

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, May 27, 2020  
Recorded virtual meeting

President Nick Ciampi called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

It was noted that the meeting was being held in compliance with the **Open Public Meetings Act**.

**Roll Call:**

Kevin McNeil	<i>absent</i>	Nicholas Ciampa	<i>present</i>	Nabil Choueiri (NBC)	<i>absent</i>
Iris Kislin	<i>excused</i>	Mayor Kramer	<i>present</i>	Edward Ward	<i>present</i>
Tom Lennon	<i>excused</i>	Agnes Kulu-Banya	<i>present</i>		
January Adams	<i>present</i>				

Nick stated that the virtual meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Nick motioned to open the meeting to public comment and Agnes seconded. All were in favor. Township resident Aruna Mettler stated that she would like to donate her late husband's (Bob Mettler's) historical papers, books, deeds, photographs, and miscellaneous items to the library. She asked that if there was a project to honor her husband she would like to be a part of it. Mayor Kramer praised Bob's 30 years of continuous service to the township and that, although he did not want to make a motion at this time, he would like to see the library's Historical Room named after Bob. Nick added that FTPL was the best place to receive these historical items and that they would need to be curated and preserved so that residents could access them. Mrs. Mettler did not have specifics about the contents or size of the collection but stated that she would review it and organize it so someone could look at it and see what was appropriate for the library to accept. This will occur once it is safe.

Nick motioned to accept with correction of the roll call the minutes of the April 22, 2020 meeting. Mayor Kramer seconded. All were in favor.

**Director's Report:**

January presented the financial reports of the **Director's report** for the month of April. The financial reports were filed for audit.

January highlighted various aspects of the narrative section of her monthly report. She noted that:

- The library continued its efforts to support patrons with digital offerings.
- The Young Adult Librarian had held a Virtual Poetry Jam, and an online contest in May.
- In addition, the Young Adult Librarian had been actively involved with the Teen Advisory group.
- The Youth Services department had produced 11 virtual story times during the past month
- Staff members were working on setting up the summer reading programs online.
- Use of the library's digital services saw a he leap over April with a 55% increase in digital circulation over last year.

**President's Report:**

Nick read the following.

Mayor Kramer has informed us that Covid -19 conditions have cast a cloud over the Library's future income. If the Township assessed value decreases, our funding will decrease proportionally.

Currently, our Library operates at a cost of \$53<sup>1</sup> per person per year, compared to \$90 + 1-2 for the rest of Somerset County. We stand committed to serve the Township, with a main library, a Southern branch, and in the near future, third branch on Lewis Street. All of this demands that we allocate our resources carefully, and the numbers show that we do.

There is however, one area where we are not spending wisely, and that is on the rent and taxes for the Southern branch. For the past three years, the Director and the trustees, with your enthusiastic support and that of several other

Township officials have endeavored to find a suitable piece of land to build a new and larger Southern branch that will own and control. Ownership of a 5,000 square foot building will save about \$100,000 per year and provide a larger space with a program room. The plan underway is to invest a portion of our capital reserve funds by purchasing land and building a new Southern branch. In round numbers, this investment of \$3.1 million can save \$100K per year, a return on investment (ROI) of 3.2 %. We currently earn about 1% on this money. If we get the State grant, the ROI on our outlay will be much higher!

Our engineering firm has surveyed a two acre parcel that the Board of Education has agreed to sell for the proposed new branch. More work has to be done to prepare for a required subdivision. We have asked our engineers, The Reynolds Group, to cease work on the subdivision plan. It is my hope that when the Covid-19 conditions and regulations permit, that we can restart the path toward subdivision, a council designation for library use, purchase of the land, and construction.

I, therefore, ask this Board and the Township to support the goal of proceeding cautiously, but in a timely manner, to make this happen.

If there is a significant reduction in Library funding, adjustments will be necessary. Freeing up \$100K from the operating budget will help.

1 – Data source information is available upon request.

2 – The + is because besides the \$90, towns served by the SCLS must also pay for the expenses of their library buildings. For the Franklin Library, building expenses are included in the \$53 per person.

The Mayor asked Nick for clarification on what he was asking. Nick responded that he wanted to continue with plan for building the southern branch when conditions permitted it. The Mayor said he could support that goal and there was general agreement among the board members.

### Correspondence and communications:

“Macmillan Ends Ebook Embargo,” *Library Journal*, April 2020

“Covid-19 Outbreak Sparks Digital Shift for Public Libraries,” *Publishers Weekly*, March 30, 2020

“Virus Concerns Prompt Cost Cuts,” *Publishers Weekly*, April 6, 2020

There was a brief discussion of the increased use of digital resources in the library and the school system.

### New Business:

Ed motioned to approve the proposed 20/21 library operating budget. Agnes seconded.

Roll call vote:

Nicholas Ciampa	yes	Mayor Kramer	yes
Edward Ward	yes	Ed Ward	yes

Mayor Kramer motioned to release the executive session minutes from the Feb. 27, 2019, March 27, 2019, June 26, 2019, Sept. 25, 2019, Oct. 23, 2019, Nov.20, 2019, and Jan. 22, 2020 meetings. Agnes seconded and all were in favor.

**The next meeting** will be June 24, 2020.

Ed motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mayor Kramer seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

January Adams  
Director of Library Services