

- 1) At 7:35pm the meeting was called to order by Ms. Karp. Present in person were Hildy Karp, Tracy Carroll, Shama Diegnan, Brian O’Leary, Ritu Pancholy, Jamie Saeed, and Marietta Zacker, Jill Faherty, South Orange Community Member Alyssa Aronson, and Jenna Leis.
Attending virtually were Village Trustee Karen Hilton and Friends Representative Kathie Abrams.

- 2) **Minutes of the October 2023 Library Board Meeting:** A motion was made by Ms. Saeed to approve the meeting minutes from the October 17th, 2023 board meeting. This was seconded by Ms. Zacker and approved by all with the exception of Mr. O’Leary who abstained from the vote due to his absence from the October meeting.

- 3) **Friends of SOPL update:** Ms. Abrams gave an update on behalf of the Friends. The latest jewelry brought in just about \$12,000. She gives her thanks for all the support and help with the sale.

In previous meetings the discussion of a Friends tag sale was in the works but due to some complications with rules and limitations on how much money can be made from the Village the Friends decided to not proceed. This is unfortunate but the goal is to not complicate things more for the library during the moving process. The hope is to in the spring continue with the jewelry sales and a possible book sale at the Baird Center once it is open.

The Friends recently renewed two of the library museum passes for another year. They include the Cooper Hewitt and Guggenheim museums. They have also been following everything to do with BCCLS and are just waiting for that to start.

Ms. Karp expressed thanks on behalf of the Board for everything and looks forward to celebrating them soon.

- 4) **Foundation Update:** Ms. Zacker informed the Board that the Foundation and Capital Campaign are still moving forward. They are aiming to host an invite only cocktail party immediately before the Town Hall to be scheduled sometime in January. Ms. Faherty will be looking into a special, one-day long insurance policy in order to have alcohol at the event, which will be purchased using Foundation funds not public ones. The Town Hall will be scheduled once the architect, Andrew Berman, provides the 50% construction cost estimates. They will probably not have them until at least the second week of January but the hope is sooner. The wish is to have the Town Hall inside the library once everything is moved out.

The next donor party is set to be hosted in January by community member Susan Haig. Connected to this is the annual appeal which Board members should have received their letters by now. This year the outreach was larger, with every library card holder

receiving a letter. Money is already starting to come in. Ms. Zacker did clarify that the appeal and the Capital Campaign are two different things.

Finally, Ms. Zacker wanted to remind the Board that the Foundation meets regularly and to please not hesitate to reach out with questions or thoughts.

- 5) Resolution:** Two resolutions were sent to the Board in regards to the Board meeting and library holiday schedule. Ms. Faherty reassured them that these were checked against the Jewish holiday schedule so that it does not conflict.

Ms. Faherty also had one additional resolution in regards to movers for the library move which will be discussed and voted upon later in the meeting.

- a. *SOPL Board Meeting 2024 Schedule:* Before voting on the resolution the Board asked if there was a location for the meetings once the library is closed. Ms. Faherty said the aim is to meet in the Baird Center once open but it was agreed upon that the January and February meetings will be held virtually. She will make sure the Village website reflects this and can obtain a Webex link. As for the dates they follow the same schedule as previous years being on the third Tuesday of each month, with the exception of August and December when there are no meetings. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Ms. Saeed. This was seconded by Mrs. Carroll and approved by all.
- b. *SOPL Holiday Calendar:* No changes were made to the holiday calendar from last year except for the addition of Juneteenth which the library will be open although the Village may be closed. It was pointed out that according to New Jersey it will be observed on the third Friday in June. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Ms. Diegnan. This was seconded by Ms. Zacker and approved by all.

6) Policy & Procedures:

- a. *Review of Collection Development and Book Challenges:* At a previous meeting Mr. O’Leary offered to take a look at the library’s collection development and challenge policy. With both the changes coming to the library and the recent book challenges in the news it was important to make sure the policies are up to date and solid in case anything is to arise. These proposed changes to the policies are in response to this and with best practices put forth by the American Library Association (ALA). Ms. Faherty has also reviewed these changes and worked with Mr. O’Leary on making them work best for SOPL.

Ms. Karp made it clear they were not voting on any proposed changes at this meeting but wanted to discuss them so that members can provide their edits and comments. Mr. O’Leary said it would be great to vote upon them at the January meeting but does not want to rush this so if it needs another meeting to discuss that is fine.

