

**LINDEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
31 EAST HENRY STREET
LINDEN, NEW JERSEY
BOARD MEETING
BERNICE BEDRICK ROOM
SEPTEMBER 18th, 2017**

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law have been satisfied in that a “48-hour” notice has been transmitted to ***THE LOCAL SOURCE, HOME NEWS TRIBUNE, STAR LEDGER***, City Clerk, posted at City Hall, and in the Library.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Robert Ayres
Dr. Berghammer
Dorota Kotowski
Joan A. Konrad
Doris Matey
Maria Pizzelli
Diane Wilverding

Marilyn Coplan, President

ALSO PRESENT:

Dennis Purves

EXCUSED: Mayor Derek Armstead

Dr. Danny Robertozzi

Luray Rusnock

Andy Baron, Esq.

**DISCUSSION WITH DALE SPINDEL, DIRECTOR OF
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Mrs. Spindel gave some background information about herself and asked what she could do to help.

Mrs. Konrad asked how we could stretch our money.

Mr. Ayres described the difficulty they have had in dealing with the City in regards to getting more money.

Mrs. Spindel said that the library is often treated like the stepchild. Cities don't like having to give money but not have control over how it's spent like they do with libraries.

She said that if a town says they don't have money for the library but have it for other departments then they're making a choice not to give it to the library.

She said that the library shouldn't be talking about layoffs if the rest of the city isn't doing the same.

Mrs. Pizzelli said it's not easy to get the City to give more money since the City is just going to do with it once. She expressed concern that they could cause the library to close.

Mrs. Spindel said that it would take a referendum to close a library.

Mr. Ayres said that they could underfund the library to the point that there was no choice but to close.

Mrs. Spindel recommended cutting the materials budget further, buying things for the children's department but cutting back on everything else.

Dr. Berghammer asked about grants to bring in revenue.

Mrs. Spindel said there aren't many options in terms of grants and most won't give money toward operating budgets since it's believed the township could be covering that.

She suggested trying to get people to make bequests to the library.

The director pointed out that most grants require matching funds, and the library likely wouldn't have the money to do so.

Mrs. Pavlak said that a primary responsibility of the library board is to secure adequate funding for the library and stressed the importance of building relationships with the governing body.

She stressed that the municipal liaison should be coming to the meetings and reporting back to the council.

Mrs. Spindel asked if we've plotted for the City what our budget has been over the past ten years and Mrs. Coplan said yes.

She asked if the City is hiring and Ms. Wilverding said yes.

She said if everyone else's budget is going up and the library's is the only one going down there's a problem.

Dr. Berghammer suggested that maybe the board needs a public relations person and find a way to make the library's programs more visible.

Mrs. Pavlak said the library wants to make itself visible to the community so that the public will come out in support of the library.

Dr. Berghammer said that computers and the internet decreased the library's value.

Mrs. Coplan said that when the library cut hours the hope was that people would complain to the City but they didn't.

Mrs. Pavlak said that a lot of patrons don't know how the library works so they may not understand that they have a voice.

Mrs. Pizzelli asked which employees went to the council and mayor about not getting raises.

Mr. Ayres said it was the representative from the Teamsters.

Dr. Berghammer said that the City is supposed to hire a business manager who will do a feasibility study of every department and will make recommendations so that the City money is distributed properly.

Mrs. Pavlak said that the business manager can't be involved like that with the library.

Dr. Berghammer said that they have to answer to Civil Service.

Mrs. Pavlak said that the library may be part of Civil Service but it's still the library board that runs it, not the City.

Mrs. Spindel said that a business administrator has no experience as a library director.

Ms. Wilverding said that there are a number of City officials who utilize library services so she doesn't understand why they don't support the library.

Dr. Berghammer suggested that maybe the library is stale and wondered what could be done to make them fresh again, and that they need better marketing.

Mrs. Spindel said the library will still need staffing in order to provide services.

Dr. Berghammer said they could use volunteers and recommended using high school students.

Mrs. Spindel said the volunteers would still need to be supervised.

Dr. Berghammer said that they need the people getting more involved because they see that the library benefits them.

Mrs. Konrad asked if she has any ideas on how to do this.

Dr. Berghammer said they need to see what other libraries are doing and they should get the voter registration list to use to reach out to every registered voter in Linden.

Mrs. Spindel said that this is what people do as a career as consultant and is beyond a volunteer.

Mrs. Pavlak said you need to know both who is using the library and who is not.

She said that it's not true that people don't need the library because they have computers since many still don't have computers at home.

(Mrs. Spindel left the meeting at 7:10)

Dr. Berghammer suggested partnering with a non-profit organization and then people can come to the library to fill out various forms and applications.

Mrs. Pizzelli said that all students 6th grade and up are given computers at school and before that there was more demand for public computers by students.

Mrs. Pavlak said that she still guarantees that many people don't have computers at home.

