

- 1) At 7:38pm the meeting was called to order by Ms. Karp. Present, in person, were Hildy Karp, Jane Bean-Folkes, Shama Diegnan, Jill Faherty, Village Trustee Karen Hilton, Friends Representative Kathie Abrams, South Orange Community Member Alyssa Aronson, and Jenna Leis.
Attending virtually were Emily Brown, Tracy Carroll, Brian O’Leary, Ritu Pancholy, and Marietta Zacker.
- 2) **Board Composition:** Doctor Jane Bean-Folkes and Shama Diegnan were sworn in as new members of the Board. The Board is excited to welcome them. Dr. Bean-Folkes will be acting at the Board representative to the school district and Ms. Diegnan, who was already serving on the Communications Committee, is taking over Andrew Ha’s term as a community member expiring in 2026. A brief round of introductions was made by all those present.
- 3) **Minutes of the June 2023 Library Board Meeting:** A motion was made by Ms. Zacker to approve the meeting minutes from the June 20th, 2023 board meeting. This was seconded by Mrs. Carroll and approved by all with the exception of Dr. Bean-Folkes and Ms. Diegnan who abstained from the vote due to their absence from last month’s meeting.
- 4) **Friends of SOPL update:** Ms. Abrams updating the Board on the Friend’s exciting summer so far. They were happy to contribute \$25,000 to the startup costs for the library to join BCCLS. The Board extends their thanks on behalf of the community, themselves, and the library staff as this would not be possible without their contribution.
The Friends last jewelry sale was their biggest yet, bringing in \$10,000. They sold 1,100 pieces with the most being 295 pairs of earrings and the biggest sale being a Swiss watch sold for \$750. The next sale is scheduled for Thursday, September 21st and following that November 11th and 12th. There will be an early sale for members, volunteers, and Board members.
Recently they hosted a lovely appreciation party to thank all of their volunteers. In attendance were Friends members, trustees, and library staff. The Friends also attending the Summer Reading kickoff event where they made \$112 selling water bottles and raffle tickets.
- 5) **Foundation Update:** Ms. Hilton reported things are moving forward with the Foundation though there is a lot of waiting for the architect, Andrew Berman, and his team to complete some drawings so they can be used in fundraising efforts. Until then they have been working with consultants to get a calendar and timeline set up with the next steps.

- a. *Capital Campaign:* Ms. Zacker gave a brief overview of the Campaign for the new Board members. She said they are in the midst of kicking it off after receiving the grant from the State for the construction project. They are in frequent communication with the Friends as a partner in supporting the library and to make sure there is clear and defined roles for both organizations. Recently they reviewed a document by Eve Peterson, a Foundation member who is consulting pro bono, and hired consultant Vicky Bixel from Sobel Bixel that put together a great timeline for what the next few months should look like going forward.

Ms. Zacker noted a few points for the Board. First neighborhood parties and get together will be starting up in the fall. Dates will come after hearing from Mr. Berman and his team. The Board was asked to think about possible community members for neighborhood captains. They are looking to expand their reach to members who may infrequently visit the library but might want to expand their support. The goal is to invite as many people as possible to these parties to talk about the campaign and give a deeper understanding of what they are doing. Board members can expect an invite to most if not all of these parties and are encouraged to attend.

Another point Ms. Zacker noted is that the annual appeals will be happening this year in addition to the campaign. It was recommended by the consultants to go ahead with it. They are looking to make sure people know the difference between the campaign and the appeal. The campaign has contributions going towards the building project while the appeal is directed towards other needs the library may have. The appeals money should not be specifically earmarked for a certain thing and is designed to meet the libraries needs as they arise. It was noted that new and unknown needs will come up while the library is in their two temporary locations during construction. There is no set goal for the appeal but in the past it has brought in between \$20,000 and \$40,000, increasing each year. Conversations are still being had about what the appeal will look like exactly this year.

6) Library Policy:

- a. *Photography and Video Policy:* Prior to this meeting Ms. Faherty sent out a draft policy for photography and video recording in the library. This is in response to a recent incident where two young adults came into the library and caused a disturbance with the goal of filming staff and other patrons reactions. The police were involved and the boys were escorted from the building with a ban for the day. There is an increase in incidents like this in both libraries and the schools. It may also be used in prevention of any publicity stunt, like a book banning campaign, that the library may face in the future.

