MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

December 18, 2023

The Board of Trustees of the Millburn Free Public Library held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, December 18, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. Present were: Mrs. Binder, who presided, Mrs. Kelly, Ms. Sherman, Ms. Chenfosky Singer, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Banick. Mrs. Eisner and Ms. Bredlau were absent.

Mrs. Binder opened the meeting and read the Sunshine Law Announcement.

MINUTES:

Mrs. Binder asked the Board to review the minutes.

Mrs. Binder asked for a motion to accept the minutes of November 20th, 2023, as submitted. Ms. Chenofsky Singer so moved. Ms. Sherman seconded. All were in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mrs. Einser and Mr. Banick compared vouchers to proposed expenditures prior to the meeting.

Vouchers #6560 – 6613 and payrolls as directed by the Township amounting to $217,021.40 and charged to the Library's appropriation were approved for payment or ratified for payment.

Mrs. Binder asked for a motion to accept the Bill Lists for December be approved. Mrs. Kelly made a motion to approved the Bill Lists as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sherman. All were in favor.

The Bill Lists were approved as presented.

Mr. Cohen asked why on the Budget vs. Actual report are the actual figures less than what was budgeted. Expenses in 2023 are only at 47%. Mr. Banick said that the figures will go up some with the Accounts Payable Bill List in January 2024. The library also received a large bequest in 2023 and the capital reserves were only minimally used. If these are factored out, the expenses come in at over 90% of the budget.

The Board asked who is the vendor Playaways. This vendor supplies audiobooks.

The Board asked why is Mr. Abbot Gorin on the Bill List. Mr. Gorin is giving a program in January 2024.

The Board asked who is the vendor Cavendish Square Publishing. They provide reference and nonfiction series.

The Board asked who is the vendor Coughlin Company. They are a book vendor.

The Board asked who is the vendor One River Millburn. They are an art and design school located in Millburn New Jersey.

The Board asked who is the vendor Child's World. They are a children's book vendor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mrs. Binder asked if there were any Public Comments. Mrs. Kelly reported for the Friends.

The Millburn Friends Membership Drive for 2024 is ongoing. Memberships are on target.

The 42nd Annual Student Chess Tournament was held on Saturday December 2nd. It was a great success.

The Friends Fireside Book Club met on Monday December 4th. The book was "Horse: A Novel" by Geraldine Brooks. Librarian Elizabeth Miller Boose was the moderator. The next Book Club will meet on Monday January 8th. The book will be "Tomorrow, Tomorrow, and Tomorrow: A Novel" by Gabrielle Zevin. Librarian Sarah Pardi will moderate. Mrs. Kelly thanked all of the Millburn staff for their help in facilitating the discussions in 2023.

Holiday plantings were done on December 11th. Mrs. Kelly thanked everyone who helped. She added that "the garden looks beautiful."

The Friends will sponsor the Winter Reading Challenge prizes and gift baskets.

The Friends are sponsoring Flower Bouquet Cupcake Decorating with Sweet Samantha on Wednesday January 24th. This is an adult only program.

The Friends extended Holiday wishes to the entire staff by gifting everyone Merchant Membership Cards for 2024.

The Board said that was a very nice gesture.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Friends Newsletter is available online. It is. Mrs. Kelly will update the mailing list to include Mr. Cohen.

Mrs. Binder thanked Mrs. Kelly for her report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Banick reported on Buildings & Grounds. The elevator project research is on-going. There will be more to report in January 2024.

The second-floor renovation will be discussed in Committee Reports. The architect submitted preliminary plans to review.

Mr. Banick reported on Personnel. The Library hired Part-Time Librarian Rachel Wood to work every other Sunday. Ms. Wood's first day will be Sunday January 14th. Ads have been placed for the two Part-Time Librarian positions. Three applications were received. None were qualified. Mr. Banick will wait to see if any more people apply.

The Board asked if Mr. Banick sent the ads to University Alumni. He did not. They were placed with NJLA, BCCLS, and on the Millburn Library website. The Board asked that Mr. Banick reach out to the Deans of local universities that have the Masters of Library Science program. Mr. Banick will do this. Ms. Chenofsky Signer asked Mr. Banick to send her the ad. She will post it on the local work moms' website. Mr. Banick will forward her the information. In closing the Board said that if none of these measures produce a qualified applicant then they will revisit the positions.

Mr. Cohen asked if the salaries are fixed. They are. They are entry level per the union contract. Mr. Cohen asked if the positions are Civil Service. They are. Millburn is a Civil Service Township. Only Union membership is optional.

The Board feels that the hours may be part of the problem. Twenty-seven hours per week is a lot for part time employment. The Board discussed combining the two part-time positions into one full time. The staff member would work between the children's and the adult service desk. It would change the benefit structure, but it may help to fill the positions. In closing the Board will wait to see if any more applications are received. They will revisit this at the January 2024 Board Meeting.

