

South Orange Public Library **Minutes of Library Board Meeting, February 22, 2023**

1) At 7:32pm the online meeting was called to order by Ms. Karp. Present were Hildy Karp, Jaime Saeed, Tracy Carroll, Marietta Zacker, Lora Tazewell, Jill Faherty, South Orange Community Member Alyssa Aronson, and Jenna Leis.

2) **Minutes of the January 2023 Library Board Meeting:** A motion was made by Ms. Zacker to approve the meeting minutes from the January 17th, 2023 board meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Tazewell and approved by all.

3) **Friends of SOPL update:** Ms. Faherty updated the Board on the latest Friends meeting. The Friends are sponsoring a new collection of books in honor of member Linda Chandross. The collection will contain 25 VOX books which are picture, chapter, and non-fiction titles with audio recordings built into the book. Youth Services Librarian Keisha Miller is planning an event to unveil the collection sometime in the coming weeks.

The next jewelry sale will be held in early May right before Mother's Day. It will be held in the library on a Saturday and Sunday.

As mentioned at last month's meeting the Friends are sponsoring a pass to the Guggenheim museum. The pass is currently being processed and will be made available to the public soon.

4) **Foundation Update:**

a. *Capital Campaign:* Ms. Zacker informed the Board that the Capital Campaign is moving along smoothly. They were given a first glimpse of a donor packet from their consulting company, 7 Layer Studio. The first training was held for those assisting in the campaign from Sobel Bixel on the best practices for asking for donations. More trainings are to come and Ms. Zacker will keep the Board updated.

5) **Resolutions:** Ms. Faherty mentioned to the Board that there is a need to hire more part-time staff in the library as many of the current part-timers are students who have had to reduce their hours in the coming months. There has also been one resignation of a part-timer. These new hires are to replace them and make up some of the reduction in hours for staff, especially on for the weekends.

a. *Part-time Library Associate - Nashaya Lyons-Watson*

Ms. Faherty read out the resolution for the promotion of Nashaya Lyons-Watson to Part-time Library Associate. Ms. Lyons-Watson has worked at the library for a number of years and is close to finishing her Masters in Library Science. A motion was made by Ms. Zacker to approve the resolution. This was seconded by Mrs. Carroll and approved by all.

b. *Part-time Library Assistant - Teresa Harris and Alexis Montesino*

A resolution was read out by Ms. Faherty for the hire Teresa Harris as a Part-time Library Assistant. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Tazewell, seconded by Ms. Zacker, and approved by all.

The resolution for the hire of Alexis Montesino as a Part-time Library Assistant was read out by Ms. Faherty. The motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Zacker, seconded by Ms. Saeed, and approved by all.

- 6) **Bills Payable:** It was noted that the PSEG payment in the bills payable this month was higher than normal. This was because there was an issue in regards to the previous month's payment and the signature on the check was rejected by the bank for deposit. The issue was resolved by speaking with the bank manager who said it was a fluke issue on their end. Ms. Faherty requested that the check be voided and a new one be issued in this month's bills. Therefore, it reflects both this month's and last month's PSEG payment.

It was also brought up that there are two lines in the Operating accounts bills for supplies to the South Orange Public Library for \$200. It was clarified that one was for reimbursement to the Amazon account in order to purchase supplies through them and one is for petty cash. An amendment was made to differentiate the two.

A motion was made by Ms. Zacker to approve the bills payable from Operating account with the above mentioned amendment totaling \$19,890.63. This was seconded by Mrs. Carroll and approved by all. A motion was made by Ms. Zacker to approve the bills payable from the Trustees account totaling \$ 1,248.39. This was seconded by Ms. Tazewell and approved by all.

7) **Committee updates**

a. *Finance:*

- i. BCCLS: At the previous Finance Committee meeting the main conversation was around the BCCLS consortium and the feasibility of the South Orange Library joining it. BCCLS is the Bergen County Cooperative Library System, is a consortium of over 77 public libraries in northern New Jersey. Joining it would allow South Orange patrons access reciprocal borrowing of their physical and digital materials.

