

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Session Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2024 Meeting opens, 5:33pm

Members Present: Jeffri Boisvert, Al Buyck, Jillian Sandy, Olivia Shimkus, Sarah Glose, Charmian Foster, Tom Jahn, JoAnne Hanrahan, Vikki Collazo, Kelly Sullivan, Kate Miller-Corcoran, Katie Bowers

Not Present:

Also Present: Emily Jones, Josias Bartram, Laura Haynes, Michelle Brandone, Rebecca Stone, Sherry Kowalski, Alex Fisher, Kathleen Shores, Michaela Gay

CALL TO ORDER - 5:33pm

GUESTS – Emily Jones

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MINUTES: November 14, 2024

- Move Tom and Olivia from “Also Present” to “Members Present”
- **Motion to accept the minutes with correction: Al Buyck, Second Sarah Glose. Passes unanimously.**

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

James Ingram – Promotion from PT Library Clerk to Library Assistant for Programs and Exhibits

- **Motion to accept the appointment: Charmian Foster, Second JoAnne Hanrahan. Passes unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

- Prospective trustee
 - Emily Jones. Came forward from marketing team. Project Manager for Care Compass Network. Born and raised in Broome County. Family was very active in the community growing up - volunteering at soup kitchens, reading at Broome Developmental Center, etc.
 - Volunteered with AmeriCorps/Rural Health Network
 - Served on board of YWCA, served as chair

- Lives in town of Chenango
 - Interested in many of our committees, especially strategic planning committee
 - Thank you Emily! Vote will occur later during executive session.
- Literacy Volunteers Lease – 2023-2027
 - We/they want to do a 5-year lease - didn't have lease in 2023 and 2024 (things were up in the air regarding the space, turnover in legal, etc) and they have been very good about working with us about space changes to accommodate the new staff break room, and we want to lock in rent for next 3 years. Prior to 2023, they had yearly leases.
 - Language in the document is boilerplate.
 - **Motion to accept the lease: JoAnne Hanrahan, Second Jill Sandy. Passes unanimously.**
- Bylaws
 - Proposal: move to three, 3-year terms from our current, two 5-year terms
 - Counterpoint: our onboarding process is not fully cemented and takes a long time. That would eat up people's terms and we'd have to fill terms much more frequently. For a long time, it was hard to get people nominated at all - what if we end up with a dry run of interest/nominations again?
 - Was this lack of interest because of the 5-year commitment? Seems like no - we've had lots of interest lately.
 - Also want to change language around board members being able to step away for a year and restart their 10 year service.
 - Con: Many members are not ready to fill officer positions until after their 2nd year - so they become an officer and then they are at the end of their term?
 - Pro: 3-year terms allow us more frequent check-ins - more warning if people need to leave.
 - Con: The wheels of government move slowly - you cannot expect to complete many projects in 3 years. Do we want turnover that frequently?
 - We should boost the community member committee positions - to make sure there are people ready to rock when positions open.

- Generally speaking, we need to tighten up our onboarding process overall.
 - 5-years sounds like a more serious commitment. We have community member committee positions for people who want shorter terms.
 - New members weigh in:
 - New members (who are currently at the start of their terms) feel that 5 years reasonable. Some have worked with a board that has a 2 year position - that is way too short.
 - Do we want to keep in the language about leaving/coming back? Partial term?
 - Should we set a lifetime cap of 10 years of service?
 - What if someone served from age 25 - 35, then wants to come back at age 65?
 - Jeffri says “Join one of our community committee positions!”
 - We will leave this language to be reassessed 3 years from now as the board recruitment process develops.
 - We need to put review of the bylaws in a regular cycle.
 - In addition to Appointed Trustees, we have non-voting advisory Trustees: County Executive, Mayor of Binghamton, BCSD Superintendent, BOCES Superintendent “or their designee”.
 - Should we expand this to allow more representatives - the county legislature? The Binghamton City Council? Or simply change it to a “commitment to inform their offices”?
 - All notes and attachments are publicly available. Is this change even necessary?
 - Let’s clarify this language before considering adding more advisory positions.
 - Should we change/keep language around not taking multiple leaves of absence in a 5-year term?
 - This was more of an issue when we didn’t have a full board - one person being absent created a quorum problem.
 - Add a line to require Trustees to notify the board of a leave of absence and length of time.
 - Add a line that the Executive Committee will review appeals for multiple leaves of absence.
- New Trustee Information

