

**Petoskey District Library**

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

**January 26, 2023**

**Call to order at 5:00 by President Ann Ingles**

**Present:** Kim Block, Ann Ingles, Mike Atchison, Amy Janssens, Trevor Nelson, Isabel Dunn, and Val Meyerson (Library Director).

**Land Acknowledgement:** We would like to recognize that we are providing services to our patrons on Anishinabe lands, home of the Waganakising Odawa Nation.

**Introductions:**

- Mya Hammons promoted to circulation desk and Emma Hammons hired as shelver.
- Karren Reish and Cathy Lancaster visiting from the State Library for a grant site visit.

**Agenda Approved by consensus**

**Minutes Approved by consensus**

**Bills Approved by consensus**

- Kim asked about PAC2 contracted services which Val explained is the payment for our cataloging service. Mitchell Graphics bill was the printing of the newsletter.
- Anne explained the payment to Resort Township had to do with the Bay Harbor Agreement in which the library pays a percentage of taxes back to Bay Harbor annually.

**Public Comments on the agenda:** None

**Treasurer's Report:** Amy reported the library spent less than budgeted, although they have not been audited by the city yet.

**Friends of the Petoskey Library (Ethel Larson):**

- The Friends contributed \$41,815 to the library in 2022, mostly in programming.
- Book sales raised \$14,844 in 2022.
- 65 people attended last month's Friends' at the Carnegie program.

### **Director's Report** (Val Meyerson):

- 600 people attended the New Year's celebration with the library and Crooked Tree
- The new website launched and people should let Val know about any glitches they experience. One issue is that certain patrons struggle with the change despite its intuitive design and simplicity.
- The library is receiving positive feedback about the Holocaust exhibit. Over 1,000 students representing 10 school districts are scheduled for tours, along with college students, home schoolers, and lifelong learners. There are 40 docents/ambassadors and lots of programming.
- Unique Management Systems sent out welcome cards to new residents.
- The library is looking for a part time facility manager.
- Statistics:
  - Number of patrons is down possibly due to popularity of family cards (multiple people on one card) and also cleaned out patrons who do not use the library any longer (8%). They are removed 2 years after card expires.
  - New patrons are up 24%
  - Family programming numbers are up 214% due to the NYEve event and in comparison to COVID years.
  - Library visits up 26% but still not to pre-COVID numbers.
  - Average date of publication numbers should be more recent as the collection is culled and cleaned up, an important piece of data for Val.
  - Senior outreach: 792 seniors communicated with in 7 locations: books are delivered and conversations had. Mary acts as a "personal librarian" to many of these seniors.
- Library staff appreciated the teens who wrote kind words on sticky notes with the "#stickynoteproject".
- Thanks to the Friends for all the financial support for children's programming and other projects.
- The board should look over the strategic plan and goals for 2023.
- Amy inquired about the "chat" function on the website. Val clarified that staff man this function during library hours.
- Trevor asked about the library app in development. Val explained that it was tested and launched but is not working for all 8 libraries participating so we are still waiting.

### **Board Members' Comments:**

- Amy thanked Val for all the statistics and information and recognized Val's effort and time. She also pointed out snack bags are available in the lockers 24 hours/day.

- Kim thanked Val for all her work on the Holocaust exhibit and how much the community appreciates it.

**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:**

1. **Student member application process:** Kim will drop materials off at PHS Social studies department. Trevor and Val will hold the exit interview in April. Questions about changes for next year will be addressed at the February meeting.
2. **General Use Policy** with additions, was approved by consensus.
3. The **Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends** was reviewed.
4. **Officer elections:** Mike moved that the following slate of officers be approved, with support from Amy.
  - Kim - president, Amy - vice president, Trevor - treasurer, Mike - secretary. motion passed, unanimously.
5. **Response to Bear Creek Township:**
  - **Val**  
The Petoskey District Library strives to nurture knowledge, drive discovery, and connect our community. We support and enhance the lives of the greater community with extraordinary services and exceptional resources, becoming the place for answers, enrichment, and community.