At a recent budget hearing for the Village a community member asked about the library joining it. There was encouragement from Village Trustee Karen Hilton and Village President Sheena C. Collum to consider if the initial outlay costs could be an operating expense.

Ms. Karp said that joining BCCLS has always been mentioned but a robust conversation has never been had by the Board. There have been a

lot of members of the community who have expressed interest in the consortium.

Ms. Faherty has already started the process of getting a quote from BCCLS for joining. BCCLS does have requirements for libraries to be able to join so Ms. Faherty has been working with the library staff to get all the necessary information about the library collection, expenses, community information, etc. to them. She is creating a pro and con list for joining that she will share with the Board. This will include benefits for patrons, financial costs, and staff requirements. A comparison is also being done with PALS, a different consortium based in Passaic County, to see what the benefits and costs would be.

Ms. Leis spoke as a library staff member who currently works with the inter-library loans and said that there are benefits to the patrons having more access to materials through BCCLS. Other board members such as Ms. Zacker and Mrs. Carroll also said that community members have asked them about joining BCCLS and expressed their interest. Ms. Saeed pointed to the Maplewood Library catalog as an example of a local library in the consortium and what it might look like.

Ms. Saeed recommended asking BCCLS as well as recently joined libraries questions such as changes in costs over the last few years, experience in the joining process, and requirements from library staff to participate. The conversation will continue with the Board and Ms. Faherty will present her findings once she has more information.

- b. *Personnel*: There were no new updates for the Personnel Committee from Mrs. Carroll. Newest Board member, Ritu Pancholy, has expressed interest in joining this committee.
- c. *Communications Committee*: The Communications Committee continues with its purpose to support the library in its communication needs.

In previous meetings it was discussed the need to hire someone to support these needs as there is a lot that to be done. Currently library staff member Michael Pucci has been doing a lot of this but as other responsibilities as the Head of Collections in the library. Prior to this meeting Ms. Faherty sent out a job description for a potential part-time marketing/communications specialist for the Board to review. The positions responsibility will include supporting the communication needs of the library, keeping the community informed of the libraries goings on, working with the Foundation and Capital Campaign, and strengthening the library's brand overall.

After speaking with the Foundation and looking at their annual appeals it was determined that they could use funding from that to sponsor the position. Ms. Zacker said that the Foundation overwhelming supports the creation of this

position. They are looking for someone who will be the right fit for not just the Foundation but for the library as a whole.

It is Ms. Faherty's goal to spread this job posting through the local community using local marketing Facebook groups and spreading the word through communications professionals in the community. If all goes as planned this should be happening in the next few weeks.

d. *Building Advisory:*

- i. *Membership:* The Building Advisory Committee (BAC) is currently made up of Ms. Karp, Ms. Faherty, Village Trustee Karen Hilton, Ellen Malgieri representing the Village of South Orange, and community volunteers Rob Fish, Tom Hut, and Alison Brown, all professionals and experts in the architectural field. Board member Andrew Ha is also a member of the committee as his schedule allows. Ms. Karp opened it up for other Board members to participate if they so wish. Currently meetings are Thursday's at 3:30pm as needed. It was suggested that Ms. Karp inform the Board what the committee will be discussing each meeting and members are welcome to join if the topic is something they would like to participate in.
- ii. *Building Project:* The committee is currently working to create an RFP for the position of Construction Manager for the project. Debate between members has been on the exact title as well as role and responsibilities of this position. The RFP should be out soon.

There have been a few meetings now with Andrew Berman and his team. These have mostly been with the library staff to discuss their needs for the new building and how the new space can serve them and the community. He presented a couple options of floor plans and once it is narrowed down further there will be a presentation to the Board. Ms. Faherty is still working with them on a schedule and Mr. Berman suggested weekly virtual meetings as well as on site meetings at least once a month. This will be starting the first week of March.

Ms. Karp and Ms. Faherty expressed to the Board how well Mr. Berman and his team communicated with the library staff. They were very receptive to their needs and listened to what they had to say. He and his team also followed around the staff to see how they work as well as watched how patrons interacted and utilized the space.

