

Minutes of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Of the Bernards Township Library
Wednesday, February 28, 2024

1. Call to order

Board President Emily Johnston called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Sunshine Law Reminder

4. Roll Call

Present: Emily Johnston, Lori Kendis, Karen Kogut, Barbara Madaio, Mary Jane McNally (Zoom), Vivian Pagoulatos, Mitul Shah (Zoom until 8 pm), and Darek Smyk

Absent: Janice Fields

Also present: Rachel Burt (Zoom), Athena Danalakis (Zoom), and Ellen Ryan

5. Public Comment

No public comment

6. Approval of Minutes

Motion 24-10 was made by Karen Kogut and seconded by Mary Jane McNally to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2024 meeting as written. The motion was passed with Darek Smyk and Vivian Pagoulatos abstaining.

7. President's Report

Motion 24-11 was made by Darek Smyk and seconded by Barbara Madaio to amend the agenda to discuss the Falcon Group report earlier in the meeting so all Board members could participate in the conversation. All present voted in favor.

Darek Smyk made a **Motion 24-12** to nominate Vivian Pagoulatos for Treasurer, and Karen Kogut seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. All members voted in favor, and Vivian Pagoulatos was sworn in.

- The meeting with the Falcon group was discussed. They will conduct two studies/reports to assess unit load and cost assessments. Their study will give a road map to move forward and provide comparative prices to complete the project all at once vs. piecemeal. The Township employed the same process, and the DPW has been consulted, so all were confident that this was the best course of action. The roof repairs will also be figured into the plan.
- The Friends of the Library will hold a Tea on April 6th. Board members are asked to consider attending the event and/or donating silent auction items.
- There will be a new trustee orientation on March 23rd.

Motion 24-13 was made by Vivian Pagoulatos and seconded by Darek Smyk to proceed with the Falcon Energy and Load study for a cost not to exceed \$7000. The motion passed after a roll call vote 8-0-0

8. Director's Report

- Moving along as expected, the budgeting process will be presented at the April Township Committee meeting for approval.
- There have been no building issues since the last meeting.
- Construction is ongoing waiting on doors.

- There were two weather-related closings in February.
- State reporting is finished; Rachel mentioned the staff was instrumental in the process.
- MAIN is onboarding more local libraries
- This month's programs were well attended.

9. Fines Report

Athena Danalakakis prepared a breakdown of fines and a thorough explanation of current processes.

1. The first overdue notice is sent via email
 2. A second overdue notice is sent
 3. After 45 days, the patron account is blocked, and no further check-outs are allowed.
 4. After 60 days, the item is billed at replacement cost.
 5. MAIN issues a bill via USPS to the patron the following Wednesday.
- Typically, items are returned. In 2023, 381 lines of bills were reported. By year-end, the report reflected only 92 lines remaining.
 - Replacement cost equals money owed by the patron if materials are not returned. Maximum overdue fines equal \$5.
 - Local library numbers were reported for comparison:
 - Parsippany \$67,000
 - Morristown \$140,000
 - Montville \$24,000
 - All MAIN libraries can collect late fines (not true of replacement costs; replacement costs must be paid to the library that owns the item). Many local libraries have adopted a zero-fine policy.
 - There have been few complaints about our fine policy. We now accept credit cards for fine payment. Since the inception of this program, \$434 of outstanding fines have been collected.

10. Committee Reports

- A. Finance & Treasurer's Report – Vivian Pagoulatos, Mitul Shah
 - Waiting for budget numbers to proceed
- B. Friends Liaison – Lori Kendis, Barbara Madaio
 - Expenses were up this year. Surplus funds will be invested in short-term CDs
- C. Land & Building – Vivian Pagoulatos, Mitul Shah
 - The ceiling tile project is on hold due to rising material costs, landscaping will continue in the Spring, and the side entrance project is on hold. Grant reimbursement timelines discussed.
- D. Legislation & Advocacy – Mary Jane McNally
 - NJ Freedom to Read Act is discussed at the state government level to protect library personnel from harassment and provide guidance in the selection of materials.
- E. Personnel – Mary Jane McNally, Barbara Madaio
 - **Motion 24-14** was moved by Vivian and seconded by Barbara to

acknowledge the hiring of Teresa Biondo, a part-time Library Assistant.
All members still in attendance voted yes to the motion in a vote of 7-0-0

F. Policies and Procedures – Karen Kogut, Lori Kendis

- Nothing to report

G. Technology – Karen Kogut, Darek Smyk

- A new ebook platform (The Palace Project, provided by LYRASIS) was discussed. Darek was able to try it out. Its interface could have been better, but it does provide more options and makes an excellent addition to current platforms. Previous issues with patrons not receiving newsletters have been fully resolved.

H. Township Committee Liaison – Janice Fields

- Our Committee liaison was absent

11. Old Business

There was no old business.

12. New Business

Reiterated the ceiling tile project is on hold and the Falcon Report discussion was moved to earlier in the meeting.

13. Public Comment

Made by Todd Edelstein of Riverside Drive. Follow-up questions regarding lost books being returned after fines are collected. Encouraged a double-check of Falcon reports so past mistakes are not repeated. Questioned where in the budget HVAC monies could be found. These funds are in the reserves.

14. Adjournment

Motion 24-15 was made by Darek Smyk and seconded by Vivian Pagoulatos to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm. The motion passed by all in attendance.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 7:30 P.M. at the Library.