

South Orange Public Library      **Minutes of Library Board Meeting, May 17, 2022**

1) At 7:31pm the online meeting was called to order by Ms. Karp. Present were Hildy Karp, Brian O’Leary, Donna Grohman, Marietta Zacker, Diego Ribadeneira, Tracy Carroll, Jaime Saeed, Emily Brown, Jill Faherty, and Jenna Leis. Village Trustee Karen Hilton and Friends representative Kathie Abrams joined later in the meeting.

2) **Friends of SOPL update:** Ms. Abrams joined later in the meeting so she sent the Friends update for Ms. Faherty to read out.

The Friends will be funding this year’s Summer Reading program as requested in a proposal by Ms. Faherty. \$4,000 will be provided for children’s books, programming, and supplies for programming. In addition, \$3,000 will go towards expanding the adult and teen collection. Half will be going towards purchasing new reference and nonfiction books, including law, health, and test prep books. The other half will be used to purchase adult best sellers and teen choice award books.

The jewelry sale was held on April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> at the library and was a big success. The expenses are still being total but they made over \$5,000 in proceeds. The board extends their thanks to all the hard work put into the sale.

Ms. Faherty is working with the Friends to create an ongoing book sale in the library. A location to house it is still being identified. A number of books sold will come from what is weeded from the collection in the near future. The plan is for the library staff to collect the money and kept separate to be given directly to the Friends.

3) **Foundation Update:**

a. *Capital Campaign:* Ms. Zacker reported that the Foundation committee is making good progress and working closely with Sobel Bixel to get things moving with the campaign. She will be sending out the finalized case statement for the board to look over. If there are any comments, please send them over to Ms. Zacker. Thanks to the work of the Building Advisory Committee, the RFP has been posted to look for an architectural firm for the next phase of the project.

4) **Minutes of the April 2022 Library Board Meetings:** A motion was made by Ms. Zacker to approve the meeting minutes from the April 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting. This was seconded by Mrs. Carroll and approved by all.

5) **Financial Report:** Prior to the meeting Mr. O’Leary sent out a summary to the board of what was discussed at the last finance committee meeting. The Village came out with their proposed budget the last week in April. It about meets what was expected in capital investments but the operating budget is about \$28,000 less than what was asked for. This is in line with what was asked for last year. While not bad, the library has been under investing in areas, particularly in collection upkeep and expansion. There has also been

an increase in demand for digital services due to the pandemic. Ms. Faherty is looking into options for funding in the second half of the year. While it is recognized that the Village is doing a lot to support the library, it is concerning that there was no word on this until the budget was released. Ms. Faherty has done a lot to improve communication between the library and the Village staff and this will continue. The board needs to prepare for the second half of the year as most, if not all of the appeals from the previous year is going towards the Capital Campaign.

a. *Policy Update:* The previously proposed banking policy update is still being worked on. It is on hold until more advice can be given from the Village legal team.

b. *Corporate donations:*

i. *Policy review:* The policy in regards to donations was sent to the board prior to the meeting for them to review. This is in preparation for the Capital Campaign to start reaching out to donors. This policy has been previously approved by the board. There is a potential for large donors wishing to name things in the new library and a list of naming opportunities will also be sent out for the board to review. It was recommended by the consultant Sobel Bixel to include a time limit on this process, which is standard in policies like this. It was suggested that this time limit be written in the documents going out to prospective donors as opposed to in the actual policy to allow more flexibility in the future. The exact language and details will be further discussed with Sobel Bixel and brought back to the board.

ii. *Sterling Property Holdings NJ LLC:* Ms. Faherty was reached out to by the company Sterling Property Holdings NJ LLC. They are competing for a license with the Village to sell cannabis in South Orange. If they are awarded the license they would like to donate \$25,000 to the library and follow it up with \$25,000 for at least the next two years with a possibility for continuation. This donation is contingent on them receiving the license. Ms. Faherty has been in contact with Julie Doran at the Village, who is in charge of this process on their end. They will be meeting Monday to further discuss it but said in an email that typically they shy away from bars, alcohol distributors, etc. for sponsors or donors of youth based funds and programs, which includes cannabis. The Village also plans to direct cannabis funds to social equity and social justice programs. It is still unclear if this would include the donation offered to the library from this company. It was also brought up that the library could be seen as a force for social equity and justice as well.

Ms. Hilton has been talking with the Trustees about this issue. She informed the board there have been discussions about the cannabis

industry coming to South Orange and there are many companies competing for the license. A part of this process does include the company making investments in the community so it is possible the library will be approached by others. Ms. Hilton will get more information for the board and continue to advocate for the library as a good place for their donations.

