

## **CLINTON-ESSEX-FRANKLIN LIBRARY SYSTEM**

Minutes for Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Held August 24, 2020

### **Call to Order**

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2020, at Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, 33 Oak Street, Plattsburgh, New York, by Mary “Lisa” Minnich, President. Due to the Corona Virus Pandemic, two Board of Trustee members physically attended at CEFLS while the other members attended online via Zoom.

### **Roll Call**

Present at CEFLS: Mary “Lisa” Minnich and Doreece “Darcy” Purick

Present via Zoom: Mary Abendroth, Nicole “Nicky” Bryant, Liz DeFonce, Chris Drennan, Margot Gold, Dorothy Latta (entered at 4:34 p.m.), Gayla LePage, Tom Mandeville, Scott McDonald, Steve Novacich, and Tim Rowland

Excused Absences: Andrew Lomanto and Linda Crosby

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, and Anja Bouchard, Library Consultant (entered at 4:36 p.m.)

### **Consent Agenda**

Mary Abendroth motioned approval of Consent Agenda, seconded by Steve Novacich. Consent agenda includes:

- Approval of absences
- Approval of today’s agenda
- Approval of the minutes of the July 27, 2020 meeting
- Committees for which there are no reports at this time: Advocacy, Executive, Finance, Health Plan, Negotiating, Personnel and Property

Consent agenda was approved unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Communications**

There were no communications.

## **President's Remarks**

Lisa Minnich reminded the Board that Sexual Harassment Prevention training is required for each calendar year. NYC offers an online training after which a certificate of completion can be printed. Certificates should be provided to Dawn Recore to be kept on file at CEFLS.

## **Plattsburgh Public Library Report**

Anne de la Chappelle, Director at Plattsburgh Public Library (PPL), was not present but provided a brief written report that was shared with the Board prior to this meeting. Also, based on her report in the PPL Board packet, Steve Kenworthy reported that:

- PPL is trying to get an air purifier for the elevator.
- PPL is updating their reopening plan. Right now they are doing curbside pick-up and it is going very well.
- PPL has not heard from the City Council regarding their 2021 funding request. From the State, they are anticipating a 20 percent reduction in funding.

## **Director's Report**

Steve Kenworthy reported that we are participating in a program with Baker and Taylor (B&T), whereby we can send back discarded books at B&T's expense. In return, we will receive a small credit good toward future purchases from B&T. About half of the member libraries have expressed interest in participating by providing their discards to CEFLS. This program benefits CEFLS and the member libraries.

North Country Library System is trying to go server-free by combining their catalog with Mid York Library System. This means that NCLS will no longer have the resources to host our system. We are in the very beginning stages of exploring the creation of a regional catalog that would include all of the systems up here in the North. Both Mid York and NCLS use Symphony ILS and we use Horizon. The two of them merging is going to be a little easier than us merging with them. We are exploring grant monies that might be available to help us. Contact has been made with SirsiDynix.

## **Finance Report**

Scott McDonald motioned approval of the finance reports that were prepared by Michael Spofford and shared with the Board prior to this meeting, seconded by Gayla LePage. Michael reported:

- We did get \$14,600 through the Payroll Protection Program. The loan forgiveness period is 24 weeks. Minimally 60 percent is to be used for payroll and related payroll expenses (exempt: federal taxes), and 40 percent can be used for utilities, vehicle fuel, interest payments and some other purposes that Michael will further explore. He stated that it will not be difficult to spend the funds within 24 weeks.
- The Franklin County budget request was handed in by its due date. Clinton County's is due on September 4<sup>th</sup> and Essex County's is due on September 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Spending is at a minimum. Payroll, utilities and vehicle fuel are basically it.

- The State Library had a few questions about our Annual Report, so that has just been resubmitted. After this meeting, Michael will verify to the State that the CEFLS Board has approved it.

Mary Abendroth asked, since Franklin County has received unexpected funds from NYS, if they have been asked if they will be paying out the remaining funds that were agreed upon in our contract. Steve Kenworthy responded that we will ask.

Steve Novacich asked if we are getting 80 percent of our funding and will the \$14,600 in PPP cover the shortfall, to which Steve Kenworthy responded that it will not cover it completely. Michael stated that he will be doing some forecasting to make sure we will have enough money to carry through to the end of the year. Right now, because we haven't received anything from the State, he is using reserve funds.

