

**Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting by Conference Call  
March 15, 2020**

**Attendance:** John Bertoni, Patrice Cummings, Gretchen Dempsey, Rich Diegnan, Jeff Hammond, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza, and Terry Thompson were present on the call. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library and Leslie Brown-Witt, President of the Bernardsville Library Foundation were also present on the call.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Ms. Arnold read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call.

**Substance of the Meeting.** Mr. Bertoni said that this meeting was called to discuss closing the library starting Monday, March 16 through April 6, 2020, and that we would meet again to reassess the Covid-19 situation. Ms. Arnold said that the plan she had sent out to the board contemplated a less-than-complete closure, as the public would be able to request books and other materials by phone or email and pick them up at the Community Room. There was a lengthy discussion of issues arising from this proposed plan, including processing of returned materials that might have become contaminated with the virus and limiting staff exposure to the public picking up materials. There was also a discussion of continuing salary payments to both full-time and part-time employees. There is not a policy covering this issue, just a practice that basically applies to closures because of weather.

Mark Krook moved to close the library until April 6, with only remote electronic services available at least until Monday, March 23, and no drop off of books or materials, and no fines. Skip Orza seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The Board then discussed continuation of salaries. Schedules for part-time employees have been published through the end of March.

Mr. Bertoni moved that all employees be paid through the end of March, with the understanding that there may be on-site work after March 23, and that the Library Director has discretion to ask staff to perform work at home and to allow individual staff members to pick up materials necessary for work at home. Jeff Hammond seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Krook moved to pay the new bills received from March 1 – 15, 2020 and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from February 19 – 29, 2020. Patrice Cummings seconded the motion, which carried by roll call vote with one abstention.

The meetings on Tuesday afternoon, March 17 at 5:30 pm and on Sunday afternoon, March 22 at 4:00 pm will be held by conference call: Dial-in number: 515-604-9099, access code 334 190 400

At 5:02 pm the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry A. Thompson, Secretary

**Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting by Conference Call  
March 22, 2020**

**Attendance:** John Bertoni, Patrice Cummings, Gretchen Dempsey, Rich Diegnan, Jeff Hammond, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza, and Terry Thompson were present on the call. 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, Janet George Murnick, from the American Red Cross, and Laura Cole, Madelyn English, and Tammy Shaw, library staff members, were also present on the call.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call.

**Continued Closing of the Library:** Governor Murphy has ordered all public libraries to close to the public because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Personnel Issues:** There was a discussion of furloughing part-time employees and reducing hours for full-time employees to reflect the work that can be performed at home. Terry Thompson said that the only assistance with salaries that appears to be available at present would be from unemployment compensation. Patrice Cummings said that there was not enough information to make any decisions on personnel matters at present. Mark Krook suggested starting with a schedule of what tasks need to be performed to provide the remote services that are presently available. Mrs. Cummings emphasized that we need to know what the budget impact will be, and what we would be saving if we furloughed part-time employees or cut hours for full-time employees. Dr. Hammond said that the timeline for the Borough budget introduction and discussion had been postponed, and that Borough employees are almost all covered by either union contracts or individual contracts. Ms. Thompson suggested that Ms. Arnold get permission to contact the Borough’s labor counsel for advice on unemployment compensation issues. Unemployment compensation can cover up to 60% of the former salary. We decided to seek more information and have a further meeting on this issue by conference call on Tuesday, March 24, at 4:45 pm.

**American Red Cross request to hold a blood drive in the Community Room:** Janet George Murnick explained that the nationwide blood shortage is serious and that the ARC is seeking locations for additional blood drives. After lengthy discussion of the problems and perils, and also of the medical need for more blood, Mark Krook moved to present a recommendation to the Borough Council that the American Red Cross be allowed to use the Community Room, entry, and lavatories for a blood drive around April 1, for persons who have signed up in advanced and wait in their cars until the technicians are ready for them, provided that an exemption permitting blood drives is granted from the Governor’s Executive Order, that no library personnel are involved except to unlock and lock the doors, that the doors to the rest of the library are kept locked during the blood drive, that additional precautions are taken during the blood drive (taking temperatures, decontaminating equipment) and that the American Red Cross provide and pay for any decontamination of the library that is necessary afterward. Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**New Business:** Mr. Krook cancelled the Finance Committee meeting as the Borough budget is still in flux, and will reschedule after the budget is introduced.

The meeting Sunday afternoon, March 22 at 4:00 pm will be held by conference call: Dial-in number: 515-604-9099, access code 334 190 400

At 5:01 pm the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson, Secretary

**Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting by Conference Call  
March 26, 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 on the call. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Nancy Verduin, President of the Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library, Janet George Murnick, from the American Red Cross, library staff members Kat Carty, Laura Cole, Madelyn English, Sarah Gillis, Annette Manthey, Kristin McCarthy, Alix McKinstry, Laurie Pelosi-Fetten, Grace Peralta, Susan Popper, Laura Shabazz, Tammy Shaw, Christina Sobczak, Christine Tropp and Ryan Weber, and members of the public Felicia Ballard, Pat Kennedy-Grant, Alice Struble and Michael Maziekien (a former president of the N.J.L.A.), were also present on the call.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call. He gave a brief explanation of the agenda and procedure for this meeting.

