FREE LIBRARY OF NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP

Board of Directors Meeting

January 13, 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 7:02 p.m.

1. Call to Order – Eleanora called the meeting to order by welcoming the members present.
2. Approval of the December 01, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the December 01, 2021 Meeting Minutes, without corrections.

Discussion: Nothing further

Action: Unanimous Approval

1. Introduction of Wayne Lahr – Library Director of the Free Library of Northampton Township – Wayne noted his background in teaching music, and his work at a high school library. He served as a director of a community public library in Birdsboro, Pa. The position opened for a job in the Bucks County Free Library System where he served until accepting his present position. He has been spending the last two weeks getting to know the staff in building relationships. He was asked if he has encountered any surprises, besides the implementation of the new technology. He acknowledged a few differences in processes, while offering praise to the staff. The newly integrated system is running, given the numbers generated through its usage. Wayne briefly explained the Bucks County Free Library System.

Introduction of Paula Gasper – Northampton Township Supervisor – Library Board Liaison – Paula noted her experience within the township as a community business owner, and her enthusiasm in serving as a Northampton Township Supervisor.

1. Library Director’s Report – Wayne discussed his report while referring to the statistics contained in his report. Wayne asked what the board would like to see in future reports. A few suggestions included, the mood of staff, Issues facing the library operations, and any help requests from the board. In general the board would like to know more about the operations of the library. A few questions included: What is the baseline as you make changes? What would be meaningful in terms of the results of any changes? If something is not working then how can the board help when and where possible? Wayne suggested the board members send a personal bio to identify experience to be considered when skills can be utilized. Wayne agreed to bring information to the board relative to conversations involving skills utilized and desired. Wayne offered his email address to be used by board members in communications. wlahr@nhtwp.org

A calendar of activities could also be helpful in such reports, as well as the statistics in attendance.

Wayne shared the current use of the promotional tools relative to movies and events, while referring to the Career Development Series, as presented by the YWCA.

Wayne discussed the new system now requiring the establishment of a password, as the system became live yesterday.

Wayne discussed the role of the marketing specialist for the Bucks County Free Library System with the upcoming webinars that would be of interest to the board. Wayne acknowledged teaming up with the Warminster Library to offer a film entitled “Alice’s Ordinary People” – A documentary film about Alice Tregay—a woman who refused to stand still for injustice. Monday, February 7th at 7:00 pm.

1. Library Room Usage Policies – Eleanora asked Wayne to explain the room usage by an individual who uses a room weekly for an SAT Review Workshop for students. The current policy recognizes Non-Profits that can use a room for free once a month. It was believed that he should have one free week, while paying for use during the remaining weeks. The current charge for the room is $50 per month. The individual did not want to pay the amount, as the library could offer a discount for the usage of the room when not being used. A limited, temporary arrangement could be offered for six months at i.e. $25 with the option to be changed when the room utilization could increase.
2. The 2022 Budget – Wayne acknowledged no immediate concerns. It was noted that the budget reflected the difference in filling the Library Director’s position this year.
3. Friends of the Library Report – Michael has not received any email communication from the Friends of the Library to offer a report to the board. Amy will be sharing the date of the next meeting with Michael.
4. Northampton Township Supervisor’s Liaison Report – Paula noted that the budget had been approved earlier in the week, with nothing pertaining to the library.
5. Election of Board of Director Officers for 2022

President: Eleanora Rosso

Vice-President: Michael May

Treasurer/Fundraising Chair: Chip Heim

Secretary: Charles Beem

Motion: To approve the slate of officers

Discussion: Nothing further

Action: Unanimous approval of the slate of officers.

1. Northampton Library Strategic Plan Development – Eleanora discussed her meeting with Bill Wert, (the Asst. Township Manager), while noting what is desired in new leadership moving forward with the library. What is the vision of the library for the future? The desire for the transformation of the library is expressed as a necessity. Where is the library going is an important question. What does the library mean to the community, while this is necessary to support resource utilization in decision making? The Library Director needs inspire the staff and to lead the implementation of the strategic plan. There is agreement that the current state of the library is not sustainable. An essential question to be answered by the community is: “Why do you visit the library?” Why don’t you visit the library? The history relating to fundraising problems of the past were acknowledged.

Wayne has a collection of strategic plans while considering the interviewing process that will be shared with the board by Wayne. The consideration of the transformation could be a concern of the staff and how this would be handled. It was also acknowledged that Bill Wert appears willing to invest in a survey that could help offer helpful information relevant to strategic planning. Finally, It was noted that this will continue to be an agenda item.

During the discussion Wayne suggested that the board look at the Kennett Square Library website to see the innovative approach towards their idea of the library of the future. Eleanora described the past visit to the Germantown library structured around community relationships. The Northampton Township Parks and Recreation Department could be a resource to investigate regarding what the library could become in the future. The Langhorne Branch Library Community within the Bucks County Free Library system was discussed.

The general agreement is that the direction of the library should be determined by the community. What is the need of the community that is not being served? The Rails to Trails could be investigated for potential ideas relating to community ‘grass roots’ support. The idea of fulfilling a community need for financial literacy could benefit the community as well.

1. Fundraising – Eleanora noted that where we go strategically could impact fundraising. Wayne discussed the Bensalem Branch Passport Service offered in the branch. The program grossed $200,000; while netting $100,000 in 2017. Wayne researched the amounts experienced in 2018, and part of 2019. Concern was expressed regarding why the branch is not continuing offering this service? The need for a ‘Big Ideas Folder’ was suggested in light of such a review of potential ideas. Community partnerships were noted concerning ideas. Wayne discussed his perspective on the annual appeal fund raising campaign. Wayne discussed the process of discarded books though the organization, Thrift Books, thus yielding $1,000 in seven months. Proctoring of tests for the University of Alabama, etc. yields additions to fundraising.

The Northampton Township 300 Year Celebration was briefly discussed relative to the library.

A fund raising event planned for the spring was suggested as a priority moving forward. The question of the 10,000 email addresses used for solicitation in fundraising was discussed as an option. The next board meeting, board members were asked to bring ideas to be considered. Wayne discussed the potential of a few ideas that could be considered as successful.

The role of the presence in the community of the library was emphasized. The goal is to finalize a spring event by the end of the next board meeting.

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 – Janet asked a question regarding the Library Board Bylaws. Wayne asked for a clarification of the holiday library closure schedule, while the rationale was explained leading to the schedule. The Columbus Day holiday and the Good Friday holiday was discussed with the options available. The Bucks County Free Library has been closed on Columbus holiday as an In-Service day for staff to earn professional development credits.

The Mental Health First Aid Training Program is being pursued for training the staff.

1. Adjournment

The meeting was officially adjourned at 9:10 pm, by a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Charles W. Beem,

Free Library of Northampton Township Board of Directors Recording Secretary