

CLINTON-ESSEX-FRANKLIN LIBRARY SYSTEM
Minutes for Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Held July 24, 2017

Call to Order

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, June 26, 2017 at Goff-Nelson Memorial Library, Tupper Lake, New York, by Nicole “Nicky” Bryant. She welcomed the members of the Board and thanked them for traveling to Tupper Lake for the meeting.

Roll Call

Present: Nicole “Nicky” Bryant, Elizabeth “Liz” DeFonce, Fran Filshie, Dorothy Latta, Phyllis Magnus (entered at 3:56 p.m.), Thomas “Tom” Mandeville, Scott McDonald, Mary “Lisa” Minnich, Rita Quinn and Charles “Kip” Thompson

Excused Absences: Emily Castine, Gayla LePage, and Doreece (Darcy) Purick

Absences: James “Jim” Bennett

Staff Present: Ewa Jankowska, Director; Michael Spofford, Finance Manager; and Dawn Recore, Administrative Assistant

Consent Agenda

Fran Filshie motioned approval of Consent Agenda, which includes the following items, seconded by Tom Mandeville:

- Approval of today’s excused absences
- Approval of today’s agenda as distributed on July 21, 2017
- Approval of minutes of the June 26, 2017 meeting
- Committees for which there are no reports at this time: Advocacy, Building, Development, Executive, Health Plan, Negotiating, Nominating, Personnel, Property and Strategic Planning
- Communications

Rita Quinn abstained, as she was not present for the June 26, 2017 meeting. Motion carried.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

Financial Report

Lisa Minnich motioned approval of the Financial Reports as presented by Michael Spofford, seconded by Rita Quinn.

Michael reported:

- We received \$914,110 in funding from the State late last week, which was earlier than expected. Local Service Support Aid is down by about \$2,400 although we had understood that that aid would be level. The State is going to get back to us with an explanation. Local

Service Support Aid is an aid that we get for providing service to areas where there are no public libraries. We are unfamiliar with the 2010 census on which the amount of aid that we receive is based.

- In response to a question that was raised at the June meeting regarding Employee Benefits on the Revenue-Expenditure Comparison as of May 31, 2017, Michael explained that in 2016 he had only used the actual figures for three months. This year, he has taken the actual figures for three months plus two or three months of projection, and multiplied them by the contribution rates to come up with a monthly amount that he believes we will be billed in December.
- The Board members are pleased with the format of this month's Budget-to-Date report which has a little larger font and is a little easier to read.
- In reference to the Over and Under Report, Kip Thompson asked about #5414 Processing Fees being under spent, yet #5410 Book Purchases are over spent. Michael explained that not all books have a processing fee. Ewa added that some are purchased from Amazon, whereas if we get them from a book jobber, such as Baker and Taylor, they are already wrapped and come with records, thus they charge a processing fee. Kip would like a little explanation of this in future Over and Under Reports.

Kip asked whether Evergreen Nursing Home is a private or public enterprise in reference to \$435.79 being over 90 days past due to CEFLS. Michael responded that it is a not-for-profit and that they are no longer using our services. He is negotiating a settlement with them. He also reported that we just received a check from a correctional facility, so that balance due over 90 days is now less.

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment Period

There were no comments from the public.

President's Remarks

Nicky Bryant stated that the following Board members have expressed interest in being part of a Search Committee for a new director: Kip Thompson, Jim Bennett, Emily Castine, Gayla LePage, Dorothy Latta, Tom Mandeville, and Lisa Minnich. The initial committee meeting will take place in September at which time a chair will be identified. The search process is expected to take a few months. As of yet, Ewa Jankowska has not announced a specific date for retirement. She would like to work through the 2017 Annual Report process so that a new director does not have to do it and her intention is to be available after she retires to help the new director.

The current Civil Service job description of System Director does not begin to define Ewa's responsibilities, so she has provided Lisa Minnich with a first draft of an amended description. She and the Search Committee will work together to further amend it. Ewa stressed that to her it is important for the new director to share the philosophy of the System, librarianship, Freedom of Information, Equality and Access, and helping correctional facilities.