8) Director's Report:

a. *Building update:*

- i. *Connett Building:* As mentioned at last month's meeting, Ms. Faherty said that she is working with the Village Clerk to remove Village documents that are being stored in the building's basement. A formal request is

needed to remove them because they contained Village information as well as historical documents. It was determined that they are contaminated with lead and asbestos dust so they must be properly removed. The building will undergo remediation soon. Once this is done Andrew Berman and his team can get further into the building to do measurements and get a better idea of the space they are working with.

Recently the oil tank for Connett had to undergo inspection for insurance purposes. Unfortunately, it did fail as they were unable to access a specific vent for a vacuum test. But Ms. Faherty was told not to worry as it was not the only oil tank in South Orange to fail this test. She will be working with the Village to get this issue fixed.

- ii. *Current Building:* In the current building there were some minor flooding issues over the past couple weeks. The first was due to some clogged drains in the boiler rooms. A plumber was there within 24 hours to address the issue. Shortly following that there was a leak in the furnace due to a broken pump. In order to stop the leak, the furnace had to be turned off with cause the building to lose heating. This was about two and a half weeks ago and there have been issues finding the specific part that needs to be replaced. Temporarily heat to the building is being provided by the HVAC system on the roof. It is not working great but it is something.

Good news is that the elevator modernization project has been completed. The elevator was shut down on December 12th so the project took just about two months. This was made possible thanks to a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) with the purpose to modernize the elevator. The car inside has been redone, it no longer requires a staff key to use, and overall was brought up to fire code with an automatic recall function and direct line to the fire department in case of emergency. There was ribbon cutting ceremony with staff and some Board members inducing a giant pair of scissors.

- b. *Programming and Services Update:* Some programming highlights from Ms. Faherty included a live chat event with Nancy Solomon and a virtual discussion with Ron Watson.

There was also a successful Lunar New Year program for with roughly 75 people in attendance. Bilingual story times continue to be popular. There is one in Spanish and one in Mandarin.

Ms. Leis has been hosting Dungeons and Dragons for teens which has been gaining members. She will be moving from monthly to bi-weekly in March. Along with this there have been momentum with gaming programs recently including Minecraft Monday's and chess club.

A number of adult craft programs are planned by the Adult Services Librarian Erica Dragonetti. On March 4th there will be a fabric wreath making event.

Finally, March is Makers Month. The library will be putting on programs every day for all ages the entire month. This includes crafts, speakers, and games. In addition, library was awarded a makers grant to create a mini golf course. Staff members Brent Shelly and Shanize Haddock designed the program.

- c. *Unattended child policy:* As amended in a previous board meeting the age for children left unattended in the library has been lowered from 12 years old to 10 years old. Ms. Faherty and Youth Services Librarian Keisha Miller worked to create a comprehensible handout with the policy for caregivers and will be keeping the version with the legal terms behind the desk to be shown if needed. The handout and procedure for unattended children will be reviewed with the staff. Board members were sent a copy prior to the meeting to view.

Ms. Saeed had a few questions and notes about the procedure and Ms. Faherty invited her to go over it with her sometime after the meeting in person or over email. Ms. Tazewell had previously provided the Brooklyn public libraries policy to the Board as an example and she stated that this handout was right along those lines. She said it seemed similar to most libraries polices.

As the handout is just a change in procedure and not policy there was no need for members to vote on the document.

- 9) **Board composition:** Ritu Pancholy has been appointed as a new member of the Board. Ms. Pancholy was approved by the Village Trustees and took her oath last Friday. Professionally she is an employment lawyer and is interested in participating in the Personnel Committee. She will meet with Mrs. Carroll about that soon. Ms. Faherty and Ms. Karp will also be having a conversation with her about her orientation. The Board is excited for her to get started.

- 10) **Current and Upcoming:** Next Board meeting is March 21st at 7:30pm. This meeting will be held virtually. The scheduled meeting on April 18th at 7:30pm will be in person at the library.

- 11) The Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:51pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Leis

