

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CRESSKILL PUBLIC LIBRARY

MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022

The meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by President Beryl Skog on January 18, 2022. Due to an increase in Covid-19 cases, the meeting was held via Zoom teleconference.

THOSE ATTENDING

Mrs. Beryl Skog, Mrs. Elizabeth Cleary, Mr. Andrew Bolson, Mr. John Orfini, Mrs. Kathy Savas and Mrs. Laura Chumas attended.

Mrs. Julie Kim (1), Mrs. Bobbi Bauer (1) and Mrs. Norma Shalhoub, Library bookkeeper, were absent.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of November 15, 2021, prepared by Mrs. Bauer in the Recording Secretary's absence, were reviewed. A motion was made by Mrs. Cleary and seconded by Mr. Orfini to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the meeting of December 20, 2021 were reviewed. A motion was made by Mrs. Cleary and seconded by Mrs. Savas to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion was unanimously approved. In the Closed Session the Board discussed increasing the beginning salary for part-time staff. A motion was made by Mrs. Cleary and seconded by Mr. Orfini to increase the minimum wage for part-time staff to the amount approved in the Closed Session effective immediately. The motion was unanimously approved.

BUDGET FOR 2022

The Board reviewed the budget for 2022 prepared by Mrs. Chumas and Mrs. Shalhoub. The Library will receive \$802,737 from the Borough, which is \$42,936 more than last year. Mrs. Chumas indicated that this amount varies every year since it is based on the property tax base from the town, and the Library gets a third of a mill of this amount. Mrs. Savas said that the money that goes to the Library is mandated by the State, and because property values increased the Library got extra money from the town this year. Mrs. Chumas added that the tax bill has a line item showing how much money is going to the Library. State Aid of \$4,000 is \$705 less than the actual amount received last year.

The category of Other includes money from copies, fines, lost items, donations and cards for Alpine residents.

A motion was made by Mrs. Cleary and seconded by Mr. Orfini to accept the budget for 2022 as submitted by Mrs. Chumas and Mrs. Shalhoub. The motion was unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mrs. Chumas presented the Treasurer's Report in Mrs. Shalhoub's absence. The Board reviewed the Treasurer's Report for the month of January and the Expense Spreadsheet for December. The 25 bills for January totaling \$38,198.32 were reviewed.

A motion was made by Mr. Orfini and seconded by Mrs. Cleary to file the January Treasurer's Report for audit, pay the bills on the bill list, and sign in blank three payroll checks, no. 2490, 2491 and 2492, for the periods ending January 25 and February 8 and 22, 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Bolton Trust

On December 29 Mrs. Chumas, Mr. Bolson and Mrs. Cleary attended a Zoom meeting with Mr. Eric Goldman and Ms. Debbie Gasman regarding a partial distribution from the Bolton Trust in the amount of \$94,500. The money has been deposited in the Building Money Market account. Mr. Goldman and Ms. Gasman expressed interest in the Library having some sort of memorial plaque dedicated to the Boltons in the Library or the garden, and they are looking into securing a piece of Phyllis Bolton's art for the Library. They said that some more money was coming, but they did not specify how much. Mr. Bolson feels the balance will probably be around \$30,000, but we will probably not hear from the Trust for another 12 months. The Board thought part of the Children's Room could be dedicated to them, and Mr. Bolson suggested an art wall dedicated to local artists called the Bolton Gallery.

Construction Grant Submission Update

Mrs. Chumas and Mrs. Skog had a conference call with Mr. Bob Gabalski, Project Director at Lothrop. He was told that we want to proceed with the renovation without the addition and to be more in line with the sketch Mrs. Chumas had submitted to them. In addition, he was told that a fixed fee contract would be required. Lothrop sent an amended contract with the fixed fee of \$137,370. Mrs. Chumas has sent it to the Library's attorney, Mr. Eric Steinberg, for review. She would like to do the renovation in stages so the Library does not need to shut down. The HVAC system and restrooms, which are not heated, should be done first. Mrs. Savas noted that electrical outlets should be included at every table. Mrs. Chumas would like to meet with Ms. Francesca Maragliano, Borough Clerk, to discuss how to go about securing bids to make sure we follow the proper steps.

Friends of the Library

Mrs. Skog indicated that the Constitution for the Friends of the Library was reviewed, and elections should be held in May. Hercules Invictus has indicated that he is not interested in being president again, and although Mrs. Skog feels he has been wonderful agreed that it is time for a change. The Friends will be purchasing two new museum passes: Museum of Natural History and Storm King Art Center. There is also a monthly raffle basket.

