

Community Library Association

Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Board members in attendance: Steve Lackey, Dave Bennett, Heidi Brayer, Kate Vavpetic, Sandie Enders, Lauren Gleason, Suman Golla

Staff members in attendance: Jill McConnell

Community members in attendance: Jim Mitnick

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm.

Steve thanked Suman for her service to the Board and Suman thanked the Board for the camaraderie, collaboration.

Steve shared his reflections on the past year and what the board needs to focus on for 2025. From an operations standpoint, 2024 was a trying year financially. However, strong donor support helped us end the year with \$123,000 in cash. The board will need to focus on meeting the budget in 2025 and finding new revenue streams. Fundraising for the capital campaign was very successful in 2024. Focus will now turn to completing the project in 2025.

We have been awarded the ARPA grant, which is a reimbursable grant. We will begin to receive these funds when we have expenses for the project.

In the past, we've posted a year's worth of minutes on the website. Steve reviewed all the minutes and in a couple of cases removed some names and specific identifiers that Steve believes should not be in the public domain, and shared that with Jill.

ACTION: Jill will circulate these revised, annotated minutes for Board review.

Motion to approve the minutes from the 11/18/24 Board meeting with the change related to the ARPA grant. Moved by Dave. Motioned. Approved.

Governance Report (Sandie Enders)

Motion to approve Lauren Gleason for a one-year initial term replacing Florrie's seat, starting now, and Motion to approve Kathleen Freyvogel for a three-year initial term, replacing Suman, starting in March, as new Board Members. Motion by Heidi. Seconded Suman. Approved.

The Governance Committee had planned to bring a Procurement Policy for review; however, the Keystone Grant requires that we use the Borough Procurement Policy since the Borough is actually the grant applicant. Jill inquired for the ARPA grant and expects that they will require CSCL to have their own. Since we will not have any action on construction until we hear about the Keystone grant in February or March, we can adopt the Borough policy at that time, unless ARPA requires us to have our own in the interim.

ACTION (for the next Board meeting): Sandie/Jill will distribute the Borough policy to the Board for review and approval to use as the CSCL policy if needed.

Treasurer's Report (Dave Bennett)

Dec 2024 was a deficit, but not as deep as expected, thanks to contributions from individuals and foundations, and reductions in personnel expenses. The greatest revenue growth was private contributions. Gains in other revenues were offset by gains in government grants. Expenses were lower in programs, personnel, and collections, in part because of payroll calendar and collections freeze.

Work on the 2025 draft budget is complete. Dave anticipates a significantly smaller deficit than previous years (\$42,700). The budget includes 3% compensation increase to staff, and has no reductions in hours of service or reduction in personnel. If we are off-track as the year progresses, we will implement reductions that have been identified during the planning process. We have restored the Collections expenses to 12% of total expenditures to adhere to ACLA expectations. Dave thanked Jill for a proactive and strong management of a complex budget this year.

Steve thanked Dave for the work he has, and continues to, put toward the budget, specifically a monthly view. Dave noted the importance of tracking new revenues monthly throughout the coming year to ensure that we do not need to reduce anywhere. If the budget plays out as anticipated, the low cash month will come in August 2025.

Motion to approve the 2025 Draft Budget Heidi. Seconded Suman. Approved.

ACTION: Dave will circulate the monthly breakdown to the Board by email.

Heidi, Dave, and Jill have attended two sub-committee meetings of the school board in the last month. They plan to attend the full school board meeting sometime this spring.

ACTION: Dave, Jill and Heidi will attend the meeting in February.

Director's Report (Jill McConnell)

Usage is up at both locations. Jill is working diligently to continue to develop what is already a very positive partnership with Lauri Ann West Community Center. Staff at the branches have been very dedicated to continuing and expanding children and teen programming in Sharpsburg, despite a decrease in personnel there. There was a slight decrease in Sharpsburg teen programming due to instability in staffing. The reason for the slight decrease in children's programming is unclear. Adult programming and usage have increased. Update: Keystone Grant awards will be announced in March. The article in the Herald generated significant buzz around the renovation project.

Capital Campaign Update (Steve Lackey & Jim Mitnick)

Jim discussed the transition from fundraising to construction. Both the makerspace glass wall and air handling unit require quite long lead times. It is not a particularly difficult project, broadly speaking. The goal is to get the drawings completed by AXIS asap, then put the request for public bids out over a three-week period in early spring, and award contract in mid-May, with construction in the summer. Goal is to award to the lowest, most responsible bidder, which is aligned with the Borough procurement policy.

Jim does not anticipate closing the library for any major work to be done (i.e., opening for the staircase); especially noisy or disruptive work will be done before or after opening hours, or overnight.

Any Other Business

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon (Jill McConnell)

Annual event in April for 25-30 regular volunteers. Wonderful, but labor intensive, event run by staff. Jill would appreciate assistance from a Board member or two to consider helping to plan/execute this event. Suman volunteered to assist.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14. Motion Dave. Second Heidi. Approved.

Jim Mitnick excused himself prior to the Executive Session.

Executive Session (Steve Lackey)

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Vavpetic
Board Secretary