

## Bethlehem Public Library Trustee Minutes – 5/12/2025

Members Present: Doug Harman, Len Grubbs, Nora Clark, Lisa Ffrench, Stephen Dignazio, Sara Plumley, Barbara Szeidler, Sally Syren and Melissa Smith

Absent: None

Public Present: None

Librarian Present: Laura Clerkin

Meeting Commenced at 6:59pm

### **Meeting Minutes**

Barbara made motion to accept April minutes as written, with Nora seconding. The motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The budget is in a good position. Funds for the patio door replacement from last year have been disbursed. The town did not bill for health insurance this month, next month we will pay the balance after the remainder of the credit. Lisa made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, which was seconded by Stephen. The motion passed.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

None.

### **Committees**

HR - Nothing to report.

Bylaws and Policies - No updates or activity to report regarding HB273 that was discussed last meeting.

Buildings and Grounds - Nothing to report.

Finance - Laura presented two grants.

- A \$10,000 grant was received from the American Library Association through the Libraries Transforming Communities initiative. The funds will be used to construct an ADA-compliant walkway extending from the end of the existing cement path to the new pavilion. Laura will reach out to individuals with disabilities in the community to gather input, as required by the grant.
- A \$15,000 grant was awarded by the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) to support building-related projects. Laura authored the grant application, which is intended to help fund the construction of the new pavilion. She reported that estimates for the pavilion project are in the range of \$25,000–\$30,000.

A discussion followed regarding potential impacts of current federal funding cuts. Laura clarified that neither of these grants are federally funded and therefore should not be affected.

Len made a motion to approve both grants. The motion was seconded by Sara and passed unanimously.

Stephen requested a discussion on the potential impacts of recent federal funding cuts on the library. Laura explained that the affected programs include the NHSL Interlibrary Loan Service and Libby, both of which rely on federal funding. The committee discussed possible consequences of these cuts and brainstormed

strategies to sustain the services. One idea proposed was the possibility of volunteer-based book transport to support the interlibrary loan system if needed.

Technology- Nothing to report

## **Librarian's Report**

### **Accounting Services:**

Laura informed the committee that New Dimensions will be increasing their monthly accounting rate by \$25, effective in June. The committee discussed several options, including negotiating the rate, comparing rates with other providers, or bringing the service in-house. After considering all options, the committee determined that it would likely be best to continue with the current accountant despite the price increase.

### **Technology and Website Transition Grant:**

Laura reported that she is working with SNS and Over Watch on securing a grant to support the library's transition to a .gov domain and either Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace (G Suite). Over Watch has conducted a security assessment, and the total grant amount is to be determined following the assessment. The grant is expected to cover three years of costs. The transition could occur within the next couple of months, and will include a new domain, email system, and platform. The new web address will be bethlehemNHlibrary.gov.

### **Emergency Access Request from Bethlehem Elementary School:**

Laura informed the committee that during library off hours on Monday morning, the fire alarm at Bethlehem Elementary School went off unexpectedly. As the school was unable to access the building, they inquired about the possibility of obtaining a key to the library's pocket door for use in future emergencies. Laura asked the trustees if they would be comfortable providing the school with a key to access the entire building in the event of an emergency occurring outside of normal library hours.

The committee discussed the request. Doug noted that there is already a Knox Box, which the fire and police departments have access to in emergencies. He will

follow up with the new fire and police chiefs to ensure they are aware of the Knox Box and its contents.

The general consensus was that providing a separate key to the school was not necessary.

Laura will follow up with the school to inform them that emergency personnel already have access to a key via the Knox Box.

**Update on Casella Donation:**

Sally asked Laura for an update on the Casella donation and the compost project. Laura confirmed that Casella has agreed to make an anonymous donation with no publicity. The donated books have been received, and the backyard compost bin program is scheduled for August.

Sara made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:37pm, with Len seconding; the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Melissa Smith