This proposed policy is designed to protect both patrons and staff privacy. It is also designed to prevent unwanted photography and filming of minors in the children's room, among other places. While not common, there have been a few instances in the past of caretakers concerned with someone taking pictures of their children. While not taken directly from the American Library Association (ALA), the proposed policy is in line with other local libraries. Ms. Faherty feels it is a good middle ground between some of the more liberal and stricter policies she has seen.

Ms. Faherty made it known to the Board that the libraries policies are in need of review and updated in the near future. She has made it one of her goals for the upcoming year. Book challenges are not unheard of in the local area and after speaking with other library directors, Ms. Faherty feels the library is under prepared for any situation that may arise. The Board is in agreement that they need to be proactive in case of an incident, like recent book challenges in Glen Ridge. Mr. O'Leary offered to work with Ms. Faherty and a possible ad hoc group from the Board to review and update the libraries policies.

In the meantime, Ms. Karp pointed out Western State Center, a pro-democracy organization which has great resources and trainings on how to be more prepared for white nationalist organizations in schools and other public institutions. She agrees that the library needs to be more prepared.

The Board was in agreement that the proposed policy should be put in place as soon as possible in case of further incident and because the Board will not be meeting in August. Ms. Abrams did point out a typo in the policy which was corrected. Zacker made a motion to approve the photograph and video policy with the corrected typo with the freedom to make changes to it as necessary. This was seconded by Dr. Bean-Folkes and approved by all. It was also suggested to post the policy publicly in the library so patrons are aware of it immediately. Ms. Faherty will work on the best way to do this.

- 7) **Bills Payable:** Before voting on the bills Ms. Faherty made the Board aware that this month's PSEG for the current building was late incoming therefore was not included in this month's bills. Therefore, they should be prepared to see a higher amount in next month as it will be included there.

A motion was made by Dr. Bean-Folkes to approve the bills payable from Operating account totaling \$9,938.06 and the Trustees account totaling \$3,756.47. This was seconded by Ms. Diegnan and approved by all.

8) **Committee updates**

- a. *Finance:* Mr. O'Leary reported that the committee met recently to look at the balance for the remainder of the year as well as do some preliminary planning for

next year's budget and what was to come. There are still plenty of variables they do not know and it is still unsure how things will look in the temporary locations. Ms. Faherty is talking about certain costs that they are sure of which include utilities still needed to the building while under construction. She is working with the project manager to get a better estimate of what these costs will look like in 2024 and 2025. The committee is on track and will be ready to present to the Village when needed.

They have also been looking at what deliverables and programs will look like in the new locations. It is predicated there may be an increase in the delivery service used during the pandemic in order to get materials and services to the community. The Committee is figuring out how to support what programming will look like and getting out into the community more. When the Board comes back in September they will see where they stand.

Mrs. Carroll asked if Ms. Faherty and the Village ever looked into local churches and synagogues for possible programming or services location. Ms. Faherty said they hadn't and was unsure if they would be able to as they are not municipal properties. She may look into it in the future.

- b. *Personnel:* Mrs. Carroll told the Board that the Personnel Committee are still in the process of getting their data collecting tools together. The timeline has shifted a bit do to some modifications needed but they are looking to get it out to the Board, stake holders, and later staff in the next week or so. Ms. Faherty also continues to give them updates on her progress for her 2023 goals.
- c. *Communications Committee:* The Committee has so far met on an as needed basis. They have so far been working closely with the libraries communications consultant, Kristin LaGrua who has been hired to create a marketing plan for the library. She is working in two phases. Phase one to create the plan while phase two is to execute it and set the staff up for success going forward.
 - i. *Marketing Plan:* Ms. LaGrua recently presented the Committee with a marketing plan. Ms. Faherty sent it to the Board prior to this meeting. It goes over the goals and strategies Ms. LaGrus has created for the library. Some of it the library has already implemented in the past but some is new and setting the library and its staff up for success. She has already been helpful in streamlining flyers to be sent out to the community and giving the staff pointers in marketing their events. Results have already been seen with about 350 people attending a penguin event two weeks ago and a big crowd at a book launch held earlier this evening.

