

**Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting
Bernardsville Public Library
May 18, 2010**

Attendance: All members were present. John Deibert, President of the Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library (“Friends”), Roni Larini, Vice President of the Friends, and Karen Brodsky, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, were also present.

Stephanie Wallace called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice.

Public Participation: John Deibert said that the Friends had developed a Board of Directors Manual, containing their policies, which would be adopted at the May meeting.

Minutes: Three corrections to the April minutes were noted; Jim Kellett moved approval of the April minutes as amended; Patrice Cummings seconded the motion, which carried.

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

- Circulation is down for another month (staff circulation is down 26%). One explanation may be that more women are back in the work force due to the economy, and perhaps there is also a demographics change. Pete Miller noted that his expected kindergarten enrollment for the fall was only 93 children, when last year’s was 140, explaining that he thought fewer “empty-nesters” had been able to sell their homes and move, so that fewer families with children were moving in.
- The library’s presentation to the Chamber of Commerce was postponed, since the Chamber had a special speaker from Governor Christie’s staff at its meeting this morning.
- Trane, which services the HVAC system, checked the air conditioner that malfunctioned and said that the air conditioner motor needed replacement. Ms. Brodsky is looking into leaving that air conditioner disconnected.
- The auto accident may have caused damage to the lintel under the window in addition to damaging some bricks. Ms. Cummings will become our lintel expert, following in the honorable path set by Russ Giglio as our ballast expert.
- The board congratulated Ms. Brodsky and the entire staff on the 2010 Hennen rankings, again terrific (No. 1 in NJ in our budget category, No. 2 in NJ among all libraries). We look forward to the national rankings from *Library Journal*.
- The library received an Open Public Records Act request from Surcidynex, a library catalog company, for our contract with Polaris, a competitor. Ms. Brodsky consulted with Jack Pidgeon, the borough attorney, and then provided the contract.
- Ms. Brodsky has found a community services “volunteer”, a landscaper, for weeding this summer, at a savings estimated at \$1000.
- In a brief discussion of the legislative update attached to the board package as Appendix D and mentioned in the Director’s Report, John McCrossan mentioned that the municipal subvention to the library would probably be in the low \$800,000s in 2011, and that the library needed either to reduce its budget accordingly, go to shared services, or raise additional funds.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Kellett reviewed the Treasurer's Report and bills, mentioning that room rent and book sales are up. Mr. McCrossan asked about planning for a rainy day, and whether any savings could be realized this year in order to bolster next year's budget. Mr. Kellett explained that many of the "savings" that look possible from reading the Treasurer's Report are illusory, as the big bills come in the third and fourth quarters. Mrs. Wallace said the library had already made many cuts. Ms. Brodsky said that the Finance Committee had presented a contingency plan to the board last year in connection with the 2010 budget discussions. Mr. McCrossan said this planning was a full board responsibility. Donald Bursset suggested that we plan a brainstorming session on both fundraising and contingency planning as part of next month's Board meeting and that we plan now to stay longer at that meeting. There was general agreement to this proposal, Mrs. Wallace said it would be done under the auspices of the Long Range Planning committee. Terry Thompson, with the help of Maribeth Southworth, will provide more substantial refreshments because the meeting will run longer. Ms. Thompson suggested we might want to broaden the planning to include our major support groups, such as the Friends, the Garden Club, the AAUW and the service clubs, after we had completed our own brainstorming. Mr. Miller reminded of the possible self-fulfilling nature of letting undecided options become known to the press, an excellent reminder. Mr. McCrossan said he hoped there were no ill feelings from his suggestion, but that he would hate to see the library operating in a "react" mode and that we needed a collective plan on the "what-if" scenarios and templates of things to do.

Ms. Thompson moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, to pay the new bills received from May 1-18, 2010, and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from April 20-30, 2010. Mr. Bursset seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

Committee Reports:

Finance will meet on June 1 at 6:15 pm.

Personnel: met and reached agreement to recommend salary increases within our expected budget. The increases will not be presented to the Board for approval until the June meeting, because the Borough Council will not act on its budget until May 24, so our budget is not firm until after the Council acts. After a confusing and confused discussion of evaluation practices and the policy on staff reviews in June, Ms. Thompson moved to set aside the section of policy dealing with staff reviews in June for a month. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which carried.

Policy and Long Range Planning: have not met.¹

Foundation Research: Mrs. Wallace said that everyone at the table was aware that the library needs to increase its sources of funding. She asked that each Board member give a succinct version of his or her view on going forward with a foundation, and on the proposed consultant.

Mr. Bursset: Not at this time.

Mr. Kellett: There are better uses for the money that would be used to pay a consultant; we should be more proactive in fund-raising.

¹ A Policy Committee meeting is now scheduled for Wednesday, June 2, at 4:45 pm at the library. The Long-Range Planning Committee will meet with the entire Board at next month's Board meeting on June 15.

Mrs. Cummings: Consultant is a good idea, Grounds is not the right person, she worries about doing fundraisers and also about having to ask for money on an individual basis.

Mrs. Orfan: She respects the Friends and doesn't want the Board to go into competition with them. On the other hand, the need for additional funds is increasing.

Mr. McCrossan: he doesn't have enough information, but also does not like asking for funds on a face-to-face basis.

Mr. Miller: is a proponent of a foundation, but senses a lot of uneasiness among the board. The school system has a volunteer base to draw from for fund-raising events, 2200 families produced 100 volunteers for the Chili Cook-off

Ms. Southworth: sees some hybrid possibilities for fund-raising, is also concerned about the "branding" issue (competition with the Friends), doesn't think the community will differentiate. For the 9/11 memorial did special fundraisers, involved children in community through Scouts, etc. She personally does not mind asking for money.

Ms. Thompson. agrees that now is not the time to try to start a Foundation, suggests that Board and Friends look at the Winchester, MA public library website for an example of how Trustees and Friends can both do fundraising for a public library without confusion (winpublib.org)

Mrs. Wallace: will support but not lead fundraising efforts, is not comfortable asking for money.

Although no vote was taken, the sense of the meeting was clearly to drop consideration of a foundation at this time.

Communications: Ms. Brodsky provided a copy of an unusually lovely letter commending the library and its staff from Catherine DaPonte. The Board thanked Ms. DaPonte for her letter.

Old Business: Ms. Brodsky asked about an entry in the Borough Council minutes regarding a grant application for the solar panels. Mr. McCrossan confirmed that even though Congressman Lance had decided not to ask for earmarks, the applications also went to Senators Lautenberg and Menendez.

New Business: Mr. Burset asked that the Board keep the existing meeting schedule except when there was no quorum available. After discussion, he moved that the existing meeting schedule for 2010 be kept to unless a quorum was known to be lacking; the motion was seconded by Ms. Thompson and carried unanimously.

At 6:55 pm Mrs. Wallace moved that the board go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Kellett seconded the motion, which carried. At 7:18 pm, the executive session ended. The board took no further action and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson
Secretary