

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Free Public Library of Berkeley Heights
May 13, 2024

Prepared: May 14, 2024
Approved: June 10, 2024

This was contained in a list of meetings approved on December 11, 2023. Advance notice has been advertised in the Courier News, Star Ledger, BHPL's Website and forwarded to TAPinto Berkeley Heights and the Clerk's Office.

The meeting was called to order by Ann Bunyaner at 7:07 PM.

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

Absent: Diane O'Halloran

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Bunyaner said that the second sentence of the Treasurer's Report in the April 8, 2024 Minutes should read "Steinbauer asked if this money should be returned to the State". Bunyaner then noted that with only three board members present who had attended the April meeting, approval of the April Minutes would be postponed.

Reilly asked if progress had been made in regard to remediating the leaks. Steinbauer replied that she has sent an official email, listing complaints about the leaks, as requested by the Township Administrator. Reilly emphasized the potential for damage being caused by ongoing leaks and asked if the Library Board could petition the Town to fix the leaks and add the cost to the litigation list for reimbursement. Nessenson replied that the exact cause of the problem has not yet been determined, with leaks reappearing a few months after repairs were made to the suspected entry site. Boyd said that the continued leaks put the property at risk of damage. Bunyaner asked about the responsibility for repair costs and Reilly said she would consult with the Mayor on this issue.

Bunyaner made a motion to postpone approval of the April Minutes. Nessenson seconded the motion and Azalone agreed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Steinbauer reported that an Amazon business account has been created so that staff can place their orders directly. An additional 100 tickets have been purchased for Museum of Natural History, with 89 tickets already having been distributed. Door counters are scheduled to be installed on the Library entry and Children's Department doors on May 20th. The counters will provide information about usage patterns that will be used in planning staffing and programming. Steinbauer will be attending the NJLA Conference at the end of this month and Ann Marie Sieczka will be attending the NJ Association of Library Assistants conference next month. Preparations including a prize wheel and branded prizes are on order for summer reading.

Nessenson noted that the Board has not received the distribution from the Township for the remaining money from 2023 or the first quarter stipend. Steinbauer said that the city administrator is now acting as the temporary CFO and has just finished the working budget. Nessenson said that she will send an email to the city administrator about money the Library is owed by the Town from last year and the first quarter along with a request for the audit trail. Nessenson made a motion to approve the Financial Worksheet for April 2024. Nessenson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Bunyaner made a motion to accept the Bills List for the total of \$39,760.02. Nessenson seconded the motion and all approved. Bunyaner made a motion to void check #9978 in the amount of \$150 for Pam Nixon. Nessenson seconded the motion and all approved.

CORRESPONDENCE AND GIFTS: None

BOARD REPORTS:

Marketing- Boyd reported that the Marketing Committee has met with Steinbauer and would like to change the Committee's name to reflect the goal of Communications. Bunyaner said that a change of name is possible if it is not a standing committee, and that this will be checked. The Marketing Committee is also looking for changes on the website that will make the committee's message more visible and connected to the community.

Facilities – Nessenson reported that she, O'Halloran and Steinbauer toured the library to talk about plans to change some of the layout. She also reported that Bill Devine from Nickerson Furniture will make recommendations for re-locating shelving and furniture in compliance with ADA requirements, and for additional storage that will be needed for the Circulation Department should the Library join a consortium. Steinbauer said that Vertilocity will submit a quote for relocation of wiring for the Reference desk, which will be moved closer to the front of the Library, and also for relocating the self-checkout station which will be moved to a more visible location across from the Circulation Desk.

Nessenson added that existing data outlets are limited and inadequate for current needs. Additional data will be installed and will appear in the Reimagining category of the budget. Steinbauer noted that a mobile desk that can be used for public and staff will be set up in the current Reference area.

Foundation - Barnes reported that the group learned that the former Foundation's charter was revoked because filings were not made. The group is considering options for re-forming as a Friends Group and have filed an application with Pro Bono Partnership, a charity of attorneys that can advise to other nonprofits. Barnes said she participated in the Senior Information Fair with a meeting scheduled for June 4, 7 pm. Publicity for the project was discussed. In response to a question asked by Boyd about the mission of the group, Barnes said that the By-laws include supporting the Library's programs and activities and focuses on fundraising.

Marketing- Steinbauer reviewed the Marketing Report which shows that 52 new patrons signed up this month and were sent Welcome Emails with new options of signing up for Book Browse and Wowbrary. April and May program calendars were sent to the school district for inclusion in the Community Folders for grades K-12. Two flyers were sent to the Township newsletter promoting special events in May, the first focused on Mental Health Awareness Month and Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the second one promoted the Library's Museum Passes. Because of so many events at the end of April, an extra e-blast reminder was sent. A new exit survey was produced to hand out at programs for patron feedback on their wants and preferred information sources. The adult newsletter went out to 1390 people with a 63% open rate. The Children's Newsletter went to 188 patrons with a 42% open rate. The new discounted admission to the Crayola Experience engaged the most patrons and the Library of Things was the next most clicked item. The Book Club Newsletter has grown to a database of 194. With the addition of the Mayor's Book Club, there are now 6 book groups plus a silent reading club.

