

Hillsdale Free Public Library

Board of Trustees

October 19, 2020

In attendance were: Judith Atchison, Mary DeChiara, Elizabeth DiLorenzo, Warren Harris, Al Metz, Carol Schepker, Kathleen Scordato, Barbara Wertheim

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

Excused:

Mr. Harris called to order a virtual 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. Virtual meeting directions are appended below.

The virtual meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM. A motion to approve the September 14, 2020 minutes was made by Mr. Harris, seconded by Ms. DeChiara. With two abstentions, the meeting minutes were approved.

Public invited to speak: No member of the public was present.

President's Report: Mr. Harris: He recognized two valued former Trustees of the Library Board, Marie Hanlon and Joanne Miano. Mr. Franz designed Certificates of Recognition.

- **Joanne Miano** served for eight years as a Trustee on the Board, volunteering on numerous committees. She held several roles and served as a Founding Member of The Foundation. She has always been supportive of the Library and I hope that she continues to do so. Mr. Metz added that she provided a seamless transfer to him for the context as the Library Board Treasurer; he was very grateful for that and wanted it publicly acknowledged.
- **Marie Hanlon** has been a Trustee on the Library Board for eight years, including being the Board President. She has been a Friend of the Library, was very involved during the Library's renovation and has been a strong advocate for the town seniors use of the Library, monthly seniors movies, among others. She has always been supportive of the Library.
- Mr. Harris read both certificates of recognition and sincerely thanked them both.
- Ms. Lundy asked for a copy of the certificates and she will read them at the next town council meeting.
- Mr. Harris welcomed Judy Atchison as the new alternate for Mayor Ruocco. Her father was a former Trustee on the Library Board and we look forward to her carrying on the legacy of her father.

Mr. Harris spoke about the upcoming budget. The mandatory 1/3 mil level is short \$92,000 from the level of funding approved in the 2020 Municipal Budget; we had initially requested

even more funding. The new budget is being planned to align with the goals and functions of the Library. Some part-time salaries are increasing due to the state increase in minimum wage.

Ms. Miano was both a Foundation representative as well as a Library Trustee. Mr. Harris is seeking a new liaison to the Foundation to replace Ms. Miano. Interested trustees should speak with Mr. Harris. The Foundation meets quarterly.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Metz: He discussed a review of the financials. There has been an increase in donations; several donations were made in memory of Ellen Vogt. There is a slight increase in revenues from projected fines. Mr. Franz said that during the transition from online to curbside to in-library services, fines had been waived. Books are quarantined for 3 days. The computer system can be set to backdate a return, if a book has been in quarantine, while being overdue. The budget is reliant upon fines as a revenue source. The system now automatically renews items and has resulted in fewer fines. Historically, the library received \$10,000-\$15,000 in overdue fines. Mr. Metz requested some clarifications. Mr. Franz ran a report today and there are a low number of people who have outstanding long overdue items. He is confident that most items that were out during the closure have been returned. He is suggesting resuming normal fine collections.

The Woodcliff Lake memberships have decreased slightly, and Mr. Metz asked if there are any issues. Mr. Franz stated we receive \$25,000 in membership revenue yearly. Woodcliff Lake can modify their reimbursement policy at any time. He budgets yearly for \$20,000, with a carryover of \$5,000, but that will not be feasible this year. Memberships in good standing at the time of the March 14 closure were extended by five months and most patrons seem to be returning. He is not planning any excess membership revenues being brought forward into next year. Mr. Metz asked about tracking membership card usage; Mr. Franz said it varies from occasional usage to weekly borrowing.

Total income is off by \$31,321 which is mostly accounted for by the delay in payment of Borough cash support, expected in November.

Digital ordering decreased.

Maintenance and utilities: There were several repairs including replacing a fan blade, plumbing, and lighting.

Mr. Metz would like to present, in the near future, a balance sheet showing the fiscal impact of *The Friends* and The Foundation.

Mr. Harris said that at the recent Trustees seminar, it was stated that Library Boards should ratify the operating bills and payments. Mr. Metz mentioned fiscal policies from other Boards that he has served on. Most of the bills are signed within the ordinary course of business. As Treasurer, Mr. Metz co-signs checks and discusses them with Mr. Franz. What level of inspection and approval is needed? Mr. Harris said that he will research this further.

