Minutes of the Bernardsville Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting by Zoom
January 19, 2021

Attendance: Board members John Bertoni, Gretchen Dempsey, Rich Diegnan, Mark Krook, Lucy Orfan, Skip Orza, Terry Thompson, Christine Zamarra and Amy DeMilt were present at the meeting. Alexandria Arnold, Executive Director, Bernardsville Public Library, Leslie Brown-Witt, President Bernardsville Library Foundation and library staff members Laura Cole, Jill Hackett, Christine Tropp and Tammy Shaw were also present.

President John Bertoni called the Board of Trustees (“Board”) meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. and read the Open Meeting Notice as follows:

- In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-8 et seq.) 1975), written notice of this regular meeting has been sent to the following newspapers: The Bernardsville News, the Courier News and the Star Ledger. Written notice has also been sent to the Borough clerk, posted on the Library web site, and posted on the principal entrance to the door of the Library. The meeting will be conducted by Zoom, and the public has been invited to participate, and told how to participate via Zoom or telephone, in the notices in the Library web site and the principal entrance door.
- The agenda and documents to be discussed at this meeting are available for review on the Library’s web site, bernardsvillelibrary.org/home/boardmeetings/January 19
- They are also at the Library’s circulation desk on Monday, January 18 and Tuesday January 19, during regular library hours (10 a.m. – 5 p.m.)
- Members of the public are invited to comment either during the public comment period of the meetings or by submitting written or emailed comments in advance of the meeting. All commenters should identify themselves by name and address.

The notice was followed by roll call.

Administrative Actions:
Mr. Orza presented the slate of Officers for 2021 Board: John Bertoni, President; Skip Orza, Vice President; Mark Krook, Treasurer; Amy DeMilt, Recording Secretary. Nominations approved by the Board unanimously.

Oath of Office to new members Amy DeMilt and Christine Zamara, and reappointed Board member Terry Thompson.

Committee appointments for 2021 will be done over the next several weeks.

Approval of Minutes: One non-substantive amendment, and the date was also corrected to accurately reflect 12/15/2020. The minutes of the December 2020 meeting were approved unanimously as amended.

Director’s Report: In addition to the items mentioned in her report, Ms. Arnold presented highlights from and additions to her report, as follows:
The focus has been the transition to MAIN which occurred on 1/11/2021 when the library was notified all databases were up. Unexpected consequence of the MAIN transition is the sudden increase in workload in borrowing external and internally, roughly based: 2/3s of the requests are incoming, 1/3 of requests are outgoing to other libraries. Other similarly situated libraries have had the same experience in MAIN transition.

Tammy Shaw has worked on reformatting the library newsletter moving to newer form with color. She has been working with Nancy Verduin on an update to be issued quarterly rather than monthly due to increased costs associated with the new format. Ms. Arnold acknowledged Tammy Shaw’s efforts on this update. Tammy has also been working on the Q1 program for children and adults; the cooking class presented in conjunction with Shop Rite will be phased out at least temporarily due to sourcing constraints associated with the COVID vaccine.

The biannual report from the history room has been updated.

In response to inquiries from Mr. Orza and Mr. Diegnan with respect to the Library Journal Star Library ratings Ms. Arnold added some clarity. The library may still be considered for Library Journal Star rating this year. The library was star ineligible 2020 and will be reconsidered for 2021 year. It remains unclear what the reason(s) to be deemed not to be considered, one single criterion could throw it off. As an aside, and another point of clarification, the 2020 ineligibility was based on 2019 criteria. Some libraries are star ineligible despite have been awarded in past. There may have been a change in formula in the determination, the Library Journal does not comment with respect to such decisions.

Treasurer’s Report: Mr. Krook noted that the library was down in income with exception of non-resident cards, all expenses down. There was a noticeable underspend on electricity, unclear if this was associated with COVID or preheat. There was a net increase of $130,000 underspend, how this may impact future finance budgets discussed below in Finance.

Question from Mr. Diegnan on recent bequest little known, except the identity of the person.

Mr. Orza inquired as to the impact of the $413,000 in the reserve balance and the relationship between this and total budget. Mr. Krook indicated that once the reserve balance gets above 20-25% of the budget that could impact funding.

Mr. Krook moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report, to pay the new bills received from 01/04/2021 to 01/19/2021 and to ratify the payment of bills received and paid from 12/17/2020 to 12/31/2021; Ms. Thompson seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance: No meeting.

Mr. Krook indicated the draft 2021 budget was submitted to the Borough by Ms. Arnold and Mr. Krook. There was informal discussion with respect to the underspend and whether to handle it over one year or several, with an indication that Borough would prefer to manage over a couple
of years. The end of year actuals for 2018 and 2019 were also shared with the Borough. Will await further determination from the Borough with respect to the proposed budget.

**Personnel:** Ms. Thompson indicated a personnel discussion will be held in Executive Session.

**Policy:** No meeting.

**Long Range Planning:** No updates.

---

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

**Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library:** Nancy Verduin, for the Friends, reported two new board members Jay and Lennie Ambelang and one resignation. Updates will be made on library web site with respect to recent Board changes. Overall, 2020 ended up financially well; the Capital Campaign raised $28,000; 177 donors of which 27 identified as new donors. With respect to 2021 events, there are no plans at this point, perhaps an outdoor concert in May. Looking at opportunities to provide goodies to library staff in lieu of a more formal staff appreciation event.

**Foundation:** Leslie Brown-Witt, for the Foundation, reported the end of year budget was forwarded to Mr. Krook.

Significant items to report on behalf of the Foundation:

- Total public revenue was $51,600, budgeted for 2020 was $61,000. The Nonevent in did well given the pandemic restricted environment.
- General budget planned was a deficit of $3,750, however with decreased expenses net income was $21,978.
- Endowment, with outstanding estate pledge. approximately $533,000.

Foundation Nominating Committee with the following Officer approvals: President, Leslie Brown-Witt; Vice Chair, Judy Quigley; Secretary, Tom Stiff; and Treasurer, Jennifer Van Beveren. In addition, there were two resignations from the Foundation, and approval of a new member Patrice Cummings. The Foundation will be focusing in part on a new member campaign in 2021.

**Communications:** Nothing of significance per Ms. Arnold.

**Unfinished Business:** None.

**New Business:**

- Resolution to reappoint:
  - Library Director Alexandria Arnold as the purchasing agent and contracting officer for the Bernardsville Public Library for 2021.
- Nisivoccia LLC as auditor of the records of the Bernardsville Public Library for 2021; and
- Peapack-Gladstone Bank will be the bank for the Bernardsville Public Library for 2021.

Motion by Mr. Bertoni, seconded, which carried by unanimous roll call vote.

- Trustee coverage for Friends meeting 2021 (Skip Orza with Rich Diegnan back up) and Foundation meetings 2021 (Terry Thompson)

At 6:14 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy DeMilt, Secretary