The board brought up a number of questions and concerns about accepting this donation and no decision was made at this time. Legal advice may be needed for further discussion. Ms. Faherty will keep the board updated after her meeting with Ms. Doran.

- c. *Bills payable:* A motion was made by Mr. O'Leary to approve the bills payable from Operating account totaling \$11,029.90. This was seconded by Ms. Grohman and approved by all. It was requested that funds be moved from the Kosloski account into the Trustees in order to cover the cost of for Insight Public Sector, a security program to prevent any hacking and protect the library data. The cost would be for \$1,284 and would cover it for the next three years. This was agreed upon by the board. A motion was made by Mr. O'Leary to approve the bills payable from the Trustees account totally \$2,721.16. It was seconded by Mrs. Carroll and approved by all.

## 6) Committee updates

- a. *Personnel:* The personnel committee is working on Ms. Faherty's 6-month review, which was delayed until recently. Mrs. Carroll has received input from Ms. Faherty but has not requested input with regards to the 360-degree relationships. She is committed to getting that by the beginning of next week.
- b. *Connett:* The Building Advisory Committee (BAC) is moving forward with the RFP and is handling things related to that. A walk through with prospective architects is taking place on Wednesday, May 18. Proposals are due on June 22. The BAC will then look over the proposals and create a shortlist before conducting interviews. With the previous RFP, the committee made a selection and then presented it to the board. This is how it will be done this time as well. Any questions a board member may receive can be directed to either Ms. Faherty or Ellen Malgieri who is the contact for the RFP on the Village end. The Connett building itself looks great; the renovations on the outside are complete. Hopefully tours of the building can get started as soon as it is deemed safe.

## 7) Director's Report:

- a. *Building Projects:* With the Connett exterior complete Ms. Faherty would like to focus on cleaning up the exterior of the main building as well. She has been in contact with the Department of Public Works to get some landscaping done, trim

the trees, clear out trash on the property, and possibly mulching. The hope is to make this regularly scheduled maintenance.

As previously mentioned Ms. Faherty is working with the Friends to create space for an ongoing book sale in the library. Library staff is in the process of moving around shelves in the periodical section to possibly create a sitting area and better utilize the space.

The upgrades for the elevators and the doors using the Community Development Block grant is moving forward. The money has been approved from the Village for it and Ms. Faherty will continue to update the board on its progress.

The idea of a communication committee was brought to the board in order to facilitate better communication on the progress of projects and to assist with fundraising. The creation was approved by the board. The makeup of the committee will be further discussed but it will include at least one if not two board members. If anyone is interested, please let Ms. Karp know.

- b. *Programming and Services Update:* The month of May has been busy in regards to programming. There were a number of programs for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month as well as the libraries first bird watching/bird walk. Village Trustee Bill Haskins has been leading that. The program was used to promote the new field guide kits which were donated to the library.

Summer Reading kick off will be on June 27<sup>th</sup>. The library staff is working to prepare a ton of programming for the summer. So far they have about 85 different programs planned for all ages. There will be a push this year for teen and adult participation.

Finally, Ms. Faherty announced the official retirement of Beth Halliday, head of the children's services. Her last day will be on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Halliday has been a staple at the library for many years and a proclamation is in the works for her. The draft will be sent over to the board to be looked over. A retirement event is being planned which the board will be welcome to attend. It was also suggested to perhaps do something with the public as Ms. Halliday was such a big part of the community for many years.

- 8) **Trustees of the Board:** It was announced that Ms. Grohman will be retiring at the end of June. She will be staying on through the June board meeting and will continue with the Foundation as well as being a nonvoting member of the personnel committee. Ms. Grohman is currently the boards liaison to the school district and while she does have some ideas for her replacement the board was asked if they knew any teachers in the community they wish to put forward to please let her know. The board expresses their thanks to her for her service.

a. *Executive Board election:* Executive board member elections will be held in June. If anyone is interested in a position, please reach out to Ms. Karp. There is currently no one in the position of Vice President and Ms. Karp expressed her hope that the position will be filled. If no one is interested it will remain unfilled for the time being.

9) **New business:** Ms. Hilton will be bringing Ms. Faherty to the next meeting of the Historic Preservation committee. Summer Jones is the Village's liaison but is unable to attend so Ms. Hilton will be going in her place. This is a good opportunity for Ms. Faherty to meet the members as their approval is needed by the State in order to proceed with the building project.

Mrs. Carroll informed the board that a new social worker, Michelle Fidierer, started working with SOMA about three weeks ago. She recently met with Ms. Faherty and discussed setting up office hours at the library a few days a week. This is not new to the library, there have been social workers there in the past and helped many patrons.

10) **Current and Upcoming:** Next Board meeting is June 21th at 7:30pm

11) The meeting was closed at 8:53pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Jenna Leis*