Resolution: Waiver of Claimant Signature: Mr. Franz stated that NJ issued new guidance with regard to processing invoices. Normally, Mr. Franz would complete a voucher and at the bottom there are two affidavits. One is signed by Mr. Franz and one is signed by the claimant. NJ State is allowing for a waiver of the claimant's signature. Signatures remain a requirement from sole proprietors and staff before being issued a check. Eliminating the need for a signature is a way to make the payment process more time efficient. Mr. Franz added it would be for invoices of \$5,000 or less. Ms. DeChiara asked if a vendor has ever disputed payment? Mr. Franz said no, that a contractor is paid the amount as per the invoice they submit. Mr. Franz would still certify that they completed their services.

A motion was made to approve Resolution #2020-6, Waiver of Claimant Signature in Certain Circumstances. Mr. Metz so moved, seconded by Ms. Schepker. Unanimous vote of approval.

2021 Budget: Mr. Franz: It will be difficult to reach a normal state of service if the municipal funding is held at the 1/3 mil level. Our cleaning services cost more, there is a potential for increased landscaping costs. A draft budget based on an absolute minimum from municipality was presented. There would be reduced hours on Saturday and Sundays would be closed. There would be a reduction in staffing on certain days. Mr. Franz waives health benefits which saves the Library about \$15,000 in health costs annually. The projections for revenue, other than municipal support, will be lower than what we are accustomed to. Woodcliff Lake memberships may decrease, or Woodcliff Lake may not continue its reimbursements for its residents. Monies are generated from printing, faxing, and photocopying. There is pressure on part-time salaries, which are increasing due to the mandated minimum wage increase. He built in various budget scenarios based on these increasing budgeted salaries. He is requesting further guidance from the Borough and is urging the Board to request more than the 1/3 mil. The Library has always received more than the 1/3 mil.

Mr. Metz asked for a flow of information from the Borough to us so that we can realistically tailor our budget. Mr. Franz said he would need to have conversations directly with the Finance Committee and Borough Administrator. He is encouraging Trustees to talk with Council members, backed up by data and the existing budget.

Ms. Lundy said that the town residential tax revenues are exactly what was anticipated. Ms. Lundy does not anticipate any changes for 2021. At the next Finance meeting, she will be advocating for additional allocations for the Library. Mr. Franz anticipates the ability to utilize approximately \$10,000 from this year's budget to make next year's budget work. Ms. Lundy will advocate, on the Library's behalf, with the Council members.

Gary Weir, from *The Friends*, will be sending a letter to residents in early November to advocate for the Library's budget. The Library budget is usually passed at a Trustees' meeting in November or December before it is presented to the Borough early in 2021.

There will be 2% raises for all staff.

A programming coordinator will need to be hired, someone who is multi-faceted.

We need at least three library assistants. We have a waiver for the NJ State Aid requirements with regard to evening and weekend hours, which expires at the end of 2020. The budget is based upon being open until 9 pm (currently Mon., Tues. & Thurs.). We must be open until 8:00 pm. Currently, there are no Sunday hours, and our Saturday closure is 2:00 pm.

Ms. Lundy requested Sunday circulation figures; on an hourly basis it is higher.

Circulation is likely to remain suppressed due to the coronavirus.

A lengthy discussion ensued about programming. Ms. Schepker said that many programs were held on Sundays and that generated other patrons. If we limit hours to a Saturday, it will be difficult for programming. The Foundation, in planning, should be thinking about virtual programming, in lieu of being in the library. Does the Board support in-library activities or are we waiting for a future date for in-person and just remain virtual now? Would we encourage programming for Sundays? Mr. Harris said with so many people working virtually, people would welcome in-person programming. The NASA representative is coming back to talk about Mars. There will be chair yoga outside or virtually when it gets cold.

Mr. Metz stated that if we can work within the NJ safety guidelines, we need to look at our safety policy and small group attendance at programs. We are limited to 25 people in the library meeting rooms. Mr. Metz does not want to pass up on opportunities to meet with patrons. Ms. Schepker said that we have to be mindful of ventilation. The Foundation is eager to do programming. Mr. Harris concurred.

Mr. Franz asked that all Trustees review the budget in detail and address any questions with him prior to the next meeting.

Personnel Committee Update: The personnel committee (Ms. DiLorenzo, Ms. Schepker, Ms. DeChiara, and Mr. Harris) has been examining the Personnel Handbook. They will continue meeting and will present their recommendations to the Board in the near future.

New business: There was no new business.

The next regularly scheduled Library Board meeting will be on November 9, 2020. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Wertheim, seconded by Mr. Metz. The meeting officially adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Danaher
Recording Secretary

Hillsdale Library – Board of Trustees
Time: Oct 19, 2020 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81777072335?pwd=OTV2UEhvTzQxNlZzUzJqT3pjYWFnUT09>

Meeting ID: 817 7707 2335
Passcode: 924556