

Because of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency and State and Federal bans on large meetings or gatherings and pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 220.1 issued on March 12, 2020 suspending the in-person meeting requirement of Open Meetings Law (as extended), the Town of Pelham Public Library Board Meeting scheduled for May 5, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time (US and Canada), was held electronically via video and conference call on Zoom instead of an in-person meeting. Members of the public were able to view or listen to the Board meeting by joining the Zoom meeting.

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE TOWN OF PELHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY**

530 Colonial Avenue  
Pelham, NY 10803  
May 5, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Terrence Mullan, Judy Shampanier, Catherine Campbell, Emily Gest, Lisa Robb, Keith Kelvney and Jennifer Meyer.

**Board Members Absent:** Margaret Breuninger, Rob Gimigliano, and Karen Fellner.

**Also in attendance:** Library Director Patricia Perito, Librarians' Augusta Turner and Oz Coto-Chang, and the Library's bookkeeper Gail Vidales.

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m.

TM delayed approval of the minutes since KK and JM did not attend the March meeting and would be unable to vote.

**Finance Committee Report  
Financials of April 29, 2021**

KK said the Library's income position was negative \$37K because we have not received the first allocation from the Town beyond what covers payroll and taxes and it is exacerbated by construction expenses, putting the library at an overall negative \$85K. KK asked PP if all of the state construction grants have been made and she noted that she thought that an additional 10% or \$5K would be received approximately 60 days after the project's completion.

JM asked for the amount of the town allocation. KK said it would be around \$48K.

KK said re allocated expenses trying to figure out w bookkeeper that it is clear we are not budgeting for allocated expenses. To date the \$14K paid by town for pest control, security and landscaping.

TM asked for a motion to accept the financials; LR first, CC second. Motion passes unanimously.

### **Friends' Liaison Report**

JM said Friends Board is struggling with Novel Night because people don't want to host a dinner in their homes and they are trying to find alternatives. PP said the Friends' check came. TM asked if they had settled on a date for novel night and JM said nothing was set in stone yet.

### **Operating Plan Review**

#### **Section II. Personnel**

CC thanked those -- LR, OCC AT and PP -- who came to their planning meeting and discussed revisions to the plan that included downplaying volunteers and removing the cleaning services because they are now independent contractors. CC said updates include 1) the personnel committee will now discuss annual wage raises before the Board meets to discuss the budget process; 2) The library will also update its employee handbook following the town's newly revised employee handbook.

#### **Section IV. Library Collections and Services**

PP said updates included information about weeding procedures and how librarians make purchasing decisions, WLS services offered, and methodologies for maintaining collections. PP said the action items included 1) revise collection policy by end of the year so that it covers the library's full scope of offerings (print, video, digital, etc.); 2) create a criteria for weeding by the end of the year; 3) ensure budget is allocated appropriately across the collection; 4) physical inventory of library items; and 5) investigate donating books to the Children's Center fall book sale; 6) investigate digitizing the Pelham weekly; 7) explore space usage to accommodate new services.

PP said there were three more areas to complete. TM asked PP to have a draft for review by early June so that the board has at least one month to review the plan before the July board meeting. CC asked if there would be an opportunity to comment on the Operating Plan. TM said yes.

#### **Personnel Committee Report**

Action Item: Wage Increase

CC said the Personnel Committee reviewed a staff person's pay history and is recommending the board to approve a \$1/hour increase, bringing the individual's pay to \$16.16/hour. JS seconded. KK said they looked at the budget to determine cost over time is below the savings we've had thus far due to COVID-19 and that this would cost \$1700 and our payroll is \$11K below where it should be. PP asked if this would begin May 1; KK said yes. CC moved to approve the \$1/hour raise. JS seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Action Item: Client Review/Retainer Agreement**

CC said there have been some personnel changes. There is one page slot open and 2 clerk spots open. CC said she approached the Town about using their outside labor counsel for personnel and other legal matters. The Town said they would cover the costs for the retainer if they are given advance notice. LR said she thought it was generous of the town to let us consult with their attorney.

JM moved to accept retainer agreement given new terms in how attorney time is billed and location of arbitration proceedings between TOPPL and Lamb and Barnosky. KK seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Program Committee Report**

EG reported that the committee had its first monthly meeting with librarians on the third Thursday of April where Drag Queen Story Hour, among other programs for the coming months, specifically for May and June, and ways to plan ahead, was discussed. EG said the librarians spoke about programs that were important to the librarians and how to present them to the board. We spoke mostly about DQSH and EG wrote a skeleton for a separate memo for the librarians to present to the board. LR said the meeting helped her get a better sense of the routine programs, the labor intensive programs, and said she was glad that there is a lot of programming underway and how the different calendars match up.

### **President's Report**

TM did not give a report.

### **Reopening Plan**

PP said next week they plan to begin offering story time outside weather permitting. The library purchased a speaker and will handle sign ups on zoom, limiting attendance to 50 participants. Patrons will be asked to bring blankets and those over age 2 will wear masks.

