

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE FRANKLIN LAKES PUBLIC LIBRARY
February 26, 2024
(Franklin Lakes Public Library)

Present: Fink, Kahwaty, Kampschmidt, Leone, Luciano, Maceri, McCarthy, Penna, Strauss, Swist, Vartabedian

Absent:

By Invitation: DeLuccia, Parete

I. Call to Order

President Leone called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

II. President's Announcement Regarding Open Meeting Act

President Leone read an announcement stating that, in accordance with the **Open Public Meetings Act**, adequate notice of the meeting has been given to the *Suburban News*, *The Record* and has been posted on the Library bulletin board and filed with the Franklin Lakes Municipal Clerk. Electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by posting notice on the Library's website, www.franklinlakeslibrary.org. All information pertaining to the meeting, including how the public may participate and submit public comments, has been made available on the Library's website. This meeting will be recorded with audio only.

III. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken.

IV. President's Announcements

President Leone welcomed Library staff members to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves to all present.

President Leone thanked the staff for their front line support over the previous few weeks, due to two incidents of "First Amendment Audit" filming that occurred in the Library during normal business hours and resulted in Franklin Lakes police involvement. Library staff received many harassing phone calls and emails as a result of the incidents after videos were posted online. Online comments to the videos were also disturbing to the staff.

Mayor Kahwaty addressed the group with his thoughts and relayed that a statement from the Franklin Lakes Chief of Police would be included in an anticipated article by the Bergen Record regarding the incidents.

President Leone noted that the Library is a “Limited Public Forum” and can restrict filming to only approved parties. A script will be provided to staff to explain what occurred if patrons from Franklin Lakes and surrounding areas inquire about the incidents.

President Leone reported on a meeting held with Library staff and several Board members on February 15, 2024. The meeting focused on four main areas of interest:

- ✓ Change
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Communication

The meeting was attended by almost all staff and was beneficial to all. Future meetings of this type will continue to be held on a regular basis.

V. Public Comments

Library employees Laura Henderson, Ken Lew, Sara Ketterer, Mary McClain, Megan Rothlauf, and Christina Tillsely attended as members of the public. The staff members in attendance expressed their concerns regarding the harassing phone calls and online comments. Children’s Librarian Megan Rothlauf reported that several recent programs had a higher than usual cancellation rate. This is very concerning and will be monitored.

VI. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- A. A motion was made and passed to approve the minutes for January 22, 2024 (Penna, Luciano).
- B. A motion was made and passed to approve the minutes for the January 29, 2024 special meeting (Penna, Luciano).

VII. Treasurer’s Report

Trustee Strauss discussed financial variances in the January 2024 Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual Report. Income was above budget estimates by 2.76%. For the months of January through January 2024, Benefit Expenses were budget estimates by 8.6% and Personnel Expenses were below budget estimates by 2.43%. Material Expenses for the same time period were below budget estimates by 10.75% and Program expenses were above budget estimates by approximately 12.73%. Operational Expenses were below budget estimates by 12/16%. Total expenses were below budget estimates by approximately 5%.

- A. A motion was made and passed to approve check numbers 3743 through 3793 (Strauss, Luciano).
- B. All bank accounts for the Library have been reconciled up to the most current bank statements.
- C. The Library continues to have very favorable interest rates on funds held at Columbia Bank.
- D. The 2023 draft Audit was received and will be reviewed by Director Fink before distribution to the Finance Committee. Two minor findings were noted and explained. A discussion was held on the length of time the Library can hold a Certificate of Deposit.

VIII. **Committee Reports:**

- **Policy** - Trustee Penna presented a new Library Visitor Conduct document to be displayed at the entrance to the Library. The document outlines specific rules for all Library visitors.
- **Renovation** – Trustee Vartabedian reported that the Renovation Phase 1 has started. The dumpster is in place and the preparation of the meeting room has begun. There is a short delay in the issuing of the necessary construction permits.
- **Technology, Building & Grounds** – Trustee Kampschmidt reported that the engraving text for the extended sidewalk has been approved. An opening ceremony will be held in early Spring 2024. The HVAC replacement project is expected to begin in early March 2024.
- **Personnel** –
A motion was made and passed to approve the hiring of following employees (Luciano, Penna):
 - ✓ Sara Ketterer, Head of Circulation
 - ✓ Gloria Carney, Library Assistant
 - ✓ Jeremy Doyle, Business Administrator

IX. **Friends of the Library Report**

Vice-President Luciano reported that the Friends are continuing to plan for the May Author Luncheon. The tickets will be available for purchase in early March 2024.

X. Director's Report

Director Fink reported that several posters have been placed around the Library explaining what the Renovation Phase 1 project will entail.

Director Fink has been researching technology solutions for new cameras and telephones for the Library.

Director Fink announced that a new chain-of-command document has been created for Library staff to use in case of incidents occurring in the Library that need escalation.

Director Fink noted that Circulation numbers are up and downloadable numbers are increasing at a high rate.

XI. Old Business

Trustee Vartabedian reported that the new Foundation Board members have been very busy. A new brochure is in progress and new slogans and naming rights are being developed. A scaled thermometer has been commissioned to depict fundraising progress. The fundraising effort will run from April to December of 2024. Several ideas for fundraising are being explored including a car raffle and an Art Auction. An overall plan for fundraising is being created.

XII. New Business

There was no new business for discussion.

XIII. Executive Session

A motion was made and passed to enter Executive session at 7:06 PM.

(see attached resolution)

A motion was made and passed to return to open session at 7:50 PM.

(see attached resolution)

XIV. Membership Hearing

The March 2024 Board meeting will be held via Zoom.

XV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectively Submitted, Peter Swist, Secretary