Mr. Banick informed the Board that he will be on vacation from Tuesday January 2nd through Monday January 15th. He will be back in the office on Tuesday January 16th.

Mr. Banick informed the Board that he reviewed staffs time and attendance for 2023. Staff who were in violation of the Library's policy were spoken too.

Mr. Banick reported on Finance. The Library is where it should be at year end 2023. The Fund Balance is high going into 2024. A portion of these funds will be used to finance the second-floor renovation scheduled for 2024.

Mr. Banick reported on Statistics. The Library continues to do well at year end. Over 20,000 participants attended programs in 2023. This area of library service continues to grow with each year.

Mr. Banick reported that staff CPR training will be held during the 3rd week of January.

Mr. Banick reported that The South Orange Public Library is now in BCCLS.

Mr. Banick reported on the Orange Public Library. He stated that the last Director resigned in disgust. Mr. Banick stated that they do not play by the rules. Some examples are:

- No-show jobs
- Illegal Board Meetings
- Staff members not enrolled in the State of NJ Pension System (PERS/DCRP)
- No minutes kept for Board Meetings
- No Director or Professional Librarians on the staff

Mr. Banick stated that the Essex County Library Directors would like to meet with the New Jersey State Librarian. They understand that they cannot force any changes to take place, but perhaps State Aid could be withheld. The Orange Public Library needs new management.

The Board stated that they understand how frustrating this can be, but that Orange is a sovereign Township and that they do not see how other towns can intervene.

Mr. Banick said that he was just updating the Board regarding concerns of the other directors and that they have sent letters of support to the Orange Library staff. Mr. Banick conceded that outside of that there is not much that can be done.

Mrs. Binder thanked Mr. Banick for his report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mrs. Binder said that the Nominating Committee needs to be activated for 2024. The Committee will be:

- Mrs. Kelly
- Ms. Sherman
- Mrs. Binder

They will meet and prepare the Slate of Officers for the January 22nd 2024 Board Meeting.

The Building Committee reported on the architect's preliminary drawings. The Committee feels that are off to a good start. They are:

- 2nd Floor Mezzanine

- Pink areas / gut job
- Yellow areas / major renovation / facelift to include floors, walls, ceilings and lighting
- Restrooms / can maintain ADA access and compliance with making entrances off the main hallway
- Move janitors' closet
- Repurpose maintenance and storage areas - partition off these areas to create a larger meeting space - trade-off being moving supplies and staff to Room B
- Level the Projection Room for better use of the space

The Board discussed moving maintenance and storage to Room B. They felt that the square footage is about the same. If Room A were to become larger there are downsides to partitioning the space for dual use. Noise being the biggest one. They also felt that the Library is looking at having more special needs and sensory friendly programming. Room B is a better space for this. It is removed from Room A which provides for the quiet space that would be needed for such programming.

The Board then went over the 2nd floor layout. These areas of interest included:

- Kitchen and staff area
- Storage areas
- Staff offices
- Quiet Rooms
- HVAC / roof access
- Computer Room / Electrical Room

The Board then discussed Room A and its use. They would like to have the technology updated to ensure that a good communications system is installed. They feel that the Library is a big public meeting space that serves the community. The current technology can be spotty at times.

The Board discussed installing windows in Room A. This can very easily be done. Motorized shades would be built into the windows. The Board was shown two options for windows. An upside to the window installation is that the outside of the building can be refreshed at the same time.

The Board then discussed the stage in Room A. The stage could be leveled to use the space differently. The Board however likes the stage. It provides a nice space for piano and dance recitals that take place at the Library.

In closing their discussion tonight, the Board feels that the architect, Don Fiore, did a good job in addressing all of their inquires thus far. The Board would like to do a walk-through in 2024. Mrs. Binder asked that the Board look at the plans again. The Library has the funds to do a nice renovation. The Board will discuss the plans in more depth in 2024.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board went into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. Ms. Chenofsky Signer needed to leave and did not participate in the Executive Session.

The Board came back into Regular Session at 9:10 p.m.

Mrs. Binder reported that the Board approved salary increases at 4% beginning January 1, 2024 for the following staff members:

- Michael Banick
- Patricia Giambattista
- Sarah Pardi

The Board stated that they are very pleased with the performances of these three staff members.

Mr. Banick thanked the Board for all three staff members and said that they all appreciate their continued support.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Binder asked for a motion to accept the Holiday Schedule and Board Meeting Schedule for 2024. Mrs. Kelly "so moved." Mr. Cohen seconded. All were in favor.

The Board discussed having the Township move the large traffic sign in the parking lot. They appreciate the no stopping or standing message but feel that it is taking up too many parking spaces. Mr. Cohen will see what he can do about having it moved to a different location in the lot or possibly having a smaller sign brought over to the lot.

Mrs. Binder asked if there was any further business before the Board before adjournment.

Seeing none, Mrs. Binder requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sherman "so moved." Mrs. Kelly seconded. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Giambattista