PP said on May 15 they plan to move to Stage 4 of reopening. This means they will take appointments for computer usage, one grade school age child per table behind the reference deck. JS asked if this was one child vs. one family at a table since some families may have multiple children. PP acknowledged the point and answered that one family could sit at a table.

EG asked why 6 feet vs 3 feet. PP said most libraries are going 6 feet and each library establishes its own policy. PP noted that the CDC guidance for 3 feet is only for schools.

PP said on June 1 they plan to give patrons access to work spaces and fit 3 people to work socially distanced up to an hour at the reference table.

EG asked about the capacity increase because 30 people in the library would mean it was only open at 25% capacity. TM asked if people were coming back to the library at 25%, and if the librarians were seeing lines. PP said they've never had a line for people waiting to enter the library, only for checking out books. EG asked why remain at 25% when the Gov. said restaurants could open at 75% (or more).

LR asked what the Certificate of Occupancy number was. PP said 162 is the occupancy rate for the entire building. TM noted that 25% of 162 would be approximately 40 people and asked how many of the occupants would be staff. PP said 7 people are staff and would count for part of the 20-30 occupancy in phase four. LR said she thought limiting occupancy to 30 people seemed low. JS agreed.

LR asked if PP had paced out the library to determine if 30 people enabled six feet distance between non-family groups. PP said early on it was determined that 200sf per person.

PP said we can try 40 to see how it feels.

TM asked PP if she meant 40% capacity or 40 people.

JS said if a restaurant can go to 75% occupancy, why aren't we at 50% since the library is a public service and people should not remove their masks in the library.

EG noted grocery stores were not limiting the number of shoppers.

KK said he thought we should be consistent with rules in place publicly.

EG asked how they were monitoring visitors and enforcing browsing restrictions. PP said they stopped writing down the number of visitors and started to use the door counter; it's just observation.

LR asked if PP had seen any behaviors that would make her concerned about 50-75% occupancy. LR clarified she was not suggesting using the program room or conducting programs indoors.

PP said not long ago a patron called to find out how many people were in the children's room.

OCC said sometimes caregivers and children congregate in the library following story time and the librarians may have trouble telling the caregivers not to come into the library.

KK noted that there were operational issues and it is hoped that people understand a year after the pandemic began. He suggested that the librarians proactively tell story time participants that they need to limit their time in the library.

LR said she did not think we should make our occupancy threshold based on 2x week story time. She asked the librarians to consider the usage of day to day users.

AT said it's really where people congregate and a way to control it by limiting browsing to 30 minutes, if needed due to occupancy.

LR asked that this language and guidelines be incorporated into the operating plan so that staff can determine the appropriate number of users at a given time without it being an undue burden on staff to make these decisions.

CC said it sounds like patron usage of the library is increasing, and that patrons are following the rules, etc. and allows people to use the library for extended periods unless there is crowding.

EG noted that she did a quick audit of libraries in the state for their policies for browsing, research, and capacity and noted that it all varies. PP added that some libraries are still closed, others are less restrictive but the TOPPL is in the largest pool of libraries that are open with some restrictions.

CC asked if PP would revise the memo and attach it to the COVID operating plan. PP said they will want to notify patrons about reference desk and computer appointments.

EG asked if we settled on occupancy. CC asked the memo to be updated based on Board feedback to allow 50% occupancy with proviso staff are enabled to restrict the number of patrons based on crowding. She noted that the library's capacity is 162 total: with 40 in the meeting room. So, 50% capacity in the main library would be approximately 62 people.

### **DQSH Plan**

AT said PP, AT and OCC have wanted to host another Drag Queen Story Hour for a while. She noted the weather is improving and June is Pride Month. AT said they can require registration to manage attendance and also be prepared to present the program if there is inclement weather. She noted there will always be people who won't like the program but the librarians were not going to deny patrons the program due to one or two critics. AT said they've asked DQSH not to post the event on their Facebook page so that attendance can remain local.

OCC said he spoke to the police dept about outdoor events. Lt. Atkins came to visit the library and said that as long as they are within code guidelines they can have 250 people outside. AT said they don't expect more than 50 people to attend. They said they just need a head's up the day before for this type of programming.

JS said she thought the memo was thoughtful and well considered.

TM explained that we asked DQSH to not heavily promote the program because last time the program was held someone made a threatening phone call to the library, leading to a police presence at the event in 2018. The first time around it was not communicated effectively and there were negative ramifications but the event was wonderful. TM said he asked a few friends in the LGBTQ community about the event and their responses were mixed. Some supported the program, others felt it did not represent them.

AT said they will do a resource list for LGBTQ+ reading materials in the library and on the website. Said she understood why some folks in LGBTQ+ don't like the story hour. AT said we'll make it clear what the event is, and people don't have to come if they don't like it.

