

**Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting
Bernardsville Public Library
September 20, 2011**

Attendance: Maribeth Southworth was absent and Michael Gouldin arrived at 5:50 pm. Karen Brodsky, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library (BPL); John Deibert and Roni Larini, respectively President and Vice President, Friends of the BPL; Howard Lemberg, Chair, Bernardsville Library Foundation; and Barbara and Philip Pitney were also present.

President Donald Burset called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice. Secretary Terry Thompson called the roll.

Minutes: John La Duc moved to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2011 Board meeting with two spacing corrections. Patrice Cummings seconded the motion, which carried.

Director’s Report: Ms. Brodsky presented highlights and additions to her written report, as follows:

- Mrs. Cummings moved to approve the 2012 closing schedule as proposed. Lucy Orfan seconded the motion, which carried.
- Ms. Brodsky asked the Policy Committee to meet if possible before the next board meeting.¹
- Ms. Brodsky reported that she was working with Borough Counsel Jack Pidgeon and Borough Manager Ralph Maresca to explore participating in the electricity purchasing group to which the borough belongs. The next application time will be in February and she expects to have completed further due diligence steps before then. This arrangement might lower electricity costs from the 12 cents per kWh that Ms. Brodsky had previously negotiated to 9 cents per kWh.
- Mr. La Duc described the meeting he and Ms. Brodsky had with the borough’s insurance broker, who explained the borough’s and library’s insurance coverage, including coverage for the Friends, the Foundation and the Board. He was very impressed and pleased with the borough’s and library’s insurance coverage and was glad to have had the meeting.
- Ms. Brodsky reported that the library had received a contribution from Mr. and Mrs. John La Duc restricted to providing funding for staff morale expenditures, which Ms. Brodsky had been meeting out of her own pocket. The Board thanked the La Ducs for this thoughtful gift. Mr. La Duc said this should be a line item and will be included in next year’s budget.
- Ms. Brodsky reported that the 125 cafeteria benefits plan, approved last month, required a flexible spending plan. Mr. Burset said he had some background in such plans and would consult with Ms. Brodsky.
- The library has a new volunteer handling book sales.

Treasurer’s Report: Mr. La Duc presented the Treasurer’s Report. John McCrossan asked if the expected year-end loaded expenses could be identified in the next Treasurer’s Report, again looking for opportunities to save. Mr. La Duc said that he and Ms. Brodsky would do so for the October report. Ms. Thompson moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report, to pay the new bills received from September 1-20, 2011 and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from

¹ It has not been possible to arrange a meeting before the October board meeting. The Policy Committee will meet on Thursday, October 27 at 10 am at the library. TAT

August 24-31, 2011. Michael Gouldin seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Finance has met once to begin work on a 2012 budget. Mr. La Duc described his assumption that property values would continue their downward trend, with a potential shortfall of as much as \$50,000.

Long-Range Planning, No report; a Board retreat for long-range planning purposes is planned on Sunday, November 6 from 12-4 pm, including lunch.²

Personnel and Policy: No meetings.

Communications: Mr. Buset circulated Ms. Brodsky's note of appreciation for the performance review process. Ms. Brodsky said that she and Mr. Buset had written letters of thanks to Congressman Lance, Kevin Feeley and Paula Marasco for their participation in the 9/11 memorial service. Mrs. Cummings thanked Maribeth Southworth for her involvement in the 9/11 memorial and the service, and also thanked John McCrossan for his work to reverse the borough's decision on the solar panel project. Mr. McCrossan reviewed the process, reminding that from March, Ms. Brodsky and the Board had sought information on the solar panel project, information that was only supplied at the meeting on August 23, two days before Somerset County finalized the bond sale, so that the Council had to move quickly if it was going to change its decision. He commented that the Council should have done its own due diligence and the local process was faulty, but that at the end of the day, the project did not make sense for the library.

Unfinished Business: none.

New Business: Ms. Brodsky reminded that there was an opportunity to meet Lia Carruthers, the new Youth Services Manager.

Mr. Buset asked for discussion of the possibility of opening meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Thompson expressed concerns that doing so could make it difficult for future board members who might not agree with the inclusion of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, or who might, on religious grounds (stemming from the First and Second Commandments as interpreted by certain sects) find it inappropriate to pledge allegiance to a flag. She suggested that if we wished to open meetings with some statement of patriotism, we take turns to select and read one, saying that she would start with the First Amendment to the Constitution. Most other board members disagreed with her position. Pete Miller was asked what the school board did, and said they commenced meetings with the Pledge and that objectors to the Pledge simply rose and stood silently while it was being recited. Mr. Gouldin moved that the Board adopt that procedure, to be reexamined at the reorganization meeting in January. Mr. McCrossan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

² This plan has also changed since the Board meeting; there is no need to save the November 6 date. The long-range planning issues will be presented at a regular Board meeting; the regular agenda may be truncated to permit such presentation.

Public Participation: Mr. Deibert, for the Friends, said they were working on their budget, which would be tentatively approved tomorrow night (9/21) and take effect in January. He also reminded us that Roni Larini has been nominated to succeed him as the Friends' president.

Mr. Lemberg said the Foundation was in the early stages of planning for next year.

Mrs. Pitney expressed her concern that the solar panel project had been withdrawn. She quoted some misinformation, for instance that the Borough was giving up a \$10,000 tax credit. Messrs. McCrossan and La Duc corrected some of the information, after which she suggested that the library get out a press release or write a letter to the editor explaining why the Board had recommended that the borough withdraw its participation. Mr. Buset thanked her for bringing this to the Board's attention and agreed that we would try to put better information out to the public. Mr. McCrossan reiterated that neither the Board nor the Council had really had enough specific information to endorse the proposal until very, very late in the process, which was unfortunate.

At 6:50 Ms. Thompson moved to go into Executive Session. Mr. Gouldin seconded the motion, which carried. Ms. Brodsky and the members of the public left the meeting. At 7:00 pm the meeting returned to public session. There was a general discussion of progress with the Friends and Foundation on the Memorandum of Understanding. At 7:23 Mr. Gouldin moved to adjourn. Mr. La Duc seconded the motion, which carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson
Secretary