**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.

**American Red Cross Blood Drive Update:** Janet George Murnick updated the board. There has been no exemption from the Governor’s office for opening closed facilities for blood drives. There was discussion about whether the permission of the local director of emergency management, Kevin Valentine, was all that was necessary, without a clear consensus. Mrs. Murnick is pursuing venues in addition to the library, including the YMCA. Alice Struble mentioned that blood drives were being held at churches in Basking Ridge and were listed on the Red Cross website. Dr. Hammond said that Somerset Medical Center was also collecting blood. The board reiterated that the conditions it had originally set for a blood drive at the library were still in force.

**Disposition of Library Personnel in light of Executive Order and Public Remarks:**

Ms. Arnold presented a plan for offering additional remote services and programs that she had prepared with the assistance of Mmes. Cole, English and Shaw. A copy of the plan is attached to these minutes. Board questions for Ms. Arnold included her basis for belief that the public would respond to the additional remote services, and how she planned to measure demand and success. Mr. Krook discussed the library’s current fund status, noting that we could continue at the present spending rate through April but would need a further temporary allocation from the borough after that. There were questions about Ms. Arnold’s cost estimates, which two board members believed to be at 90% of the monthly cost when the library is open and fully staffed. Ms. Arnold agreed to check those estimates and provide those results to the board within the next couple of days, and also look for information on usage of online materials. Dr. Hammond said the Borough hoped to introduce this year’s budget at the April 13 or April 27 meeting at the latest, with adoption by the May 11 meeting, again at the latest.

**Public Input:** Staff members Kat Carty, Laura Cole, Madelyn English, Sarah Gillis, Annette Manthey, Kristin McCarthy, Laurie Pelosi-Fetten, Grace Peralta, Susan Popper, Laura Shabazz, Tammy Shaw, Christina Sobczak, Christine Tropp and Ryan Weber, and members of the public Felicia Ballard, Pat Kennedy-Grant, Michael Maziekien and Alice Struble offered input. Staff members who spoke all

supported the remote and digital services plan; many emphasized the library's value to the community and the staff's integration and work together. Felicia Ballard and Pat Kennedy-Grant, both former library staff members, offered similar perspectives. Mr. Maziekien, who is the director of the Cranford, NJ Public Library, said that the Bernardsville Library was a model in much of the state, that other libraries look to Bernardsville and that a strong digital presence would not only help the local community but could reach others in the state. Ms. Struble said that as a library patron she thought our library has a five-star staff, and in this time of uncertainty it can provide content to the community.

All board members supported an immediate beginning of the proposed plan, recognizing that there would need to be continued input, adjustment and evaluation.

The next meeting Sunday afternoon, March 29, 2020, at 4:00 pm will be held by conference call:  
Dial-in number: 515-604-9099, access code 334 190 400

At 7:10 pm the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson, Secretary

**Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting by Conference Call  
March 29, 2020**

**Attendance:** Board members John Bertoni, Patrice Cummings, Rich Diegnan, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza, and Terry Thompson were present on the call. Gretchen Dempsey and Jeff Hammond were absent. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Nancy Verduin, President of the Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library, library staff members Kat Carty, Laura Cole, Madelyn English, Sarah Gillis, Kimberley Hunt, Grace Peralta, Tammy Shaw, Christina Sobczak, and Christine Tropp, and several unidentified persons were also present on the call.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice, followed by the roll call. He gave a brief explanation of the agenda and procedure for this meeting.

**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.

**American Red Cross Blood Drive Update:** None.

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

Ms. Arnold presented a brief overview of the plan circulated earlier in the week, with assurances that there would be a robust method for public input and metrics on usage levels of new and existing remote offerings. After discussion, the board agreed that a weekly update on usage levels would be sufficient. Board members expressed concerns that use of remote and virtual services would be important to the Borough and to taxpayers. Board members also made suggestions for making the public aware of virtual services, including using the school district’s Friday Folder, reaching out to the Bernardsville Bubble for more space (Mr. Orza agreed to contact the editor), putting links to the library on the school district and borough web sites, and using the social media and other lists that the Friends and Foundation may have.

Mr. Krook moved that the Board support the virtual services plan with funding through April 15. Ms. Thompson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The Board agreed to reassess the situation every two weeks. Mr. Bertoni asked about rollout plans, and Ms. Arnold explained what she hoped to accomplish in the coming week, including a marketing blitz beginning on Monday.

Mr. Bertoni suggested that part-time staff members should be asked if they wanted to accept furloughs. Ms. Arnold agreed to do so.

The Board set the next meeting, by conference call or Zoom, for Saturday, April 11 at 10 am. Mrs. Cummings and Ms. Thompson will work to familiarize Board members with using Zoom.

**Public Input:** None.

At 4:49 pm the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry A. Thompson, Secretary