCLS going live. Someone will look into getting cake for the event and Ms. Hilton will see about having Village President Sheena Collum attend.

The Board appreciates how much thought Ms. Faherty has put into the presented plan.

- ii. *Communications Plan:* The communication plan is set to start around mid-November. This is when the library will provide the FAQs about BCCLS prior to its launch for patrons. The hope is to have people trained on it by closing on December 11th. This training includes where to pick up books, how to reserve books, sessions for Overdrive and Libby, and utilizing digital material. Ms. Faherty is working with the libraries Head of Collections and Communication, Michael Pucci, to create the patron training recordings. Patron training cannot be done prior the launch so but it still gives them almost two weeks with it before the library is closed.

There are plans to take out ads in the Village Green and have an article both about BCCLS and information on the closing. Other communication channels include the SOPL monthly newsletter, social media, and a written press release, which has already been written and is scheduled to be sent out around October 30th.

A suggestion was made by the Board to look into getting a banner along the train station to communicate this information. This will be looked into though it was warned the process has to go through NJ Transit and is sometimes difficult and expensive. In addition to the station though banners can go up throughout the town and Ms. Hilton will look into this further. The idea of having bookmarks and flyers in local businesses was also suggested.

Ms. Hilton has a brief question about the library's local history collection and if it would be accessible during construction. Ms. Faherty said it will not as it needs to be properly stored in a climate-controlled location that Walton does not have. She is also working with the Village to look into a local storage business in town to see if they can get either free or discounted storage of the materials. It was noted that about a quarter of the materials does belong to the Village. There is a grant being looked at that could help provide for the costs of storage as well as money for a new scanner to digitize the collection. The digitization of it will be helpful so the community can better access the materials and needs to be done anyway.

- b. *Services & Building Update*: Ms. Faherty gave a quick update on current services going on in the building and said things were running business as usual around all of the preparing for the move. The children's programs especially have been a success and Dr. Bean-Folkes expressed she was happy to see the library in the schools.
 - i. *Connett*: The contract for the abatement of the Connett building has been awarded and should be starting shortly. A pole has been erected on the lawn between the two buildings with a meter on it to provide electric to the building during this process and potentially the whole construction. This is because electric to the actual building will be cut so that they may begin taking down walls and cutting wires safely. The building will also need its own water source run to it.

The oil tank in Connett was also removed weeks ago but the company came back last week to do some excavation and take more soil samples. The initial results came back not looking good with oil and other things in it. This is likely because the old tank was leaking. They are still waiting on the results to see how extreme the contamination is. The

removal cost about \$18,000 but thanks to push back from Ms. Hilton they were able to get the Village to cover the costs.

9) New Business:

- a. *Board Training:* The library Board is required to do a combined number of hours of training each year. Ms. Karp asked if anyone had done so already. Dr. Bean-Folkes did attend part of a virtual one and Ms. Faherty asked her to do a quick write up to share with the Board. She will also share the slides from the session. Ms. Saeed did remember attending one over the summer as well and was asked to make a quick summary to share too.
- b. *Book Banning:* Ms. Abrams wanted to mention the recent statement by the Maplewood library rejecting the banning of books. The Friends asked if South Orange would make one as well.

In last month's meeting Board Member Brian O'Leary had asked for a copy of the library's challenge policy to review and make recommendations for. As he was not in attendance this meeting he will likely bring those to the next one. Ms. Karp did have a conversation with him about it and shared his wariness to make such a statement as it might invite challenges that have not arose yet to the library. As far as Ms. Zacker was aware Maplewood like South Orange has not had any challenges yet and while those who live in the area do not seem likely to make one she did note that most book challenges come from people outside the community.

The statement was made following one from Maplewood Village on the issue to create a united front. Ms. Hilton will look into what the South Orange Village can do on their end.

Ms. Faherty said that she has been in communication with other library directors in the area about these issues and are often in contact with the Glen Ridge Library Director in regards to their recent challenges to get suggestions in order to strengthen their own polices. Things like challenges only allowed to come from residents, which the current library policy does not state.

It was also suggested to reach out to the school district to make sure the library is aligned with their polices. Dr. Bean-Folkes stated that the school does currently have a statement and so far there have been no challenges.

Ms. Karp suggested continuing this conversation, if the Board would like to release a similar statement to Maplewood Library, in next month's meeting. The question is if one will acually benefit the Village and Library or if it is more of a performance that could invite challenges.

10) Current and Upcoming: The next Board meeting scheduled for November 21st at 7:30pm at the library.

11) The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:42pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Leis