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Steinbauer reported that the Library was a supporter of the Rotary's annual Pancake Breakfast. Mobile Library Card signup is now a goal. Steinbauer reported that, at the last Town Hall meeting, the Mayor commended her for successfully reaching out and bringing the Library into the community. She and Head of Circulation, Ann Marie Sieczka attended an unconference for small libraries at Plainfield Library and are now planning a new checkout display for the Library of Things. Steinbauer has signed up for a project management course for Libraries. An unofficial goal of creating a packed calendar with at least one activity offered every day, earned positive feedback from the community. Family Fun Fridays, a Plant and Seed Swap, and The Joy of Cook Booking Club and a Taylor Swift Karaoke event with over 80 in attendance were among the many successful programs. The Summer Reading kickoff on June 8 will feature a prize wheel for Reading Club sign-ups, story time, crafts, an ice cream truck at the Library followed by a Foam party in the park.

First Amendment Auditor Training and De-escalation Training sessions for the staff were held last week. Staff Meetings and Storytime Training will be held in June.

The Reference department is working on major weeding. The shelving order for the Nonfiction and Fiction collections need to be moved and rearranged in a more logical pattern for finding. The Children's Department hosted The Good Time String Band, Sing and Sign Story Time, Yoga Storytime, and Meet Morrigan the Dog as well as the weekly Storytime programs. Four new part-time staff members have joined the Circulation Department and have also joined the full time staff in leading a series of new programs for public. Tinker Tuesdays, March Madness, National Poetry Month and the Haiku contest were among successful programs recently produced by the Circulation Staff. Nessenson suggested that a banner could be used to identify Library events in the park,

In response to an inquiry by Boyd, Steinbauer said that the food aromas from the cooking class have subsided, but noise in the hallway increased. Reminders asking for quieter voices have been posted in the area.

LIAISONS REPORTS: Azalone reported that Dori Dowling has reached out to the schools with library information that has been posted and shared with the school community. Robert Nixon, Principal of Governor Livingston H.S. has been named as the acting Superintendent of Schools. The Assistant Superintendent has resigned as of the end of June and Board member Angela Penna has also resigned.

OLD BUSINESS: Bunyaner read the March 11, 2024 Executive Session Draft Minutes as follows.

Executive Session: Personnel Executive Session: Personnel

Present: Ann Bunyaner, Diane Azalone, Linda Nessenson, Diane O'Halloran, Mary Jean Barnes

Executive Session was entered into at 8:52 pm after Resolution to Enter Executive

Session was read by Ann Bunyaner and all agreed.

Annual goals for the Library Director were discussed. No action was taken.

Bunyaner moved to exit the session, Nessenson seconded, all agreed.

Board exited Executive Session at 9:15 pm

Bunyaner made a motion to approve the amended Minutes of March 11, 2024. Barnes seconded the motion and it passed with Boyd and Barnes abstaining. A quorum was not present to vote on the approval of the April 8, 2024 Executive Minutes.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) Steinbauer reviewed a new statistical report that provides monthly counts for resources and services being used by the community and will be used as a planning tool for developing Library services and collections. Steinbauer said that Overdrive is being investigated as a replacement for Hoopla. She added that she would like the library to be known for programming that is based on identifying and providing what people want. In the past month Book Groups, Poem in a Pocket Day and a haiku contest were successful. Use of social media for programming is also being explored.

Steinbauer reported that the Meeting Room has been reserved for a celebration of the Library's 71st Birthday to take place on September 21st. Board, staff and community members are being asked to participate in the event. Steinbauer will be contracting TLC to ask if a reminder can be sent to card holders when their cards are about to expire.

OLD BUSINESS: Nessenson reported that the auditors and the attorneys were consulted about the need for maintaining the two escrow accounts and learned that there is no need to maintain the accounts and that the money can go into the general operating fund. Bunyaner said that a resolution will be proposed next month. Nessenson also learned that libraries cannot have a credit card but can have a P-Card. Steinbauer said that At the library conference she learned that in New Jersey the Bank of America must be used for P-Cards and that is pending at this time.

Steinbauer asked that the Library be closed for Juneteenth on Wednesday, June 19th. Bunyaner made a motion to close on Wednesday, June 19th for the Juneteenth Holiday. Nessenson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: Steinbauer informed the Board that Rachel Talbert has resigned and that a new Teen Librarian is being looked for. She also announced that Laura Fuhro is looking forward to retiring as Children's Librarian, hopefully on August 1st.

Steinbauer recommended changes in current circulation rules that will streamline the process for borrowers with no extra work for staff, including circulating new books for 14 days, a 5-day hold period, automatic one-time renewals, set costs plus a processing fee for book replacements by category, elimination of the 10 cent daily fine for overdue new books, and doubling the new book borrowing period from one to two weeks.

She also informed the Board of previous borrowers whose combined fines now total more than \$2000 and who have never responded to repeated staff attempts for contact and the staff would like to be relieved of this burden. After a short discussion, Boyd asked for more information about the collection process and Steinbauer said that she will bring that information to the next meeting with a recommendation for policy change.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Bunyaner made a motion to adjourn. Nessenson seconded the motion and all agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.