

Library Board Minutes

May 13 2024

Bethlehem Area Public Library

Meeting conducted in a hybrid form of in-person and virtual attendance via Zoom.

President Jane Gill called the meeting discussion at 6:06 P.M.

ATTENDING: City of Bethlehem – Anne Felker, Jane Gill, Joyce Hinnefeld
Bethlehem Township – Carolyn Harper, Peggy Salvatore
Hanover Township – Telly Diacogiannis

Staff – Josh Berk, Amresse Farrow, Sarah Phillips, Susan Schirripa
Other – Christopher Anthony (Masters of Library Science student observer, PennWest University), Alison Diefenderfer (Bethlehem Township alternate), Terence Faul (King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul)

ABSENT: City of Bethlehem – Joanne Garcia, G. Christopher Hunt, Rachel Leon, Delia Marrero
Fountain Hill – Will Rufe

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

Board members welcomed two new representatives from Bethlehem Township and one alternate. Ms. Harper, Ms. Salvatore, and Ms. Diefenderfer introduced themselves.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Motion to approve the March minutes was made by Ms. Felker, seconded by Mr. Diacogiannis; motion approved with Ms. Harper and Ms. Salvatore abstaining.
2. Motion to approve the April meeting notes was made by Ms. Hinnefeld, seconded by Ms. Felker; motion approved with Ms. Harper and Ms. Salvatore abstaining.

APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUNDS:

1. President Gill called for a motion to approve the February operating funds subject to audit. Motion to approve the February operating funds, subject to audit, made by Ms. Felker, seconded by Ms. Hinnefeld; motion approved unanimously.

2. President Gill called for a motion to approve the March operating funds subject to audit. Motion to approve the March operating funds, subject to audit, made by Ms. Felker, seconded by Ms. Hinnefeld; motion approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT:

Director Berk gave an overview of how BAPL operates for new Board members. He explained that the library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit rather than a component of municipal government. He explained that this is just one of many different models of public libraries in Pennsylvania. He shared some financial details of our library's \$3 million annual budget; he also offered records for the new members to review. He continued to explain where the funding comes from, a per capita figure for local funding and a standard-based subsidy from the PA Department of Education. He explained that the Library is a District Center and what that means. Next he gave a history of the current library locations, number of employees, the major expenses, and sources of income in addition to tax revenue such as book sales and fundraising. He reminded everyone that BAPL will be requesting a per capita increase for the 2025 budget.

He continued by describing how most library committees consist of a mix of board members and community members. There is an exclusive board member section on the website for information they may need to utilize.

Director Berk moved on to his monthly report, noting that the numbers may look odd when comparing this year's stats to 2023. This is because the first half of last year was disrupted heavily by the renovations at the Main Library. He also highlighted current fundraising for a new Bookmobile and explained that staff members are using the library van to continue Bookmobile services to the community until the new one is ready.

He noted how eBook demand continues to increase and praised the success of the 2024 Lehigh Valley Book Festival which was held in conjunction with PBS39 at the Main Library in March.

Ms. Farrow added an offer of a tour of the Main Library for new Board members following this evening's meeting.

COMMUNITY REPORTS:

1. City of Bethlehem – Ms. Felker wondered if the library bikes to borrow are available for the season and are they being borrowed. Yes, they are. Ms. Felker also thought community bike rides could be organized to start at BAPL to encourage more use and advertise the bikes' availability to the public.
2. Bethlehem Township – none

3. Fountain Hill – none
4. Hanover Township – Mr. Diacogiannis shared how pleased he was to see that BAPL had received a \$500 donation check from the ribbon cutting at the new McDonald's on Schoenersville Road. He asked how that relationship had come to be. Director Berk and Ms. Farrow answered that this time it was initiated by the local McDonald's, but typically it is BAPL reaching out to request support.

Mr. Diacogiannis also thanked Director Berk for the assistance with a letter of support provided for a recent Hanover Township grant application. He reported that the highly anticipated Hanover Township pool opening will be on June 8. He has asked the Head of Outreach, Regina Kochmaruk, for the Book Bike to use at the celebratory event.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee – Ms. Farrow reported the staff training sessions are completed and gave the history of this initiative for the new Board members. The report from FACES International is available for Board members.
2. Finance Committee – No report, but President Gill inquired if there has been a conversation with City of Bethlehem officials. Director Berk has planned to officially request an increase in June. He has already had conversations with some governmental leaders on the topic. He also explained the situation for new Board members, clarifying how library income funding by per capita and census population counts affect the budget.
3. Governance Committee – Ms. Felker reported there was no meeting this month. They plan to review the agreements for community members. Director Berk requested they continue to work on a policy for library staff member tuition reimbursement.

Also, at this time, it was shared that Ms. Garcia will not be renewing her library Board position for Bethlehem, since she has a conflict with the meeting time due to her graduate studies.

Ms. Felker also plans to confirm if Ms. Marrero is serving on this committee, too.

4. Human Resources Committee – none
5. Marketing and Advocacy Committee – Mr. Diacogiannis reported this committee will be meeting to plan and strategize more for Bookmobile fundraising. Ms. Farrow added an update for the new Board members on current efforts. She is still searching for corporate donors for larger donations. Having those conversations is also beneficial for community

relationships and library development. Mr. Diacogiannis requested information to hand out and/or email to participating community influencers.

Ms. Hinnefeld complimented social media posts she has seen with Director Berk and Ms. Farrow. She wondered if there has been a good response to this content. Ms. Farrow shared there has been positive feedback. The library's handle on Instagram is @pabapl. In addition to Facebook and Instagram, there are library presences on LinkedIn and TikTok. She proposed adding social media numbers to future annual reports.

6. Strategic Planning Committee – none

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Felker. President Gill adjourned the meeting at 6:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Phillips (BAPL Staff) and Delia Marrero (Secretary)