Per the CEFLS Personnel Handbook, Ewa will provide a one month's notice prior to retirement.

Director's Report

In addition to Ewa Jankowska's written report:

Ewa learned that we will soon be receiving over \$900,000 in funding from the State.

Ewa is organizing a Director's Day tentatively to be held on August 24. We have four new directors and 12 who are relatively new. She intends to share a Power Point presentation about the System in general, followed by presentations by staff members to highlight what they do and some of the special projects that are current, including the status of the development of the new website. We are very hopeful that Assemblyman Billy Jones who represents Franklin and Clinton Counties and Molly Ryan, his Chief of Staff, will accept our invitation for the day's luncheon with member library directors. Assemblyman Dan Stec has declined due to being on vacation that week and Senator Betty Little will be invited.

NNYLN asked Ewa to serve on their Board of Directors. She accepted after explaining that she hopes to retire some time in 2018.

At the end of August, NNYLN will have a new database catalog system called DueNorth. We are planning to offer training for member library staff in each of the three counties. The biggest difference between the old and new systems is that what we are using now tells you that a library has an item but it doesn't tell you its status, whether it is available or checked out. DueNorth will.

We have a new banner with the CEFLS logo that was purchased with Adult Literacy grant funds. It will be used at community events. Also purchased were eight mobile laptops that can be lent to libraries to use when they have their own events. Among the laptops' features is job search information, and in the fall they will have the capability of registering people for library cards at community events.

We have had some recent press releases and very nice write ups on the Routes to Recovery project in the Press Republican and The Community Sun. The articles are the result of attending legislative meetings where a couple of journalists were present and very enthusiastic about the project.

Staff have been busy working on special projects.

- Karen Batchelder is collaborating with CVPH on a pilot project for young children. She is a member of North Country THRIVE through which we have been able to provide each member library with 10 free books. New mothers at CVPH will receive early literacy information, a CEF Library System brochure with contact information for the 30 member libraries, and a book with a "dummy" library card. When the "dummy" card is brought to a local public library to obtain a "real" library card, they will receive a free book. In time, we hope to extend the project to the hospitals in Elizabethtown and Saranac Lake.
- We took advantage of an offer to receive 5,000 free solar eclipse glasses that we have provided to member libraries to give away. The glasses will make it possible to safely look at the solar eclipse on August 21.
- Thanks to a Stewart's Holiday Match grant, Karen is preparing six backpack kits that promote early literacy. They are each geared to a specific age group and contain books, toys and games, and CDs, as well as an activity booklet with additional ideas and early literacy tips. Libraries can request the kits for their own use and they can also be signed out by parents or caregivers.
- The annual agreements with area correctional facilities have all been signed.

Questions or comments directed to Ewa Jankowska

Nicky Bryant asked for the status of the tunnel. Michael responded that there are two panel boxes in the tunnel containing wires that lead to PPL so we are trying to find out if anyone's phone service is dependent on them. Michael will ask Primelink, our current telephone service provider, to check. Then we will get a quote to have two concrete walls built in the tunnel, one at the property's edge near Plattsburgh Public Library and one just a little ways into the tunnel from our side, with the middle being filled. Discussion ensued regarding various aspects of the project including the property line of CEFLS, which remains an ongoing issue. Rita Quinn has inquired about it at Real Property Tax Services where she used to work, and she has spoken with the city's assessor, and they continue to tell her that they cannot tell how far the CEFLS property extends. Because currently no one is contesting the boundaries and neither PPL nor CEFLS are taxed properties, they seem not to feel the need to resolve the matter. Tom Mandeville has some ideas and will report back to the Board in the future.

Plattsburgh Public Library Report

Anne de la Chappelle, Director of PPL, was not able to be present. Her Director's Report was extrapolated from PPL's July Board Packet that was provided to CEFLS, and copies were distributed prior to the meeting.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Possible funding for temporary accounting clerk: Lisa Minnich stated that the Finance Committee discussed this immediately prior to this meeting. On behalf of the committee, she motioned to allow CEFLS to hire a temporary clerk for three months, part-time, for approximately 18.75 hours per week, at a billing rate given by a temp agency of \$18.24 per hour, for 244 hours over three months, not to exceed \$4,500, seconded by Rita Quinn.