The Marketing Plan will be complete after everyone's input. After they give their critiques it will go to the staff for their input. The plan also has a timeline for the near future. This includes joining BCCLS. Ms. LaGrua will also be working with the Foundation in the near future to

create a unified message between them and the library. Ms. Faherty has been working closely with her through this first phase of the plan.

Ms. Diegnan said that the Committee has gone through it with Ms. LaGrua and are all very comfortable with it. It touches upon a lot of things and will be something to help the library get their presence known in the community more and all the great programming it has.

Ms. Hilton mentioned she wished there were more measurable outcomes in the plan. It has nice ideas but wants something more concrete. She also feels there is room for improvement in the senior engagement plan. She and Ms. Faherty will speak further in the coming week on her ideas.

Ms. Faherty also noted that Ms. LaGrua worked with Kristen Tyler from SOMA Two Towns on the plan as well. She also said that they want to focus a lot on the social media indicators as and utilize them more.

- d. *Building Advisory*: The Committee has not recently met following the Construction Manager RFP and interviews. The contract was officially awarded to Legacy and a meeting is planned for tomorrow with them and the Village to catch them up to speed on the project. Mr. Berman will also be meeting with the Village soon with cost estimates. Once the cost estimates are done the design can be done. An external cost estimate needs to be done to make sure their plan is within budget and all of Mr. Berman's references say he is good at making changes to fit within it. Once this is done they will be having more frequent meetings with the architectural team.

9) Director's Report:

- a. *Construction project update*: As previously mentioned, Legacy was awarded the contract for Construction Manager through the Village. For now, they will be working on demand with the project until construction starts. They are key in creating the bid for the construction company to submit proposals. The Village is required to go with the lowest bid so they will be using their expertise to write a clear and tailored RFP in a way to make sure only qualified companies submit proposals.

Another part of the Construction Managers job is to be another set of expertise eyes on Mr. Berman's plan. They will also be able to make recommendations on where to save money and see where things may need clarification. The volunteer industry professionals on the Building Advisory Committee stressed that this was where money should be spent as it is an important position.

- b. *Moving update*: A lot has been discussed recently about the move to two temporary locations. Tomorrow Ms. Faherty will be working to figure out which

shelves will be taken to there. The first of these locations will be a building on Walton Ave. This is where parking authority is located and currently where the Parks Department is being housed while the Baird is under renovation. This is also the larger of the two locations though not ideal because it does not have a lot of parking. Ms. Faherty will be heading there tomorrow to get a look at the building. The second location will be a room in the Baird Recreation Center. This will be more of a store front location with and probably the most popular with traffic. Here there will be a small browsing collection, some reference services, and most programming. Plans are still being worked out and Ms. Faherty said they will learn as they go. They are also in the process of seeing what furniture will be taken. There will also be a limited amount of computers at Walton Ave. The library will make sure to have laptops and hotspots available for South Orange residents to check out.

As far as services go it will be dictated by the space. The library has already been doing a lot more outreach in preparation. It is still undecided what staff will be doing what and Faherty is working on a staffing plan. Ms. Faherty is also working on a communication plan to get the word out to the community. They are thinking about doing a direct mailer for this since it was not done for Summer Reading as previously desired.

A timeline has been made for relocation but it is all dependent on the Parks Department going back to the Baird.

In preparation for storing the collection a heavy weeding project has been ongoing. This is to be done in two phases. Currently they are in phase one, pulling books based on circulation records. A book will be pulled if it hasn't gone out in at least five years as well as taken out less than five times. The number right now to weed out is 20,000 units. Most of them will be donated to Better World Books who has sent over boxes to ship books back to them in. Ms. Faherty is also in discussion with Orange Library to see if they would be interested in any books. They are mostly looking for children's books. Phase two of the weeding project will probably start next week with sections, doing a more in-depth look at the collection and being more select on what gets pulled. This will start with sections phase one has already been complete in such as the teen section. The library is still purchasing new books but is looking to move to more digital ones for the smaller locations.

