

Hillsdale Free Public Library

Board of Trustees

April 27, 2020

In attendance were: Mary DeChiara, Elizabeth DiLorenzo, Warren Harris, Al Metz, Joanne Miano, John Ruocco, Mayor, Carol Schepker, Kathleen Scordato, Barbara Wertheim

Also present: David Franz, Director of the Library, Abby Lundy, Liaison to Council

Excused: Marie Hanlon

Mr. Harris called to order a meeting of the Trustees of the Free Public Library of Hillsdale, Bergen County, New Jersey. Notice of this meeting was transmitted to the newspaper of record, filed with the Borough Clerk, and posted on the Library's website and bulletin board, in accordance with the Open Public Meeting's Law.

The virtual meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM. A motion to approve the March 9, 2020 meeting minutes was made by Ms. Wertheim, seconded by Ms. DiLorenzo, unanimous vote of approval with an abstention by Mayor John Ruocco. A motion to approve the March 25, 2020 special virtual meeting minutes was made by Ms. Scordato, seconded by Ms. Schepker. Unanimous vote of approval.

Public invited to speak: No one was present.

President's Report: Mr. Harris: He extended heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Franz and the Library staff; they are on the front line, and their health and welfare is our primary concern. He also extended the same concerns for the health and wellness of the Library Board of Trustees. He profusely thanked Mr. Franz and the Library staff on behalf of the Board as we get through this COVID-19 pandemic together. The staff continues to provide excellent service while working remotely. Mr. Franz has continued to give staff assignments as well as anticipating what will need to happen when the library reopens. There is no anticipated date for re-opening, and it is assumed that the Library will be operating in a different format when it does, such as Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), and possibly plexiglass. When New Jersey Governor Murphy decides to begin re-opening the State, businesses and government entities will have to plan ahead.

The COVID-19 Committee met on 4/13/20 and 4/22/20 and discussed the modified budget as well as staff working at home. Staff cannot work at the library, except for Mr. Franz, doing administrative work, occasional book drop unloading and quarantining items. The committee was not able to make any recommendations currently regarding furloughs of staff. Mr. Harris listened this afternoon to the NJ Library's Association webinar, with Mr. Cerone; most libraries are continuing to pay their employees while Libraries are closed. Mr. Harris listened to the 4/14/20 Hillsdale Borough Council meeting. The modified budget was not approved then, but a temporary one was approved on 4/17/20. The modified budget will be revisited on 5/12/20 during a Hillsdale Borough Council meeting. Mr. Franz submitted a budget based on the modified Borough budget; it contains the shortfall of \$13,000 as previously discussed. That will have to be held until after the Borough Council meets on May 12th. There was some savings from the flood insurance, (the Library is no longer

considered to be in the flood zone), but that savings was simply deducted from the Library's overall budget.

Mr. Harris suggested that we postpone the Board of Trustees regularly scheduled meeting on May 11, 2020 to May 18, 2020, to allow for discussion following the Council's meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Metz: The Library is fiscally sound. Our net income is down slightly by approximately \$300. We did receive the first quarter support from the Borough. There was a reduction of fines, WL memberships decreased, and income reduced from normal Library operations, i.e. photocopier etc. There was a repair expense (replacement to elements in the pumps of the heating system), but overall, expenses are down.

COVID-19 Committee: No further comments.

Director's Report: Mr. Franz: New Jersey's 250+ public libraries are affected by the closures and are working in consort in dealing with the pandemic. The Hillsdale Library is guided by the law and by available funding. Next year's budget may be more difficult, so we need to move ahead cautiously. It is hoped that we will be able to open soon but must be guided by the new NJ Task Force and Governor Murphy. BCCLs is forming a task force to look at opening implications to keep staff and the public safe, taking guidance from the CDC, OSHA, and other applicable agencies. Health and safety are our #1 concern; the Library must be very clean, and the public must have that perception. There may be future concerns that the Board will have to consider with The Foundation and programming. The Library's aim will be to provide minimal close contact, several days of quarantining of returned materials in a separate location, perhaps curbside pick-ups, PPEs for staff, among a number of considerations. Mr. Franz is keeping the staff engaged and thinking about planning for a possible summer reading program.