In summary, a few of the changes made specially to the collection development policy include changes in language to allow for more flexibility in their ability to select items for the collection, suggested removal or editing of statements that may be used to undermine the libraries objective of having different viewpoints in the collections, and the need to recognize belonging to the BCCLS consortium and only having control over material SOPL directly owns. Points were also made to clarify reasons items may be withdrawn from the collection with an importance on materials that are servicing the community.

Points on digitization of materials were also made to address permissions of the copyright holder not just the author/creator which in some cases are different. In regards to the library Wiki it was suggested to make the language vague in order to allow for future changes in access.

After presenting the current proposed changes to the collection policy by Mr. O'Leary the Board conversed how far the library should be in its language with commitment to supporting different views and the diversity of the collections. Ms. Pancholy felt the library could go further in this by defining what a diverse collection means to the library. Mr. O'Leary tasked the Board with coming to the next meeting with suggested language for the policy.

He also did express a possibility that by making statements in the policy such as the recent one by Maplewood about being a book sanctuary that it could place a target on the library for potential book challengers.

In regards to the book reconsideration policy and the challenge process a few suggested edits were made that included being clear that patrons cannot restrict access to materials by taking books out and never returning them. Challengers must also be active library card holders and provide evidence that they have actually read the material they are looking to ban. It was also suggested to be clear that the library Director may appoint a committee of professionals to review any challenges with appeals to the Library Board in writing.

Conversations were had as to if the appeal to the library Board is needed if it is stated in the policy that the Board will trust the decision of the Director and their appointment committee. Some felt this added steps to the process that may entice outside challengers to the library. But Ms. Pancholy pointed out the importance legally to have this policy in writing so that if challengers take legal action there is a trail of due process in the policy.

Finally, the discussion turned briefly to clearing up the selection policy so that if a material is requested to be removed they can go through with the material to see if it aligns with and is accurate to the criteria and should or should not be removed. Factors for selection included timeliness of the material, value to the community, and factualness of the content which is decided based on reviews and such according to Ms. Faherty.

Ms. Karp again asked that everyone review the policy and proposed changes and send any edits, suggestions, comments, or questions to Mr. O’Leary and Ms. Faherty. The importance of having a policy in place and ready to address any potential challenges that come to the library was stressed by the Board. Ms. Faherty said the biggest tell from other library directors who have faced challenges is to have a policy already in place and ready to be acted on. While there is one currently in place it is in need of revision.

- 7) **Bills Payable:** Before voting on the bills Ms. Saeed commented on the \$600 spent for an article on the library in the Village Green. Ms. Faherty confirmed that this was the price and opted to pay for the top spot as it was only a \$100 increase at that point. They would not run anything without paying, it is how their business model works. She did say there has already been a lot of feedback from the article though. There was no question to Ms. Faherty’s decision on this, but there was shock at the price.

Ms. Faherty also pointed out to the Board that this month instead of the usual four Verizon bills there are only three included. This is because of a recent hack to the library’s phone lines and with hackers making international calls which they were only recently made aware of. Because of this the bill was around \$5,000 instead of the usual \$500. Ms. Faherty is in the process of appealing this with Verizon and once resolved it will appear in the December bills.

She also noted that the BCCLS payment of \$9,000 is a part of the start-up costs but not the entirety of it. It was originally said to be \$25,000, which is being provided by the Friends, but is not set to be less though she does not have an exact number.

Finally, Ms. Faherty clarified that in regards to the payment to the Communication Consultant, Kristen LaGrua, she is responsible for her tax filings and forms on that as a temporary consultant.

A motion was made by Ms. Saeed to approve the bills payable from the Operating Account totaling \$16,771.59 and the Trustee Account totaling \$11,834.13. This was seconded by Ms. Zacker and approved by all.

8) **Committee updates**

- a. *Finance:* A summary was sent to the Board prior to this meeting on the recent finance committee meetings and what was discussed. Included in their discussions was the use of a moving company for the library move to the Walton location. The previous plan was to first utilize DPW to assist in the moving of shelves, boxes, office furniture, etc. but due to their other commitments this does not seem they can assist in a timely manner and it is unfair to push back the reopening of services due to this. Therefore, Ms. Faherty has been working with library staff to receive five different quotes from moving companies.

It has been narrowed down to two companies, Delicato and Liberty. Both provided an itemized list of their services including the ability to pack up the books, which right now is to be handled by library staff. This is important as the books need to be packed and unpacked in shelf order. The book packing can be removed to reduce the price but a pro to having them do it is the possibility of opening the library sooner. Ms. Karp did ask if the cost was less than the staff hours it would take for them to do it. Ms. Faherty was not sure at this time.