In addition to the weeding an inventory is being done of every item in the building. Each room needs to have everything accounted for and measured. Staff has also been given until the end of August to take home all personal items from their desks and work areas. September 30th is the deadline to remove all unnecessary supplies from their desks, such as extra scissors, tape dispensers, etc. The plants in the building will also need to go to new homes at some point.

This is all being done to identify what will be taken to the new locations and following that into the new building. As mentioned in last month's meeting Ms. Faherty has approached the Friends about doing some kind of tag sale with furniture, books, and other items left over. Ms. Abrams said the Friends are still discussing this and will be a major topic in their next meeting. She noted they do have more experiences selling books than furniture.

c. *Building update:*

- i. Connett: The bid for asbestos and lead removal in the Connett building has gone out and is due on August 16th. The contract will be awarded after that and then the removal process can get started towards the end of September at the earliest. Currently there are documents in the building covered in lead dust that need careful removal. The contract will go to the lowest bidder. Because of this Mr. Berman and his team have not been able to go into the basement of the building as much as they would like. Ms. Hilton wanted to point out that the removal process is extensive but to not worry. Mr. Berman will share the demolition plans with them so that it can all be done strategically.

In other news the exterior of Connett has finally been finished. This was started from a grant years prior and after some time of losing contact with the contractor working on it they finally came back to finish it up. The final part was to put copper planting over the gutters.

- ii. Current Building: In the current library building it has been a little muggy. The AC unit does not work very well and does not dehumidify the building like it should. There have also been a few plumbing issues lately but all seem to be patron related and are handling them as they come up.

- d. *Programming and services update:* The Summer Reading theme this year is All Together Now and this year programs have been breaking records. There were about 450 in attendance for the kickoff event and had over 350 at the penguin visit. A recent beekeeping program was attended by about 20 people, many who are not regular program attendees. Another well attended program was a wellness program in collaboration with SOMA Two Towns and the SOMA Health Department which they are looking to make an ongoing thing.

For Summer Reading the library also purchased a subscription to Beanstack, an online service to track patrons progress during summer reading. It captures data for the library as patron's log what they are reading for prizes and to enter raffles. So far there have been 615 people signed up on the app, with the largest amount being children. 132 adults are signed up and 48 teens are signed up, both an increase from previous years. 3,607 books have been logged so far and 103 reviews have been made. *Smile* by Raina Telgemeier is the most popular with

teens, *Looker* by Laura Sims is the most logged for adults, and the *Dog Man* series is most popular amongst children.

Finally, Ms. Faherty recently attend the ALA conference in Chicago at the end of June. In attendance were a lot of other library and publishing professionals. She was able to network and attend presentations on topics such as utilizing data for specific outcomes, increasing graphic novel circulation, diversifying collections, offering better services for the deaf, and how to promote award winning books.

- e. *BCCLS*: As mentioned in the previous meeting Ms. Karp and Ms. Faherty presented to the BCCLS membership board where South Orange was almost unanimously voted in, there was one abstention. The library has since been assigned a product manager with BCCLS but Ms. Faherty has not met with them yet. She was told they would meet at the start of September to go over the transfer of all of the libraries patron and bibliographic data to them. Ms. Faherty said unfortunately she was told that because of backup through a third party who handles their data the merge might not be done until later in 2024 than anticipated. This not an acceptable thing as this was something when joining could be done in January, when the libraries big bill to their service provider TLC is due. Ms. Faherty will continue the conversation with BCCLS about this. In good news at recent programs she has had many patrons come up and express thanks for joining BCCLS. Patrons are excited.

- f. *ALA's United for Libraries webinar*: Ms. Faherty recently sent an email to the Board with an upcoming webinar from ALA's United for Libraries which focuses on Foundations, Trustees, and Friends organizations. This is one potential way to gain hours required from the Board to be eligible for State Aid. It was noted as well that State Aid is a requirement to participate in BCCLS. It is a three-day virtual event which Ms. Faherty will forward again following the meeting. Dr. Bean-Folkes expressed interest in attending and Ms. Diegnan will check her availability. Following the session those who attend will need to give a brief presentation to the Board about what they learned.

10) **New Business:** There was no new business.

11) **Current and Upcoming:** There will be no Board meeting in August. Next Board meeting scheduled for September 19th at 7:30pm at the library.

12) The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:38pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jenna Leis