

CLINTON-ESSEX-FRANKLIN LIBRARY SYSTEM

Minutes for Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Held June 22, 2020

Call to Order

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m. on Monday, June 22, 2020, at Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, 33 Oak Street, Plattsburgh, New York, by Mary “Lisa” Minnich, President. Due to the Corona Virus Pandemic, Mary “Lisa” Minnich physically attended at CEFLS while the other members of the Board of Trustees attended online via Zoom.

Roll Call

Present at CEFLS: Mary “Lisa” Minnich

Present via Zoom: Nicole “Nicky” Bryant, Linda Crosby, Liz DeFonce, Chris Drennan, Margot Gold (entered at 4:41 p.m.), Dorothy Latta (entered at 5:08 p.m.), Gayla LePage (entered at 4:41 p.m.), Andrew Lomanto, Tom Mandeville, Scott McDonald, Steve Novacich (entered at 4:45 p.m.) and Tim Rowland

Excused Absences: Darcy Purick and Mary Abendroth

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

Staff Present via Zoom: David Fuller, Library Computer Specialist

Consent Agenda

Margot Gold motioned approval of Consent Agenda, seconded by Gayla LePage. Consent agenda includes:

- Approval of absences
- Approval of today’s agenda
- Approval of the minutes of the May 18, 2020 meeting
- 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 email received from Valerie Mero on June 11, 2020. Valerie attends the French Conversation Group (FCG) that Anne Jobin-Picard facilitates weekly. Since the Pandemic began, the FCG has been meeting via Zoom. Valerie enjoys the opportunity to participate in this group, adding that Anne is a lovely facilitator, is supportive, and is absolutely nonjudgmental. Plus,

“Anne provides so much information about the CEF Library System and about events in the surrounding area, from New York to Vermont to Canada.”

President’s Remarks

Lisa Minnich encouraged trustees to consider giving to the Board’s Leadership Fund. Any donation is welcome, regardless of size. The desired outcome is that every member participates.

Lisa can’t wait until libraries can open again!

Plattsburgh Public Library Report

There was no report from Plattsburgh Public Library.

Director’s Report

Steve Kenworthy reported that CEFLS’s offices are open. Van deliveries and ILL will begin July 6th after some new protocols are established. There will be a meeting with the drivers tomorrow to solicit their input.

The member libraries are both anxious and cautious about restarting services. Most are offering curbside service now. The CEFLS website has information on what each library is doing based on information received from the libraries.

Two staff members, Robert Welch, Driver, and Karen Batchelder, Principal Library Clerk, have retired and Alissa Vidulich, Page, has resigned. We wish them well. We would like to leave these positions vacant until we better know what will happen with State funding.

Clinton County’s third quarter installment has been received. Franklin County has stopped their payments, and we have not heard what Essex County plans to do. Theirs will be due later in the summer. Among colleagues at PULISDO and NYLA, there has been a lot of discussion about a possible 25 percent or more cut in library funding from the State. There is great concern over NYS Education Law’s Maintenance of Effort clause that is meant to encourage local governments to maintain their support of libraries. It says that in the event that the sum total of local sponsor support raised by local taxation exclusive of the sum raised for capital expenditures for the support of a public library system and participating libraries in a 12-month period is less than 95 percent of the average of the amounts raised for such purposes by local taxation for the two preceding 12-month periods, the state aid to which such library system would otherwise be entitled shall be reduced by 25 percent. Our PULISDO and NYLA friends are hopeful that due to the Pandemic the penalty might be suspended. Otherwise, the outcome would be devastating.

Linda Crosby inquired whether Wead Library has a director right now. Steve responded that they are between directors. Mary, a staff member, has temporarily taken the helm. Wead is also down two board members. In total there are three member libraries that do not have directors at this time, Dodge Memorial Library in Rouses Point, Dannemora Free Library and Wead Library in Malone. Steve reports that this is a very challenging time to fill the position.

A policy on telecommuting that North Country Library System shared with CEFLS has been minimally modified by Steve Kenworthy and was provided to the Board for review prior to this meeting. When the Pandemic began and up until June 5th, the CEFLS staff was forced to work from

home. Going forward, the option to work from home will be considered on a case-by-case basis, so we want to have a policy in place. Steve feels the North Country policy is a really good starting point. The Board has been asked to look over the draft policy in detail and be prepared to discuss it at the July meeting.

Finance Report

Lisa Minnich reported that Michael Spofford was not able to submit financial reports for the Board packet due to many factors involving his immediate attention, including time spent trying to fix the air conditioning.

Michael reported that tomorrow he has to finish up the Over and Under Report for April and email them to the Board members. Then he will start working on May's reports.

He will also finish reviewing the few remaining annual reports for member libraries and follow up with them regarding any questions, then he will be able to complete and submit the CEFLS Annual Report. The State is anxious to receive all of the reports, as they collect data from them for their report to the Federal Government.

Steve Kenworthy and Michael have been working on a budget with a 25 percent cut in funding. As it is now, our projected budget has a little more than \$40,000 in expenses than in revenues.

Some items already figured into the proposed 2020 budget:

- Trimmed reserve funds
- Book, DVD and audiobook purchases reduced by 50 percent
- Unspent funds from 2019 budget moved to 2020 proposed budget
- Vacant positions for a librarian, a principal library clerk and a page to be held open
We have asked the State Librarian for a variance in order to hold open the librarian position since our Charter says that we must have four librarians on staff.

Some things under consideration are:

- Our audit being conducted by the Finance Committee rather than an outside firm
NYS strongly urges that it be done by an outside firm but they do not require it, so we are checking into this further. We would still have an auditor do the IRS Form 990, at a cost that we don't know yet.
- Furlough all staff one day a week
Employee benefits stay in place and employees would be able to file for unemployment for one day a week.
- Staff lay-offs
Since Michael has been at CEFLS, we have been self-insured for unemployment, so 55 to 58 percent of staff's salary would have to be covered 100 percent by CEFLS.
- Early retirement
- Van deliveries every other week vs. weekly

Negotiations are due to begin before the end of the year and would require about \$2500 to be budgeted. If a new contract is not agreed upon by December 31, 2020, the current contract would be extended. To this, Tom Mandeville, Chair of the Negotiating Committee, suggested suspending negotiations until the economic climate has cleared for this year and next year.

Margot Gold asked if staff is aware of the potential cuts, to which Steve Kenworthy responded that they were talked about at a recent staff meeting. He stated that the one thing that we know for certain is that if funding is cut by 25 percent, it is going to be painful. It would be between \$250,000 and \$300,000 and to put that into perspective, our salaries plus benefits total about \$900,000, so at a 25 percent cut, we would get about \$750,000 from the State.

When asked how much 50 percent of Franklin County's contribution is, since that is what we have received from them this year and that is also the amount that we will not receive for the remainder of the year, Michael responded that it is \$7,836.50.

Lisa Minnich concluded that the input of all Board members regarding potential budget cuts is welcome. Contact Steve Kenworthy by telephone or email.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Unfinished Business

Potential Budget Cuts: Discussion worked its way into potential budget cuts earlier in the meeting under Finance Reports. There was no further discussion on this topic. Lisa asked trustees to please do anything they can to encourage their local libraries during this difficult time.

New Business

There was no New Business.

Adjournment

Lisa Minnich stated that until there is a cure for COVID-19, there is an effective vaccine, or there is some kind of solution, we are probably going to be doing meetings by Zoom because it doesn't make sense to endanger anyone. There was easily consensus to this.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Lisa Minnich adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayla LePage
Secretary