Lisa explained that hiring a clerk would help Michael to catch up with the paperwork of ever-mounting responsibilities. Over the years, while the State has added responsibilities for the Human Resources department and the Finance Manager, CEFLS has had to reduce staffing significantly due to shortfalls in funding, resulting in a significant backlog of paperwork.

- Reports mandated by the State have become more and more complicated.
- Grant funds, upon which CEFLS and the member libraries rely heavily, are administered by the Finance Manager.
- Physically filing the above paperwork and administration of record retention have taken a back seat to completing other daily, weekly, monthly and yearly responsibilities.

Lisa explained that the expense of this part-time position could be paid for with savings from the Vehicle Expense account because when the budget was approved, the price of gasoline was high but it has been down for quite some time and it appears that it is going to stay low for a while. The savings could be transferred to All Other Salaries.

Ewa stated that the services of ETS would be used to hire this person and civil service requirements would not be involved because this would be a temporary position, not to exceed three months. At the end of three months, what has been accomplished will be assessed to determine how to proceed.

Motion carried unanimously.

Proposed 2018 Draft Budget: Lisa Minnich motioned to accept the proposed 2018 Draft Budget as presented by Michael Spofford, with an amendment to include funding for the newly approved clerk position. Kip Thompson seconded.

Lisa explained that this draft budget is very tentative and the reason that it even exists this early is because the three county legislatures will be requesting it soon which will in turn help them to prepare their budgets. Discussion ensued regarding requesting a three percent increase in funding from each county. There is, as always, concern about the Maintenance of Effort clause in NYS Education Law that states if local funding is cut more than five percent, then State funding would be cut by 25 percent.

Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Regarding last month's discussion on the possibility of forming a committee to study central libraries as their role seems to be changing and Maintenance of Effort across the state continues to be of concern, Tom Mandeville mentioned the looming cuts being considered for the City of Plattsburgh. There is trepidation over how it might affect PPL, the Central Library. Kip Thompson suggested forming an ad hoc committee to learn more about this very worrisome situation.

Ewa Jankowska stated that when libraries, including central libraries, serve populations from outside of their geographical area that are otherwise unserved by a public library, they can expand their area of service by requesting to be put on either the municipal ballot or the school district ballot. In simple terms, if the municipal or school district budgets are passed by the constituents, a portion of the collected taxes could be funneled to these public libraries.

Dorothy Latta volunteered to work with Ewa to learn more.

New Business

Purchase request for new file server, installation services and backup software: Lisa Minnich motioned approval to purchase from Twinstare Technologies a new file server, installation services and backup software for \$5,332, seconded by Fran Filshie.

Betsy Brooks recommended Twinstare Technologies after carefully analyzing the four quotes she received. There was concern by some Board members over the wording in the recommendation summary that the total expenditure would be no more than \$7,500, the budgeted amount if greater capacity was needed. Some stated they would have preferred that the request include the cost of more capacity within the quote, at a greater price, if our needs would be better met. Ewa stated that she trusts Betsy's judgement and that Twinstare has a very good reputation. Ewa added that Betsy has been handling nearly all of our IT issues so having Twinstare assume a good portion of them will increase her availability for her librarian/consultant responsibilities. If more capacity is needed in the future, the Board would like Betsy to make a new request.

Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session

Lisa Minnich motioned to enter into Executive Session at 4:18 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter of a particular staff member and to discuss Director recruitment, seconded by Rita Quinn. Motion carried unanimously.

Return to Regular Session


Kip Thompson motioned to return to Regular Session at 4:32 p.m., seconded by Fran Filshie. Motion carried unanimously.

Lisa Minnich motioned to pay Michael Spofford \$2,782.07 in exchange for unused vacation time. This amount includes FICA and all other ordinary deductions. Kip Thompson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Nicky Bryant adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Emily Castine
Secretary