We aim to be an inclusive and safe environment where ALL patrons are treated equitably with kindness and empathy – we are welcoming. The staff are reliable and knowledgeable and ready to provide answers – we are dedicated. We provide a clean, comfortable, and safe space for all – creating community. We are a place to explore, have questions answered, find new joys, and continue life-long learning through books and programs – we value discovery. In response to the August 2020 letter from the township, we have been more mindful of balance in regards to promotion and displays. For example, when Mr. Hoffman disagreed with the library having a YouTube video on our webpage, it was reviewed and then removed. We also added a newspaper to help better balance the viewpoints presented in the periodical room. As a public library, we do not strive for neutrality, but viewpoint balance. We hope to provide information from all walks of life; to provide windows and mirrors for all.

In the future, it would behoove residents to bring their complaints and concerns directly to the library, instead of going through the township. The library can then readily respond to the issue at hand.

- **Anne**

The Petoskey District Library is a government entity whose function is to provide library services. This library is providing excellent services including access to all kinds of information for anyone who wants it. The library is partially funded through millage approved by a vote of the people specifically for library services. Individuals with concerns or questions about the library are encouraged to contact the Library Director. I think we all should embrace the philosophy expressed at the meeting of another township in our service area: “We’ll take care of our business, and you take care of yours.”

- **Amy**

The ask of the township board is quite broad as it asks the library to remain a “neutral body”. Is there something specific? What is the actual “ask”? The township members are an important part of our community. The library has many policies in place and all adhered to. She is not sure how to meet the neutral requirement as there are differing opinions as to what that means.

- **Kim**

The list of yearly displays shows the variety of topics with few if any being controversial. Most are seasonal or connected to particular monthly celebrations/recognition. She encourages patrons to look at the list.

- **Isabel**

Who defines “neutrality”? It would be impossible with staff favorites and best books of the year for example. How do we meet neutrality and is it the job of the library? What about the first amendment? Displays change frequently, are various, and have a short duration.

- **Mike**

The most excitable issue (LBGTQ- the June display and name tag pronouns) do not necessarily offend the majority of Bear Creek residents. The library prides itself in being a safe place for all. The fear that children will be converted or indoctrinated is unfounded. We take everyone’s concerns seriously and listen to all. Some changes have been made but everyone should

be served at the library.

- **Amy**

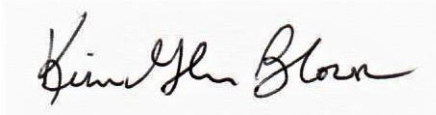
We do not want to make assumptions, and still am not sure what the “ask” is.

**Public Comments:**

- Holly Angileri (Resort)-introduced herself as the new Resort Township representative
- Luna (EDU card)- appreciated ADL’s visit and being able to help with the programming at PHS
- Nevea Wells (EDU Card)- the ADL discussed bias at PHS
- Matt (Bear Creek Township)- he volunteered to clarify the “ask” at another time, he is interested in the family card, patron numbers have gone down to families giving up on the library because they do not feel safe with the perceived liberal agenda, he does not want to see biological men in the women’s bathroom and does not want menstruation materials in the men’s bathroom
- Ava Kitcher (Petoskey)- is happy to see menstruating materials in both bathrooms
- Mark Fralick (Bear Creek)- really supportive of the library and its board and see the library as a place to raise social consciousness
- Patty Fralick (Bear Creek)- she brings her grandkids to the library and find the staff helpful, she sees kids’ questions as teachable moments and the library as a reflection of the larger society
- Helen Wolfgang (Bear Creek)- the library is an important facility, she has had to enter men’s bathrooms with her husband who has Parkinson’s disease and does not see a problem with the opposite sex in the bathrooms
- Joanna (Bear Creek)- the library is a safe place and is a place where she can continue to learn, books are chosen through a very specific policy
- Katie Allen- she is happy the board is will to listen and keep the discourse going
- Rose Fitzgerald- she is uncomfortable with the discussion around “neutrality” as both sides of a controversial issue (pros and cons) would need to be eliminated leaving few materials, she would like to see “viewpoint balance” be the focus.

**Adjournment:** Ann adjourned the meeting at 6:29.

Minutes submitted by



Kim Block, Secretary