After conducting interviews and looking at the quotes Ms. Faherty and a library staff landed on Liberty as the best fit. Their quote came to \$33,375, which could be reduced by \$6,600 if they do not pack the books. The library staff would then handle that and Liberty would take care of disassembling, moving, and reassembling the shelves, office furniture, etc. This is also just for the one time move to Walton.

She will be meeting with them on Monday along with library staff, Lindita Cani to discuss the quote and possibly negotiate. The quote is not a guaranteed rate but are looking to negotiate so it cannot exceed the quoted \$33,375.

Ms. Faherty is asking the Board to vote on a resolution approving the costs, not to exceed the \$33,375 and giving her final say on if the company or the library staff will pack the books based on conversations with all parties. The funds will be coming from the library operating budget for 2023 and 2024. She also noted that after consulting with the Village they do not need to go out to bid for the service.

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

- b. *Personnel*: Matters of the personnel committee are set to be discussed the later executive session.
- c. *Building Advisory (BAC)*: Ms. Karp did not have much to report that was already not discussed and they are just waiting for the 50% construction cost estimate at this time. Ms. Faherty did share with the Board images sent by Mr. Berman of the new plans which are not for public consumption at this time.

9) Director's Report:

- a. *Relocation Plan*: According to Ms. Faherty the next step is figuring everything out with the movers, as discussed above. With that everything is running on schedule. Closing the building is still set for December 11th and the library is in constant communication with the community about it. The goal is to stay closed for as short an amount of time as possible and the hiring of movers will help to expedite the process.

Ms. Faherty also added that abatement of the Connett building will be taking place soon. There were some hold ups with paperwork to take care of but she has

been told it will start at the end of next week with them setting up the electric. After the abatement Mr. Berman and his team can finally get into the building for a thorough look around.

- b. *BCCLS*: Big news for the library is that the official launch of BCCLS will be taking place on November 29th. The staff has been undergoing a lot of training to be ready for it. An invitation went out to the community for a launch party being held on that date at 4pm to celebrate. Ms. Faherty expressed her thanks to the Friends for making this all happen.

Following the launch and during the library's closure patrons will not be able to pick up non South Orange Library materials until it is reopen at the Walton location. The library will allow for drop off of materials only.

- c. *Communication Plan*: Ms. Faherty and library staff continue to work on the communication plan with the Communication Consultant, Ms. LaGrua. A press release is going out next week in regards to the BCCLS launch. It was set to the *News Record* but there is no guarantee they will run it. Ms. LaGrua has also been in contact with the *SOMA Lounge* and *Matters Magazine*. Ms. Diegnan told the Board of a connection she has with someone at *Matters* and will share with her the news so far, working on an angle to best write for the story. A story in *Gaslight* is also on its way.

Ms. Faherty said they are also working on a broader branding guideline and is working to get staff input as of right now. Once it is more complete she will share it with the Board.

- d. *Review of Services*: Ms. Faherty gave a quick update to the Board stating that programming at the library will run until the end of November. This is only about a week earlier than programming usually ends for the year anyway. It was decided to focus more on BCCLS training for patrons at this time.

Ms. Faherty also informed the Board that the social worker who had been utilizing the library will be moving to the Village offices temporarily. She works with seniors and has been there on Mondays.

In addition to programming, Ms. Faherty has recently gotten the staff to participate in more professional development. She has been sharing a lot of webinars including a recent popular one on working with the homeless and difficult people. A lot of staff felt they got the most out of this one. There have also been ones on collection development so staff are knowledgeable about new titles. Two library staff members, Keisha Miller and Nashaya Lyon-Watson, also attended a recent Adult Services Forum and plan to attend the upcoming Youth Services Forum.

Ms. Faherty has been attending BCCLS director's meetings and the NJ League of Municipalities Conference last week where she went to a number of sessions. She went to ones like civil services support, how to be more green,

community communication and expanding that, and the one she found most helpful was a public safety meeting. She has since been in contact with someone who could provide active shooter training for the staff as the South Orange Police do not have it right now.

Lastly Ms. Faherty informed the Board that the library was recently awarded a grant from the Essex County Division of Cultural Affairs to provide it with a high resolution scanner to assist in the digitization of the historical collection. The grant is good for a year and includes funds to hire part-time staff to assist in the project and for storage of materials which is needed during the relocation. Library staff member Ms. Cani put all of this together and will be heading the digitization project.

10) Current and Upcoming: The next Board meeting scheduled for January 16th at 7:30pm and will be held virtually.

11) At 9:25pm the Board went into executive session. The session was to discuss personnel matters that may be made public at a later date.

12) At 9:42 pm the Board ended the executive session. The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Leis