

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Free Public Library of Berkeley Heights

February 12, 2024

Prepared: February 19, 2024

Approved: as corrected March 11, 2024

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this meeting was advertised by legal notices in the Star Ledger and Courier News. Notice was also posted at Town Hall, BHPL Website and sent to TAPinto BH at least 48 hours in advance. This meeting was included in a list of meetings approved December 11, 2023.

The meeting was called to order by Ann Bunyaner at 7:04 PM

ROLL CALL: Ann Bunyaner, Mary Jean Barnes, Linda Nessenson, Donna Boyd, Diane O'Halloran, Superintendent's Alternate Diane Azalone, Mayor's Alternate Chris Reilly

ALSO PRESENT: Amy Steinbauer, Director; Laura Fuhro, Assistant Director.

Bunyaner welcomed Director Amy Steinbauer and Mayor's Alternate Chris Reilly to their first meeting with the Board of Trustees.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Corrections were made to the January Minutes. Bunyaner said that the line following the opening statement, "The meeting was called to order by Donna Boyd at 7:23 PM", was an error and should be removed. In addition, a misspelling of "Diane" was corrected, as was the appointment of Kristen Hayes as Attorney. Bunyaner said an error had been made in reporting the gift from Fran and Ned Voss that should be corrected to \$1,000. Nessenson asked that under TREASURER'S REPORT, her response to Israel's question should be "Nessenson said that is not allowed to happen". Bunyaner asked for a clarification to the last Paragraph of the DIRECTOR'S REPORT in reference to snow closing decisions, noting that the Township has the authority to close the building and no Board approval is required when the Township is present. It is only necessary to consult with the Board when the Library is on its own. Bunyaner asked that, under New Business, the sentence "Mary Jean Barnes suggested Nonprofit Direct" be added.

Bunyaner called for a motion to accept the Minutes as corrected. Boyd so moved. Nessenson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Reilly asked about the availability of the Audit Report. Bunyaner said that it is posted on the website when received from the Town. Nessenson added that the Town also prepares a monthly Audit Trail Report for a line item in the Town budget that covers payroll and a Library allowance, and that she will forward a copy to Steinbauer.

Bunyaner reviewed the Financial Worksheet noting two outstanding checks. Steinbauer reported that she is working on the budget. Bunyaner called for a motion to accept the Financial Worksheet. O'Halloran so moved, Boyd seconded the motion, and all agreed.

Bunyaner called for a motion to approve the Bill List for the total amount of \$13,971.72. O'Halloran so moved, Nessenson seconded the motion and all approved.

CORRESPONDENCE AND GIFTS: Steinbauer reported gifts from Lisa Savino \$25; Raymond Daley for Cathleen Donovan \$25; and from Susan Johnson \$150. Bunyaner thanked the donors.

BOARD REPORTS: Bunyaner reported that she did one hour of Trustee training on cybersecurity and offered to share the information with Board members. Bunyaner noted that the Board is required to complete a total of seven

hours of training that can be earned by one or any number of members. She added that Attorney Kristin Hayes will be providing 1st amendment training for the board, and is also preparing a Director Evaluation policy and form. In response to an inquiry by Mary Jean Barnes, the opportunity for volunteer participation on Board committees was discussed. Nessenson said that community members have been asked to participate when expertise or participation in focus groups has been requested. Boyd will check the bylaws for entries pertinent to this question.

Marketing – Boyd reported that the Marketing Committee met with Dori Dowling last week to assess marketing and communication goals. Board members are invited to send any thoughts on marketing to the committee. Reilly asked about efforts to target the Teen audience for programming and services. Steinbauer said that Library has hired a Teen Librarian who has been successfully building a teen audience with at least four programs a month, in addition to a Teen Book Club, a Teen Council, and Teen Volunteers. The number of teens using the Library and staying to study has risen noticeably. Barnes asked about a reference to the Community Folder in the Marketing Report. Azalone replied that it is a weekly online feature sent to parents in their Friday folders on the district website. O'Halloran said that she had reached out to an original member of the Foundation who said she would help facilitate the transition to a new group, but will not participate in future activity. Discussion will continue at the next Board Meeting.

Facilities – Nessenson reported that she, Boyd and Steinbauer met to survey the areas of water damage due to continuing leaks in the Children's Room and a study room. Steinbauer distributed a map of the leaks that was prepared by a representative of the Canon remediation company. A small ceiling tile in the Children's room was later replaced by the DPW and a section of carpeting will be pulled up to check for mold. Nessenson also reported that she and Barnes had discussed the need for improved technology. Nessenson said that improvement of library technology tied into a goal of the past year to investigate the advantages of membership in one of the two local consortiums. Since effort was placed on hold when the Director announced her retirement, Nessenson suggested that the consortium representatives be invited to speak with Steinbauer and at a future Board meeting.

CITIZEN'S HEARING- (Name and address) No citizens present

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Steinbauer reported that she has meeting with the staff, visiting local libraries and speaking with the Directors. She also spoke at a meeting of the Berkeley Heights Civic Association about new Library services and collections. Steinbauer has also talked with Dori Dowling about creating a welcome brochure, and with staff about a programming calendar, and identifying missing audiences. One-on-one meetings are being held with department heads and an effort is being made to streamline processes and set up best practices and professional norms. Community engagement efforts include a Welcome Tree wall sculpture in the lobby where visitors attach hearts with drawings and "What I love about the Library" messages and a Groundhog Day poll resulted in 78 evenly split votes. A puzzle table has also been a big hit. Steinbauer mentioned that she is also meeting once a week with the Mayor and Town Hall staff. Steinbauer also reported that pungent aromas from downstairs cooking classes have been penetrating the Library and are strongest in her office and at the Main desk. Steinbauer said that the downstairs windows cannot be opened and suggestions for closing the door and providing ventilation have proved unsuccessful. An email has been sent to Barbara Russo informing her of the matter. Steinbauer reported that the Museum passes are going well with MOMA and the Museum of Natural History the most popular choices. Steinbauer thanked Ann Marie Siczka for visiting the museums and preparing area restaurant guides for each one. The Monthly Statistics were reviewed. Steinbauer said that she is restructuring the report so that all Departments will make entries on one consistent form.

LIAISONS REPORTS: Mayor's Liaison Chris Reilly asked about her responsibilities as a Liaison. Bunyaner said that she would forward the guidelines for Liaison responsibilities as provided by the Library's lawyer. Reilly

informed the Board that she will be out of town for most of March and April, but that she will call in for the meetings as suggested by Bunyaner.

Azalone reported that Gail Bradford has been appointed President of the Board of Education. The search for a Superintendent is still underway. The 2024-25 calendar has been posted on the website BHPSNJ.org

OLD BUSINESS: Installation of Directional Signs - Steinbauer reported that the Library directional signs were picked up by a police officer and that the Town is concentrating on parking lot signs. The Library way-finder signs are still needed.

Approve session minutes from November as follows:

Candidate for Library Director Amy Steinbauer was presented by the Personnel Committee, as was the need for hiring an interim Director, Phillip Israel.

No action was taken.

Bunyaner called for a motion to approve the minutes from the Executive Session. Nessenson so moved and Boyd seconded the motion. The motion passed with Barnes and Reilly abstaining.

NEW BUSINESS: Barnes made a recommendation for the book "On Censorship: a public librarian examines cancel culture in the US" by James LaRue, of the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom. The book discusses how censorship issues have been handled in real life situations by public libraries.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (as necessary): No session needed.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Bunyaner made a motion to adjourn. Nessenson seconded the motion and all agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.