2020 Budget: Mr. Franz stated that the modified Library budget reflected a reduction in materials collections, and we only have two more payments for the LED lighting, so that is a utility savings. Additionally, one staff member resigned.

Mayor Ruocco expects that the Borough modified budget will be passed in May. The Mayor met with several individuals and he asked the Hillsdale Borough Administrator to examine the budget and freeze items considered to be discretionary. One item is the 'cash support' to the Library; it will be frozen until later in the year to align projected revenues with actual expenditures. There is not a lot of wiggle room. The Library would have to operate on a tight rein, not allowing us the full appropriation. The first quarter check has already been given to the Library. With the remaining three quarters, what would the budgetary planning look like. Mr. Harris said, in examining the modified budget, \$38,000 has already been given to the Library, \$101,000 could be held back. Mr. Harris stated that some bills have to be paid, such as utilities. The Borough support is applied to utilities, membership fees for BCCLS, and collection development. When faced with a budget reduction, the two major cuts would come from collection development or service hours. Mr. Metz asked if the remaining amount of income, the \$10,477 remaining from the 1/3 mil, would be enough to maintain the building safely. Mr. Franz stated no, more than that amount would be required to keep the facility functioning, even if it remained physically closed. Mayor Ruocco stated

that the Hillsdale Borough Administrator would be open to discussing what is discretionary income vs. what is absolutely needed to keep the building running safely. Ms. Wertheim stated that there could be a leak with the AC or heating, so there needs to be a fund to maintain that. Mayor Ruocco agreed and stated that he felt that the Borough Administrator would not want to see that occur; Mr. Franz said that we spent \$7,000 - \$9,000 on repairs for 2019.

Mr. Franz said if we were reduced to the 1/3 mil. only, it would be a \$93,000 difference. That would be without any changes to our operating structure. We would have to eliminate collection development or restructure staffing. Mr. Metz said \$620,000 = 1/3 mil. Mr. Franz is examining the overall budget and the remaining cash support. Ms. Lundy said that you have to examine the whole budget, less the 1/3 mil. \$93,000. A lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Franz will focus on the 1/3 mil first. Mayor Ruocco suggested holding back on payments that don't have to be made and draw up a contingency plan. Mr. Harris asked when the next borough check is due; the CFO paid \$38,000 in April and the next payment would come in three months. Mr. Harris asked if the Library's budget shortfall will be discussed at the borough meeting on May 12th. Mr. Harris asked if there would be transparency as to other departments; would we be allowed to know what other departments were asked to 'freeze'? The Borough Administrator was given discretion as to what appropriations to freeze. The Library is a 'living' entity and can make changes to the budget. Mr. Harris suggested that Mr. Franz needs to discuss this budget with the BA. It is \$139,000 and we are only guaranteed the \$38,000 that we received. Mr. Franz reiterated that budget cuts would come out of the collection development or staff restructuring; Mayor Ruocco reiterated the need to cautiously plan ahead. Mr. Harris said that those proposed budget constraints would change the dynamics of the Library. The Mayor asked if the Library could borrow monies on its own; no, it cannot. Mayor Ruocco suggested asking if the borough could borrow monies on the Library's behalf to gain liquidity. The Mayor asked the BA to be judicious in any spending. Mr. Franz said that the Library can only operate so far; moving forward with a vague short and long term budget is difficult with the two major factors in play, staffing and collection development. The Mayor doesn't know what the final budget will be. Mr. Harris suggested that he and Mr. Franz should meet with the Borough Administrator to fully discuss this. Other neighboring libraries are facing similar situations; this is an exceedingly difficult dilemma.

The Foundation: Mr. Harris and Mr. Franz: No comment.

The Friends: No one was present.

New Business:

- A motion was made by Ms. Schepker to postpone the next regular Library Board meeting from May 11, 2020 to May 18, 2020, seconded by Mr. Metz. Unanimous vote of approval.

- The COVID-19 committee agreed to meet on Thursday, May 6, 2020.

- Mr. Franz recommended viewing a webinar for Trustees on May 6th.

- Mr. Harris asked everyone to please remain safe.

The next Library Board meeting will be on May 18, 2020. Ms. Wertheim moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Miano. The meeting officially adjourned at 8:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Danaher
Recording Secretary