FREE LIBRARY OF NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP

Board of Directors Meeting

February 10, 2022

Members Present: Eleanora Rosso, Michael May, Wayne Lahr, Paula Gasper, Chip Heim, Charlene DiSarlo, Janet Braker, Marci Lyons DiCamillo, and Charles Beem

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. Call to Order – The Board President called the meeting to order by welcoming the members present.
2. Approval of the January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes, with two minor corrections.

Discussion: Nothing further

Action: Unanimous Approval

1. Library Director’s Report – The opening discussion concerned his report relative to the format he has adopted. Acknowledgement and support was offered for his recently completed ALA, (American Library Association) eLearning Course entitled, “Library Director Crash Course: Getting the Skills you need”.

Building Hours – An explanation of the process and rationale was offered relative to the goal of more fully re-opening the library with Friday and Sunday operational hours. Several board members expressed the need for consistency in establishing the library operational hours. I.e., Monday through Thursday, opening at 9:00 am. A continuation of the discussion included, full time and part time staffing, pay inequity, and comp time, staffing rotation scheduling, etc. The goal expressed is to fully re-open the library to its full seven day hours by the end of February or mid-March. The board expects notification of any barrier or difficulty in the achievement of this goal.

AARP Free Tax Filing Assistance – The question was asked concerning how this free service is publicized to the township residents. It was noted that this could be a strategy option in reaching out with the newsletter, website, and social media. The desire to reach a new audience should be considered. The option of library donations was discussed.

The requirement of timely and accurate record keeping associated with the impact of changes made in the operation of the library by the director was suggested, in order to track the metrics and possible improvements. The following questions was asked. What’s the baseline and measure of success? The need for a comprehensive strategic plan was expressed, as the document offered by a board member was referenced relative to the potential of adopting the best process in crafting a strategic plan.

1. Friends of the Library Report – The board liaison noted that he has not been made aware of any recent meetings. The director has not met any of the members, while inquiring about the requirement of membership to get the discount museum passes. The membership to the Friends is $20. They sponsor the Adult Program. In the past, Friends have supported programs and initiatives financially. In past practice the Friends have tended to operate in a more autonomous operational style. The board president has reached out for help concerning projects or activities several times over the years.
2. Northampton Township Supervisor’s Liaison Report – A short report acknowledging little supervisor activity relevant to the library. The township supervisors are handling other pressing issues relevant to the residents of the community.
3. 300th Anniversary Celebration – Library Participation – The board liaison noted that some ‘Cool Things’ have been discussed for the celebration, with an upcoming meeting on March 16, 2022. Follow the celebration on Facebook and Instagram. A staff librarian, and township historian is working on the celebration activities as well, including Township Trivia Activities. Other initiatives include changing the banners throughout the township to celebrate the event, events featuring local restaurants with historical dinners with connections to local breweries, celebration logos for the police cars, etc. The Mystery Dinner Gala is scheduled to take place in November.
4. Fundraising: 2022 Annual Appeal – Nothing at this time.
5. Northampton Library Strategic Plan Development – The Board Treasurer/Fundraising Chair referenced his discussion concerning the strategic planning packet he sent to the board. The recommendation was tying Mission and Vision together. If the board were to consider hiring a consultant to guide the process the individual, (observed by the board member), could charge between five thousand and eight thousand dollars for guiding the process. The belief is that his fee is under budget as compared to similar consulting work considered by the board in the recent past. The approach of this consultant is to look forward not back. In addition, limit the number of participants to 8-12 in the room for discussion. A virtual call involving the board with this consultant could be helpful in moving forward with the process. The graphics concerning the strategic planning process presented ‘a nice model for a process’. The president suggested that the board must plan for the strategic plan with a smaller group of the board in order to solidify a process to be followed. Please let the board president know if you would like to serve in this ad hoc group of the board. The director agreed to review materials relevant to the strategic planning process for libraries. The director also noted that the Bucks County Library System may have resources helpful to the process. The strategic plan of the Westminster Library was noted by a board member, as well as a related report. The suggestion was offered to reach out to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to review the research concerning the library of the future. The operational value of the completed strategic plan was acknowledged relative to the suggestion that the strategic plan be synthesized into a brief, two page document, to be visible and widely communicated. The board voiced support for a staff member to be asked to serve on the strategic planning committee.
6. Spring Event – The president asked for the ideas to be presented. A Great Gatsby 1920’s theme tied to a book might draw interest. Self-defense classes, although the township Parks and Recreation department might be involved with such a program. A spring time family event could work with a book like Dr. Seuss although this could be researched. A one book day, commonality as used in Philadelphia might be considered. A Spring Fling Gardening Theme was considered. Visit gardens passport. Farming 300 years. Walk away with a plant, or seeds bring them back. Plant a plant in honor or memory of someone. Take a plant and leave one behind, a community garden. Develop a whole Facebook page around the themes.

A family event, a master gardener, one plant take home, a community garden. Plant in honor of someone. Display books on gardening. The question voiced concerning what would appeal to kids? This is not a festival like the birthday celebration. Face painting Balloons, Candyland, mini trains, and a Petting Zoo were all noted as attractions to kids and making an event a fun filled evert. Master Gardeners are a great attraction to adults as offered by Penn State. The director will review books for a potential theme. The second week of June might work for a date. A kid’s activity table to make Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day cards was offered. A car show was also a thought to be considered for such an event.

The library summer reading program and the 300 anniversary celebration, were considered as ‘tie-in’ themes. A Saturday or Sunday event was suggested.

1. Public Comment: Written comments or any questions from the public may be emailed to public comment@nnhtwp.org prior to the meeting.
2. For the Good of the Order/Miscellaneous – At the request of the Library Director, the Board confirmed that the library will be open on Good Friday. Library staff will be notified relative to their schedules. The packet sent by the director was acknowledged relative to the posting on the webpage. The board president reviewed the past policy and practices. The director believes in greater transparency with the minutes and agenda being part of the packet, however it was noted that the meeting minutes require approval by the board prior to posting. The agenda would be posted with the minutes only to be posted after approval. This a topic that may be discussed with the township supervisors.
3. Adjournment

The meeting was officially adjourned at 8:59 pm, by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Charles W. Beem,

Free Library of Northampton Township Board of Directors Recording Secretary