Motion to approve the finance reports carried unanimously.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Nominating Committee**

Gayla LePage recapped the status of terms for officers who, on December 31<sup>st</sup>, will have fulfilled the maximum number of allowable consecutive years in their particular positions and for trustees whose current terms will have expired.

### **Officers**

**Lisa Minnich, President**, will be completing her first year of this term. She has agreed to serve another year.

**Nicky Bryant, Vice President** will be completing her first year of this term. She has agreed to serve another year.

**Scott McDonald, Treasurer**, will be completing his third year of this term and cannot serve another consecutive year. Gayla is awaiting a response from a potential candidate for treasurer.

**Gayla LePage, Secretary**, will be completing her first year of this term and has agreed to serve another year.

**Tom Mandeville, Member-at-Large**, will be completing his third year of this term and cannot serve another consecutive year. Liz DeFonce has volunteered to serve as Member-at-Large beginning in 2021.

Gayla would like to present a slate of officers to the Board as soon as possible.

### **Trustees**

**Andrew Lomanto**, representing Clinton County, has agreed to continue serving as a trustee.

**Mary Abendroth**, representing Essex County, has agreed to continue serving as a trustee.

**Margot Gold**, representing Franklin County, will be stepping down from the Board on December 31, 2020. Gayla has a couple of people in mind that she will speak with and she has asked that all Board members keep their eyes and ears open for potential candidates.

Both Lisa Minnich and Nicky Bryant have stated that it would be nice to get some of the newer trustees involved in serving as officers in the future.

## Unfinished Business

**Snow Removal Quotes:** Darcy Purick motioned approval of Bruce Mousseau of BM Specialty Waterworks, West Chazy, as the snow removal contractor for the 2020-2021 season, seconded by Margot Gold.

BM Specialty Waterworks is the contractor that CEFLS used last year and the price quoted is the same as last year.

- November through March - \$700 per month
- Month of April, per qualifying event - \$175

Motion carried unanimously.

**Individuals, Entities and Institutions with Whom to Conduct Business in 2020 and Individuals to Conduct Business in 2020:** Nicky Bryant motioned approval of this form, with two corrections, seconded by Gayla LePage.

1. A 't' must be added to Margot Gold's name on Individuals to Conduct Business in 2020.
2. The auditing firm's name has been changed to The Hoffman Eells Group.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Potential Budget Cuts/Reductions:** Michael Spofford will be basing our budget requests for Clinton and Essex Counties on the same budget as our Franklin County budget request. He stated that when the 2021 budget request was sent to Franklin County, we didn't know yet what the cut in State funding would be for this year. We know now that this year's cut is 20 percent and that it might also be 20 percent for 2021. The amended 2021 budget that Michael will prepare might include a little more than a 20 percent cut because there has been a 5 percent gap for the last couple of years that we've been trying to close, plus in the budget for 2021, Governor Cuomo included a 2.6 percent cut. If you add these together, the funding will be about 28 percent less than the \$1,091,349 that NYS Education Law requires.

Michael has calculated that there is a chance that just with our Basic Aid, Supplemental Aid, Coordinated Outreach, State Corrections, County Jails, and Local Service Support Aid, we will be cut \$305,578 and might receive \$785,771 of the \$1,091,349 that is in NYS Education Law. Also, it looks like Adult Literacy and Family Literacy will be cut 10 percent, or about \$300.

Michael reported that reducing the van delivery to every other week is a possibility. That would save on vehicle fuel, maintenance, payroll and meal reimbursements. Per month, that would save around \$1,600. Furloughing people would be a last resort, and if people are furloughed some would be able to use vacation days for the furloughed days, so they would still be paid.

Steve Novacich asked last month why we don't have unemployment insurance as an expense. Michael responded that we will have to figure it in in the future, but we do have \$20,000 in a reserve account that will cover a small amount of unemployment. For at least as long as Michael has been at CEFLS, people have not been laid off so a chance was taken that it would not be needed and unemployment insurance has not been paid.

In response to a request for a review of the PPP that has been received, Michael stated that the purpose of the PPP is to keep people employed, so it cannot be used to pay staff if they are furloughed. He reiterated the basic guidelines, adding that it is a band aid because it helps but the

funds that were budgeted are really needed. So far expenses have been paid with money that was saved from last year or prior years and carried over for other expenses.

Dorothy Latta appreciates hearing about the expense of van delivery, but is a little concerned about helping libraries to open up, particularly in Essex and Franklin Counties. To say that we may cut services worries her.