JM said she was surprised the program was for . younger kids 3-8 yr olds ..

TM asked which public officials would be notified.

AT said mayors, police dept.

LR asked about parking. OCC said police told them they should call if they needed help with parking or traffic.

JM asked how many people attended in the past. AT said it was 44, it was a lovely program and they did an arts & craft project.

AT said Maurice Owen-Michaane wanted to organize a Brave Space panel similar to the AAPI panel. AT said she asked Desmond Yuen, who organized the AAPI panel, what he would do similarly and differently with the previous event. Maurice said he would find panelists. JS asked that the program would be announced after the election for the school board.

TM asked if there is a backup program. AT said no.

TM said June 1 would be the go/no-go date for holding the event.

### **Director's Report**

PP said they are looking for a replacement for FT Clerk Adam who recently resigned and they are waiting for the list of candidates from the civil service canvas. PP said the tile grout has been sealed in the bathrooms per RG's recommendation. She is excited about a new pilot project with WLS to make chromebooks available to certain patrons who meet the eligibility requirements. She said the Double Coding program will be ending after the May 8 session because the student volunteer leader wants to study for finals and take a break for the summer.

PP thanked AT for developing a branded program calendar, and for helping organize the AAPI program which had over 150 people on the call.

PP highlighted upcoming programs including:

- A sunrise scimeter (eclipse) program with retired News12 meteorologist Joe Rao
- Special Juneteenth program
- Author talk with former library trustee Kristin van Ogtrop
- Indian dance class.

PP noted that program totals were wrong in April. She said 165. Totals for the month should be 545 not 453. She noted the February total was wrong and should be 554.

PP noted other stats related to circulation, overdrive electronic books, hoopla. She noted that totals for circ were also incorrect.

TM noted that it was the third section of her report where she mentioned data that was incorrect. He asked she bring updated, corrected stats at the next meeting.

PP said the Boyscout garden has been planted and established.

LR asked that PP make note that some stats are impacted due to Covid.

CC asked when the program room would be ready to open, noting that we soon will be able to be three feet apart. PP said they were hoping to clear out the room by Sept. CC asked why Sept. PP said there was still materials stored in there and they are still weeding. CC asked what would happen if the library were open and there was no pandemic. PP said the weeding would occur at a slower pace. CC noted that the weeding had been underway since January 2021.

PP said the program room is also used to quarantine materials as well as to receive materials. CC asked what the direction is on quarantining. PP said they had been quarantining materials since the pandemic began.

CC asked to see what document the librarians are using to justify quarantining materials when the CDC has said touch was not transmitting the virus.

LR asked if libraries are uniformly quarantining materials. PP said there was no agreement across the board regarding quarantining at the Westchester Library director's last meeting.

LR expressed concern that it seems like the board is having to negotiate with the librarians regarding capacity and quarantining materials. LR asked what was the policy guiding the quarantine period.

PP said 24-72 hours was the last recommended quarantine period. CC asked when that recommendation was made; PP said last month.

LR asked PP if the librarians were not comfortable lowering the quarantine time frame from 72 hours despite the guidance that it could change to 24 hours. PP said she would be comfortable quarantining only 24 hours.

LR noted that she was nervous about the board's role to have to think about minute, important operating decisions.

CC said there has been a frustration at the board level that the weeding project is taking over the library. The library is for patrons and the community not to be weeding or quaranting books. She asked for a memo for clearing the weeding project.

AT said the books are about and for the public. CC they can't take over the program room for a year. AT said the majority of weeding could be done by Sept but she's spending all of her time doing programming and she's one person.

KK asked the librarians how often they weed. AT said it's ongoing and this is the largest effort ever and it will not have to be at this level again.

AT said there is a specific process to weed the books.

CC said one of the goals for the operating plan is to create a criteria for weeding. She noted that at the last board meeting it was noted in the minutes that PP needed to supply a goal for completing the weeding project. CC asked for a written memo outlining the completion of the weeding project.

JM asked if books could be moved to the basement.

OCC said the basement is hostile to books because there is mold and it is humid and the books will be trashed. Throwing them out is the last resort. They use a vendor to resell books.

JS said just get the work done by Sept. when she thinks more people will be using the library.

CC said she feels like the weeding project has taken over a lot of projects and she would like a written memo.

KK noted covid has been going on for 13 months.

PP said they started weeding when they came back from pause. EG asked if that was last summer. PP said probably.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

TM adjourned the meeting at 9:33 p.m.

### **Action Items:**

- CC asked for a memo stipulating a completion date and goal for the weeding program.
- TM asked PP to have a draft OP for review by early June so that the board has at least one month to review the plan before the July board meeting.



- CC asked PP to revise the re-opening memo based on the discussed 50% occupancy and attach the revised memo to the COVID opening plan.
- TM asked PP to bring updated, corrected stats at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting of the Town of Pelham Public Library Board of Trustees is Wednesday, July 7.

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