

**Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting by Zoom  
April 11, 2020**

**Attendance:** Board members John Bertoni, Patrice Cummings, Gretchen Dempsey, Rich Diegnan, Jeff Hammond, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan (joined at 10:15), Skip Orza, and Terry Thompson (joined at 10:10) were present at the meeting. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Nancy Verduin, President of the Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library, Leslie Brown-Witt, President of the Bernardsville Library Foundation, and library staff members Kat Carty, Laura Cole, Madelyn English, Sarah Gillis, Kristin McCarthy, Tammy Shaw and Christina Sobczak were also present.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call.

**Continued Closing of the Library:** Governor Murphy’s executive order regarding the closing of libraries to the public because of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to stand.

**Disposition of Library Personnel in light of State of Emergency and Executive Order Closing Libraries:**

Ms. Arnold presented an overview on updating the virtual library. She said that there had been 32 emails and 42 telephone calls to the library during the past week (April 5-10) and 30 emails and 50 calls between March 30 and April 4. She was not able to give an average time for patron call-in inquiries to be answered. She explained the social media and marketing plan. In response to Dr. Hammond’s questions, she explained that the library is charged a fee for each use of Hoopla and other downloadable options. The number of downloadables budgeted for daily usage is being exhausted on a daily basis, so that some clients are disappointed if they cannot download the books they want. Mr. Orza expressed concern over the financial picture for the library. Dr. Dempsey thanked Ms. Arnold for the survey results showing usage of the various virtual programs.

Mr. Krook suggested that money already in the budget for materials be shifted from hard copies to electronic books. Ms. Thompson mentioned that some of the restricted funds could be used for electronic books in various categories. Mr. Orza raised a question of furloughing employees now, while the library is closed, rather than later when the library is open. Seven of the part-time employees have been furloughed, five at their own requests. Further staffing issues were referred to the Personnel Committee, which will meet between this meeting and the regular board meeting on April 21. Dr. Hammond said that he understood the Borough budget would be reduced, perhaps by deferring capital expenses.

Mr. Krook said that current staffing was running at 74% of the personnel budget, but that other costs, such as cleaning and heating, are going down. Mrs. Orfan asked if participation in virtual services was equaling 74% of normal library use. All electronic service uses have increased over their use when the library is open. Mr. Krook said that library funding could carry through May with its current funds. Dr. Hammond said that the Borough would be sending funding in its normal pattern in May.

Mr. Bertoni moved that the Board support the virtual services plan with funding for two additional weeks, through April 25. Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote. Mrs. Cummings and Mrs. Orfan thanked Ms. Arnold and the staff for what they are doing. The Board agreed to reassess the situation at the regular board meeting to be held on April 21 by Zoom.

**Public Input:** None.

At 10:55 a.m. the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Terry A. Thompson, Secretary

**Minutes of the Regular Library Board of Trustees Meeting by Zoom  
April 21, 2020**

**Attendance:** Board members John Bertoni, Patrice Cummings, Gretchen Dempsey, Rich Diegnan, Jeff Hammond, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza, and Terry Thompson were present at the meeting. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Nancy Verduin, President of the Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library, Leslie Brown-Witt, President of the Bernardsville Library Foundation, John La Duc, and library staff members Kat Carty, Laura Cole, Madelyn English, Jill Hackett, Sarah Gillis, Laurie Pelosi-Fetton, Grace Peralta, Tammy Shaw, Christina Sobczak and Christine Tropp were also present.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of meetings held on March 17, March 22, March 26, March 29 and April 11, 2020 and the minutes of an executive session held on December 17, 2019, were approved as submitted.

**Director’s Report:** Ms. Arnold presented an overview on updating the virtual library; use of story times has been consistent, as have use of downloadable resources (1484 downloads over 13 days in March). She thanked ESL coordinator Amy Jones for having donated her stipend back to the library for continuing the ESL program. She was asked about the possibility of patron voice mails being transferred to staff home phones, and asked Madelyn English to answer. Mrs. English said that the attempts had not been successful so far.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Mr. Krook moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report, to pay the new bills received from April 1-21, 2020 and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from March 16-31, 2020. Patrice Cummings seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**Committee Reports:** Finance, Policy and Long-Range Planning did not meet.

**Personnel:** Ms. Thompson reported that the Personnel Committee met with Executive Director Shura Arnold on Wednesday, April 15 to discuss the use of the virtual library services and programs and staffing levels. We assessed where we are in relation to the patron demand being presented, and recognized that we are overstaffed for the current level of demand. We are recommending that almost all part-time staff be furloughed, beginning on May 1, the exception being our IT professional who needs to continue so that our virtual services can continue. We also recommend, in the interests of fairness, that the full time staff have reduced hours and salaries. We recommend continuing to measure trends, revisiting and reevaluating the situation. We hope that the library will be able to reopen by sometime in July or in August, and that we will be able to be back on a full schedule for everyone by September.

**Public Input:** Mr. Bertoni opened the meeting for public comment on the Personnel Committee recommendation, asking that comments be kept brief and nonrepetitive. Tammy Shaw read a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Madelyn English and Sarah Gillis joined in Mrs. Shaw’s statement. Kimberly Hunt commented that the library’s continuing to be available by telephone was particularly important to seniors, who may need more help borrowing downloadables and who see the library as the face of local government. Shura Arnold thanked the entire staff for their extraordinary work during this time of virtual operation and difficulty.

Mrs. Cummings asked for more information on the budget outlook; both Mr. Krook, as chair of the Finance Committee, and Leslie Brown-Witt, head of the Library Foundation, replied that it was not possible to tell what amount of the budget would be met.

Ms. Thompson moved, for the Personnel Committee, that all but one of the part-time staff be furloughed, that Jim Dronay, our IT professional, have his hours reduced, and that all full-time staff members have reduced

hours and salaries. The motion carried by roll-call vote, trustees Bertoni, Dempsey, Diegnan, Hammond, Krook, Orfan, Orza and Thompson voting yes, member Cummings voting no.

**Unfinished Business:** Ms. Arnold reported that the Red Cross Blood Drive was still a possibility for early May but that the Red Cross is also trying to arrange one in Bedminster, and the roofers' use of the Community Room and foyer for storage will mean that the area would have to be cleaned. She is speaking to Doug Walker about the cost of the cleaning.

**New Business:** Dr. Hammond had asked that we begin to plan for how we will reopen. The Board decided to hold that for the next meeting.

**Public Participation:** Mrs. Verduin reported that the Friends would not be meeting this month, and that the concerts, movies, senior breakfast and volunteer lunch had all been postponed. Ms. Brown-Witt said that the Foundation's April meeting had been cancelled, that it would probably meet by Zoom in May, and that the endowment meeting in April had also been cancelled. She added her hope that all the library staff stays well.

At 6.40 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson, Secretary