- Please review this document to make comments/additions regarding what needs to be done to smooth the onboarding process.
- Security
 - Overview
 - This is a planned overview of the security system - unrelated to recent events.
 - Security is provided by Broome County Security - they have full law enforcement powers on County property, but they are not police officers. Part of the Department of Public Works.
 - We pay for this with a county charge-back. Presently ~\$100,000 per year.
 - We have an officer assigned whenever we are open - roughly 15 minutes before opening, during the open hours, and 15 minutes after.
 - Monday - Thursday, we are open 9am - 8pm. Usually have a FT officer from 9am - 5pm and then a PT officer from 5pm - 8:15pm.
 - This has been true since just after COVID.
 - May be armed with guns or tasers and pepper spray issued by the Department, depending on their level and licensure. We have never had a gun discharged at the library.
 - Ideally officers work closely with staff. Check in with the building supervisor in the AM, review any incidents. Interact with staff and patrons enough to know names and have a general understanding of concerns.
 - When we have issues with officers, it's usually officers that just sit and watch the cameras. We need officers that walk around and get to know people. When we don't have this, it has a big impact on everyone in the building.
 - There are lots of gaps in the cameras - which we are trying to correct - but presence is the point.
 - Ideal officers are also skilled in deescalation, and do not freeze or escalate dangerous situations.
 - One of our biggest concerns at the moment is high turnover - they get new jobs, they prove themselves and get moved to higher conflict sites, etc. We have expressed this to the Department, but it does not seem to make a difference. We would like a say in creating a degree of stability.

- Custodian walked through several times by himself and she moved around to avoid him.
- After she slept for 5 hours, then woke up around 11pm and immediately started smashing children's artwork, tearing books, rearranging things on the desk, throwing things in the trash.
- She took some of the money in the donation jar.
- She moved schedules and desk items around.
- She went into the Circ room for many hours and moved things around on desks, messed with keys, library card applications, trashing family photos, lip balms, medicine, throwing items in trash, cut cord off the coffee maker, and tearing down half of the photos of banned patrons. Did not go into emergency services. None of this tripped the motion sensors - we need to look at the placement of these.
- Went to the bathroom to throw out the coffee maker, which tripped the motion sensors and the security company sent BPD. She was questioned for an hour, but not searched. She stole keys, money, and some paperwork.
- Broome's head of security looked briefly at footage and decided she had not done real damage. Library staff were not informed.
- Library staff came in and noticed the damage, texted Josias at 8:58am. Kelsey took lots of photos, which are now being used as evidence. Library staff knew the space and could see the extent of the damage.
- They put the security officer in charge of the investigation while also blaming him for it. Josias and Sherry came in to investigate. It took Saturday - Wednesday to assess the full damage.
- Josias sent an email to the board on Saturday.
- On Monday, Josias attempted to contact security. At 10:45, the Assistant Security Department Head called - "Oh yes, I hear your concern".
- Because there was clearly a mental health component, got blamed on a single officer, "and no damage", they let her go.

- Another member of the Department who mentors the new officers came to the library to review everything - noted many crimes and the need to press charges - including felonies and grand larceny.
- The situation is now being fully, adequately addressed thanks to this officer.
- This situation has dominated staff time this week and left staff feeling unsafe, “in a daze”, etc.
- Problems it exposed
 - We need to look at the placement and timing of the motion sensors.
 - We need to review procedures to clear the building, particularly areas with high shelves. This requires a minimum of two people.
 - Circulation area needs to be locked.
 - The Library Director was not alerted by the alarm company or Broome Security - they should have alerted him immediately. Staff was never alerted.
 - After she was released by BPD, security did not search the building for any additional persons, any unlocked doors, etc. What if there was someone else in the building? No one checked.
 - (Lack of) assessment of damage was issued before a real assessment - money, keys, etc was missing, personal items destroyed - none of this was noted in the original review by BC security.
 - Concerns were not taken seriously by BC security leadership.
- Where we are now
 - We were told that the keys have been thrown off the Court St. bridge - we need more information about that. Fortunately, there were no external keys taken.
 - Took key to AED - this was scheduled to be replaced anyway.
 - Took key to sharps containers in bathroom.
 - Took key to override the door lock from the *inside* of the library - can only be used inside the library.
- Youth Services staffing
 - Youth Services Librarian is out on very long term medical leave.

- At this point, we are understaffed in this area in an unsustainable way. People are pitching in hours, but we need a full time person. A balance needs to be figured out.

OLD BUSINESS

- Emergency Services MOU
 - We met with Emergency Services here with the County Engineer. Possible solutions are going to be drawn up.
- Renovation/Projects update
 - We have over \$500K to spend on renovations. We have been working on this process for several years. We will be working more with County Engineering to move forward.
 - Highest priority projects are bathrooms and door to garden.

REPORTS

- November Financials
- Director's Report
 - There is none. No time, dealing with crime (see above).
- Staff Reports
 - Review process of director
 - The gains Josias has helped the library make are immense
 - Staff feel heard
 - There are weak spots in the library overall, but there are plans in place to address these
 - Generally speaking, Josias works extremely hard and we need to put more funding and more staffing in place to prevent burnout 🌸🌸
- Committee Reports
 - Great job nominating and marketing committees! And everyone, but they have been doing a lot to bring in new board members.
- Friends
 - Goal was to raise \$50K this year - Friends raised \$56K so far (two weeks left to go)!!
 - Friends Gala - October 10th, 2025 at Doubletree
 - \$100 for a ticket
 - \$50 for library staff
 - Seeking business sponsorships
 - Also you can join the Friends!

Executive Session

- **Motion to move to Executive Session: Sarah Glose, second Jillian Sandy. 7:55pm.**
- **Motion to close Executive Session: Katie Bowers, second Jillian Sandy. 7:56pm.**