

CLINTON-ESSEX-FRANKLIN LIBRARY SYSTEM

Minutes for Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Held May 18, 2020

Call to Order

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2020, at Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, 33 Oak Street, Plattsburgh, New York, by Mary “Lisa” Minnich, President. Due to the Corona Virus Pandemic, some members of the Board of Trustees attended at CEFLS and others attended online via Zoom.

Oath of Office

Lisa Minnich, President, administered the Oath of Office to Christopher Drennan, as a new trustee who will represent Essex County.

Roll Call

Present at CEFLS: Mary “Lisa” Minnich and Christopher “Chris” Drennan

Present via Zoom: Mary Abendroth, Nicole “Nicky” Bryant, Liz DeFonce, Margot Gold, Dorothy Latta, Gayla LePage, Scott McDonald, Steve Novacich, Darcy Purick and Tim Rowland

Excused Absence: Linda Crosby

Absent: Andrew Lomanto and Tom Mandeville

Staff Present at CEFLS: Steve Kenworthy, Director; Michael Spofford, Finance Manager and Dawn Recore, Administrative Assistant

Others Present via Zoom: Anne de la Chapelle, Plattsburgh Public Library Director; Anja Bouchard, CEFLS Librarian; Karen Batchelder, CEFLS Principal Library Clerk and David Fuller, CEFLS Library Computer Specialist

Consent Agenda

Gayla LePage motioned approval of Consent Agenda, with a correction in the first line of the minutes to change the date of that meeting to February 24, 2020. Mary Abendroth seconded. Consent agenda includes:

- Approval of absences
- Approval of today’s agenda
- Approval of the minutes of the February 24, 2020 meeting with correction noted above
- Committees for which there are no reports at this time: Advocacy, Executive, Finance, Health Plan, Negotiating, Nominating, Personnel and Property

Consent agenda was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Communications

Dawn Recore read a thank you card that the Board received on March 2nd from Mary Abendroth for flowers received following the passing of a family member.

President's Remarks

Lisa Minnich welcomed everyone to the meeting, adding that she hoped that attending via Zoom would be a good experience.

Plattsburgh Public Library Report

Anne de la Chappelle asked if anyone had any questions about her written report that was distributed prior to this meeting.

Her report stated:

- Plattsburgh Public furloughed 12 union employees for up to 90 days effective May 2nd. An additional employee chose to retire.
- PPL does not plan to reopen before August 1st.
- PPL does not know the status of their New York State funding.
- PPL has been approved for \$10,439 in E-rate funding for 2020. They were approved for \$11,871 for 2019.
- The City of Plattsburgh is facing a budget shortfall of approximately \$3 million by the end of the year.

Director's Report

Steve Kenworthy reported that since the Corona virus pandemic began, staff has been working mostly from home. We are having Zoom staff meetings on Tuesdays and on Thursdays we are having Zoom meetings with staff and any member libraries who chose to participate. Thinking about reopening has been frustrating because nobody really knows is what phase libraries should be categorized. There is a concerted effort from PULISDO, NYLA and the State Librarian to have libraries explicitly mentioned in Phase 2. Others believe libraries are in Phase 4 under education.

Many member libraries would like to try curbside service. Clinton County has been told by Empire State Development that curbside services can begin now. We have not yet received responses from Franklin or Essex County regarding curbside service but we are hopeful that they have also received the go-ahead from Empire State Development.

To initiate curbside service, each library must have a written safety plan for dealing with the COVID virus that can be shown upon request. It does not have to be submitted anywhere. The safety plan for CEFLS was provided to the Board several days prior to this meeting. More procedural things, such as how long to quarantine items, will be added as we learn more.

Steve was considering reopening CEFLS on May 26th, but after talking with staff, he isn't sure that we can be of any more assistance to member libraries than we are from home right now. By informal

consensus, the Board would like to wait to reopen until we know officially what phase we are in and that we can reopen safely.

Margot Gold asked what curbside service would look like. Steve explained that it can vary by library but basically books would be taken outside for pickup without personal contact. Since member libraries are autonomous, it is up to them to decide on specifics.

Steve reported that two member libraries have director vacancies: Dannemora Free Library and Dodge Memorial Library in Rouses Point.

Finance Report

Gayla LePage motioned approval of the Finance Reports as presented by Michael Spofford, seconded by Margot Gold.

Michael reported:

- The underground tunnel between Plattsburgh Public Library and CEFLS has been filled in.
- The railing in the garage has been installed.
- The driveway is the next big project. He is trying to work with the engineers to learn what the contractors will need.

As the Human Resources person at CEFLS, Michael reported:

- He has received a written notice of resignation from Robert Welch. Bob has been a driver for CEFLS since 2002. In his resignation letter, Bob stated that he has enjoyed every minute of the years spent with the System and that this has without a doubt been the best job he's ever had. Michael stated that all the staff loves Bob and he will be missed.
- As a System, we are required to have four librarians on staff. Due to impending funding cuts, we are going to be sending a letter to Lauren Moore, NYS Librarian, to request a variance to postpone hiring a librarian to fill the position vacated in March when Betsy Brooks retired.

The Financial Reports were approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Unfinished Business

Lisa Minnich recapped briefly that each year three member libraries are asked to host a CEFLS Board of Trustees meeting. For 2020, one library, Dannemora, had already agreed to be a host; however two things have since happened. Dannemora is without a director now, and with the pandemic, this is not the time to expect to hold a meeting at someone else's library. By consensus, the Board decided to forego the away meetings for this year.

New Business

Lisa Minnich commented that she has seen a PULISDO report and the state's budget figures since the pandemic began and stated that there is so much unknown, especially regarding Federal funding and whether that will extend to libraries.

Steve Kenworthy stated that he is hearing that a 25 percent cut in funding from the state is possible and it could be more. It isn't known if there might be a budget amendment that would make the cuts effective this year or if it will be next year. It is expected to be a multi-year cut. A twenty percent cut from the state would be \$250,000 to \$300,000. With our three counties also going through tough times, that funding may also be cut.

A hold on discretionary spending is in place and we are asking if we can hold off on filling the open librarian position. When we know more numbers, we'll know how much deeper we will have to cut.

Steve Novacich asked whether the driveway project will be done this year. Michael Spofford stated that we do have half of the money from the State. We are asking for a waiver to extend the project's deadline. All along, the goal has been to do this project in conjunction with PPL. Anne de la Chapelle stated that they have been putting money aside into a capital fund so they have \$90,000 for their construction projects, of which their roof has to be a priority, but she said they are okay with moving ahead with the driveway project. However, she is concerned about what will happen to the funding for construction projects state-wide since the State has no money.

David Fuller interjected that NYS just recently asked libraries to pare down construction projects. Dorothy Latta added that food and shelter, as essential services, are a top funding priority. Anja Bouchard followed up by saying that she spoke with NYS Library this morning and was told that they cannot guarantee funding for this year's Family Literacy grants.

Steve Novacich asked if staff would put together some potential plans for what and where cuts can be made. He would like to see a tentative plan at the June Board meeting. Dorothy Latta would like to see a working document showing how expenditures are categorized specifically.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Lisa Minnich adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayla LePage
Secretary