Dr. Berghammer asked if the library advertises programs on Channel 36.

The director said yes.

DISCUSSION WITH PATRICIA PAVLAK, PRESIDENT, NEW JERSEY LIBRARY TRUSTEE ASSOCIATION

Mrs. Pavlak said that the library board's responsibilities are outlined in state statute.

She said that their primary role is to secure sufficient funding for the library.

She said the book sales in Cranford raise \$20,000 per year.

Mrs. Pizzelli said that's a completely different demographic from Linden.

Mrs. Pavlak said the board's responsibility is to recruit, appoint, and evaluate the director. The board is only responsible for one employee: The director, and the director is responsible for the other employees.

She said that there shouldn't be much of a relationship between the board and the employees.

She said the board is responsible for setting library policy.

She suggested policies be reviewed every three years and get rid of ones that are no longer applicable.

Dr. Berghammer asked if staff has an issue if they should go to the board.

Mrs. Pavlak said absolutely not.

Dr. Berghammer asked what to do if a staff member is emailing her.

Mrs. Pavlak said the staff member should be dealing with the director and not a board member.

She said on a regular day to day basis the board shouldn't be getting involved with staff issues.

She said a responsibility of the board is to plan for the growth of the community, and see if the library is meeting the needs of the community.

She said the library wants to become such an important part of the community that they'll react to anything that might work against the library.

Mrs. Pavlak asked whether the library has books in other languages.

The director said there is a small collection.

Mrs. Pavlak suggested that the library consider increasing the collection.

She said there might be social groups in the community that would give donations.

The director said the collection is small because there isn't even enough money for the regular collection.

Mrs. Pavlak suggested putting together a packet of information about the library and ask local realtors to distribute it to people moving into the city.

She said that the mayor and the superintendent of schools each have an alternate but each gets only one vote. The alternates should be reporting to the mayor or superintendent and keep them informed of what's happening.

She said there are five to seven other board members, none of whom can be municipal employees. She said being an employee of the board of education is okay since that's autonomous.

Ms. Wilverding said there are board members who are municipal employees.

Mrs. Pavlak said those people would need to come off the board.

She said that decisions made by a board with municipal employees as members could be called into question.

Ms. Wilverding asked if the Cranford board of trustees has its own attorney.

Mrs. Pavlak said yes and a board should use its own lawyer and not the city's.

Dr. Berghammer asked if she could personally be sued as a board member.

Mrs. Pavlak said she's not an attorney and isn't sure but an entire board can be sued.

She said that many people think being on a library board is all for fun and don't understand the role.

She said that every trustee must take an oath of office at the beginning of their term.

She said trustees serve five year terms and a third of the board should go off every year so there's a rotation.

She said if someone leaves the board a replacement can be appointed but they only get the remainder of the original term, not a new five year term.

She said a trustee needs to stay knowledgeable about library law.

She said trustees can offer information about the new library construction bill but can't tell people to vote for it because that would be a political action.

She spoke about legislation that would raise the third of a mil minimum funding amount. She recommended that the board would want to come out in support of this bill when there is action on it next year.

She said trustees are required to attend the meetings and need to be prepared by reading their packets.

She said the board needs to have bylaws.

She said a board member should be willing to serve on a committee.

She said there need to be rules about what happens when board members miss too many meetings.

Mrs. Pizzelli asked about the attendance of the council liaison.

Mrs. Pavlak said he should come to the meetings and give reports and if he doesn't come he should be sent a list of things the board wants reported to the City.

She said that the board can only go into private session for personnel issues and nothing else.

She said board meeting minutes need to be held forever.

She said the board needs to support the library director.

She said that every library board must have seven hours of continuing education per year and there is a possibility of that increasing in the future.

Dr. Berghammer asked if the education can be done online.

Mrs. Pavlak said yes.

Mrs. Matey asked if it is seven hours per member.

Mrs. Pavlak said it is seven hours per board.

Ms. Wilverding spoke about tutors and that it can be hard to find a safe place to do it.

Mrs. Pavlak said that tutors said that they liked being with the students in an open public place and didn't feel comfortable doing it at home.

She suggested that the library have a meeting room policy.

Mrs. Coplan said there is one.

Mrs. Pavlak said that the meeting rooms have to be open to everyone, even people the library may not agree with.

Ms. Wilverding said that the policy keeps people from using the meeting rooms for a business.

The director said that the policy used to exclude religious groups but it had been changed.

Dr. Berghammer asked if the library could charge for the meeting rooms.

Mrs. Pavlak said yes if it's in the policy but then it goes against the idea of the free public library.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting scheduled for Monday, October 2nd, 2017, at 6:30 pm in the Bernice Bedrick Room, 31 E. Henry Street, Linden.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Maria Pizzelli, seconded by Joan Konrad and passed, the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Sincerely,

Joan A. Konrad
Secretary