Community Survey

Mrs. Chumas reported that there were a lot of good responses to the Community Survey. She and Ms. Gina Scalise compiled the information from the survey and found that most people connect with the Library through the website, the most important library services are borrowing materials, museum passes and digital collection while the least important service is assistance with computers and patrons want more programs for K-5 and are not interested in programs for the college age group. In addition to Thursdays at 7 pm patrons would like to see more adult programs during the school hours, other evenings and Saturdays. Mrs. Chumas is looking into incorporating new programs and services that reflect patron interests.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Chumas presented her Library Director's Report for the month of January to the Board. Some of the issues in her report were previously discussed during the meeting.

Library Attendance

Monthly visits and daily average were up a bit in December. The Library hours are back to the pre-pandemic schedule. Twenty-two libraries in BCCLS have changed their service to the public due to staff shortages, Covid exposure or the rise in Covid cases. Mrs. Chumas was pleased that we have been able to stay open.

Personnel

Mrs. Chumas reported that Devon Allan and Matt Weinberg have started and they are quick learners. Employee Evaluations were completed, reviewed by the Personnel Committee and salary increases were implemented.

Children and Adult Programs

Ms. Rebecca Morel prepared the Youth Services Report this month. Seven children attended in person the Baby and Me and Toddler Story Time the week before Christmas. However, due to the rise in Covid cases the Toddler Story Time was moved to virtual only and the Baby and Me was cancelled until February. Many patrons would like to see these programs in person again. The Board Game Club has 4 participants on average, and the Craft Programs remain very popular. Four students from Bergen County Academies hosted the first Intro to Entrepreneurship Class, which will be held twice a month. Three students attended the virtual session and are eager to continue.

There was a bit of a lull in the adult programs because of the pandemic and the holidays. Two in-person attendees and ten on Zoom watched a Holiday Concert performed by three High School students. Mrs. Chumas hopes to implement a full schedule beginning in February.

The ESL program with Literacy Volunteers of Pascack Valley started January 3 with ten participants and two waiting to be matched with a tutor.

Additional Hours

Mrs. Chumas spoke to the directors of the Demarest and Tenafly libraries regarding how they pay their employees for Sunday hours. Both libraries are open four hours on Sundays from September to June, and Sunday pay is time and a half. Tenafly uses hires just for Sunday, but Mayor Romeo told Mrs. Skog that the Borough Payroll and Finance is totally capable of paying the regular staff a different Sunday pay rate. Mrs. Chumas would want to start Sunday hours after Labor Day at a time and a half, and there would be no need to worry about coverage for a lunch break. At \$22.50 per hour it would cost about \$7,200 per year.

The additional hour on Saturdays gives the Library 51 hours a week. Mrs. Chumas asked the Board if we should stay open later on Tuesday, and if so she would rather stay open until 8:00 PM than just one more hour until 6:00 PM. Mrs. Cleary thought more students might like to come in on a Sunday since they might have a lot of sports on Saturday and would have more time on Sunday. Both she and Mr. Orfini agreed that they would rather extend hours on Sunday than Tuesday.

Mrs. Cleary suggested that Mrs. Chumas look into the feasibility of opening the Library on Sundays between 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM and check staff availability to manage it. Mrs. Savas felt we should definitely wait until after Labor Day to begin opening on Sundays.

NEW BUSINESS

Patron Complaint

Mrs. Chumas advised the Board that a patron had complained to her and the staff because he was upset over the number of World War II books that the Library had in its collection were being pulled from the shelves and discarded. He stressed that this part of history is important and felt we were giving priority to Korean publications. Mrs. Savas said that the Library has to represent the needs of the entire community. Mrs. Chumas told the patron how she evaluated materials. When she started at the Library every shelf was stuffed with books and she has methodically evaluated every book. If a book is not in the core collection, has not circulated in over two years and is not in good condition it is discarded. Any book a patron wants can be ordered through BCCLS and delivered in a few days.

Teacher Gratitude

Mr. Orfini informed the Board that one of the High School teachers had paid the Library a very big complement. The Library was able to get 76 new paperback books that we own for her class, and Mr. Orfini thanked Mrs. Chumas and Ms. Morel for doing that.

The Board went into closed session to discuss the patron complaint in further detail.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, one day later due to the President's Day holiday.

The motion was made by Mr. Orfini and seconded by Mrs. Cleary to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara F. Schuierer
Recording Secretary