Michael stated that CEFLS wages are minimally in the mid \$500,000 range, after which Steve Novacich asked if the \$114,000 would cover the 20 percent cut. Michael stated that the PPP funds can theoretically pay net wages. Currently Michael is using the PPP funds for retirement and State taxes, which are less than \$20,000 every pay period.

Michael stated that if needed we could shut down our money markets, and that would be \$50,000. Although the bank requires a minimum money market account balance of \$25,000, in these times if need be, they will allow money market accounts to be drawn down.

Nicky Bryant stated that the clock is ticking and we know we are looking at a 20 percent funding reduction. She would like something to be instituted to avoid ending the year in red and suggested considering the 80 percent as a number to try to achieve. Lisa Minnich agreed, stating that maybe we need to start limiting the van delivery right now. Franklin and Essex Counties not paying their share contributes to the fact that services may have to be reduced. Further, Lisa doesn't get the impression that there is quite as much demand for this service right now since libraries are not fully open. Gayla LePage concurred that we need to preserve our people, and some savings can be seen with reduced delivery.

Margot Gold asked if reducing employment is within the guidelines of PPP. She stated that we have a quandary whether to use PPP money immediately for all personnel costs or look at reducing other items that are non-salary related. Michael wants to look into PPP further to see if the van drivers' status would change if van delivery is reduced but he feels that the drivers would still be part-time and hourly. Lisa Minnich inquired whether we would be eligible for PPP again if it is offered, to which Steve Kenworthy responded yes.

Steve Novacich stated that it seems that we will be okay for four months, then we will be right back where we are now, so it makes sense to project over 18 months with a combination of furloughing or whatever, and subsidizing payroll. He agrees that we do need to put something together in terms of deciding what changes to make and making them as soon as possible.

Margot Gold asked Steve Kenworthy what advocacy is being done. He responded that NYLA employs a lobbyist and has very strong voices who campaign for our causes, including facilitating letter campaigns and Legislative Day when we visit our representatives in Albany in the Spring. We try to include our representatives whenever we do anything special so that they can see that we spend money wisely. Steve stated that some of the systems in the State are preparing drastic cuts to personnel, because that's what they have to do. CEFLS can't cut anymore. We have already asked the staff to pick up on two vacant positions which is significant and adds to the stress. We try to keep things positive, but every once in a while we think about what we have to do and it's a little discouraging. The Board could do well to contact their county governments and remind them that they have a commitment to CEFLS. He stated that that will be more effective than him contacting them. Margot responded that when legislators hear of loss of jobs, it's a red button issue but it really is a State issue. She commented that Senator Little really listens when jobs are at risk. Steve

Kenworthy stated that Senator Little has been a tireless advocate for libraries, and that it could be a void for us when she retires at the end of this year.

Tim Rowland asked Steve Kenworthy if he feels that this 20 percent cut is because the Federal government hasn't bailed out the State government. Steve responded yes, and that's one of the reasons the State hasn't distributed the 80 percent yet. They have been waiting to see if there is another bailout coming from the Federal government. Now the State has come to the realization that they have got to give money to the cities, counties, towns, and libraries. Tim stated that it would be appropriate to also reach out to Elise Stefanik and the Senate as well.

Steve Novacich suggested that the Finance Committee or some other committee could work with staff to bring something to the Board by the next meeting so we can start implementing. If we are going to do some furloughing, people need to know. Steve Kenworthy is in favor of this. Scott McDonald suggest that there could be such a meet on Monday, September 14. Lisa suggested that if Gayla Le Page gets confirmation of someone who is interested in becoming treasurer for 2021, they should be asked to participate in this meeting.

### **New Business**

Steve Novacich motioned approval of the 2019 CEFLS Annual Report, seconded by Gayla LePage. Lisa Minnich thanked Michael for working tirelessly on it. Motion approved unanimously.

### **Executive Session**

Margot Gold motioned approval of Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing health insurance benefits, seconded by Mary Abendroth. Executive Session was entered at 5:34 p.m.

### **Return to Regular Session**

The Board returned to Regular Session at 5:56 p.m. Darcy Purick motioned that effective January 2021, the copay for health insurance for Management Confidential staff will go to 12 percent, and effective January 2022, the copay for the Director will go to 17 percent. Tom Mandeville seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

Next month's meeting will be a Zoom meeting. There being no further business to come before the Board, Lisa Minnich adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayla LePage  
Secretary