

**Bridgman Public Library
Board Minutes
November 23, 2021 - 9:00 a.m.**

Meeting Called to Order: 9:00 a.m. by Valauskas

Board Members:

- **Present:** Valauskas, Wilk, Collins, Janoskey, Noll, Fuller, Kole (on Zoom)
- **Excused:** Bogue, Worcester

Staff: Kreps, Abele

Agenda Revisions: A suggestion was made to move Committee reports and Action Items to the beginning of the Agenda to facilitate time constraints of Board Members; all Members agreed

Guests: Brian Hake, Kruggel Lawton, CPA

Public Comments: None

Friends of the Library: None

Committee Reports:

- **Finance Committee:**

1) Kole stated that the library's budget is in good shape. The library maintains a conservative budget and therefore is in a favorable position to set aside additional surplus funds for specific projects. Further discussion will help identify projects or activities to which such funds may be directed.

2) **2020 – 2021 Audit Overview**

Brian Hake, lead auditor from Kruggel Lawton, CPA, commended the library and its accounting firm Johnson, Valk, Thomson, & Rheam, for their diligence and detailed record-keeping with regard to budgeting and managing the Library's finances. As a result, variances in budget-to-actual expenditures small and few adjustments are required during the process. Hake encouraged the library to continue to use the Future Operating Plans section of the Management's Discussion and Analysis section of the audit to create context by documenting pertinent library goals and objectives; making financial predictions, however, is not advised.

- **Facilities Committee:** None

- **Personnel and Policy Committee:**

1) Kreps is finalizing a new BPL Organizational Summary which includes employee job descriptions and photos of each employee. An employee pay scale document will also be shared with the Personnel and Policy Committee. In addition, Kreps has created a New Board Member Orientation Materials binder and plans to begin posting the monthly Director's Report on the library website.

Directors Report:

Kreps noted that in-person library visits remain at about 55% – 60% of that prior to the pandemic. Kreps acknowledged concern about said numbers, and also described the new ways the public engages the Library: emphasis on virtual programming and take & make/drop-in style activities, and utilization of digital and streaming resources. Kreps is also analyzing Google analytics data to assess patron engagement of the library website.

Kreps gave an overview and update on OverDrive and Hoopla – two digital resource and streaming services which allow borrowing and instantly downloading ebooks, e-audiobooks, movies, and music directly onto your electronic device using your library card. BPL participates in a ‘catalog’ of titles shared among Southwest Michigan Library Cooperative (SMLC) members. Heavy use of these shared Overdrive titles has often created long hold times for popular titles. A designated SMLC Committee has evaluated this situation; participating libraries (like BPL) will be increasing funding for this collection and will focus on increasing the number of copies of these popular titles

Approval of Minutes: Janoskey requested 3 minor corrections:

- 1) Under FoBPL, “...shelving units for use *in* the library...”
- 2) Under Personnel and Policy Committee “A draft of this document *will* be provided...”
- 3) Under Communications and Correspondence – Harvey Kimmel, “...provided an educational component for BPS students *is* incorporated.”

Motion made by Collins to accept the October 26, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Noll. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report/Financial Reports: None

Discussion Items:

- **2022 Library Closings and Board Meeting Schedule:** Kreps will have the 2022 Library Holiday Closing Schedule and the 2022 Board Meeting Schedule available at the December board meeting.
- **Review of COVID-related protocols:** Currently, the library is strongly encouraging that masks be worn inside the building. Due to the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, the board agreed to review COVID protocols every month and make it a standing agenda item.
- **Libraries experiencing First Amendment “audits” and Intellectual Freedom Challenges:** Kreps alerted the Board of increasingly common occurrences in public libraries and public municipal offices, which are being described as ‘first amendment audits.’ In these cases, people enter public offices (e.g. city/township hall, library) and begin to film themselves and activity in these spaces; if objection to this activity is offered, they claim a ‘1st Amendment right’ to film and document as they wish. There is currently much discussion about this topic in the library world about how best to respond to such activity. The Library Privacy Act itself only offers limited privacy protection pertaining to what qualifies as a ‘patron record of activity’ and is not particularly applicable. Violation of library policies regarding patron behavior could be applicable, however. The general consensus is that if the person(s) are not confronted or resisted, they typically leave without major incident. Kreps noted the need to be prepared for such possible incidents; he will review pertinent library policies with the staff and with the Personnel and Policy Committee in the event that BPL needs to confront this issue.
- **Technology Plan Update:** The Technology Plan Update will be discussed at the December meeting.

- **Chikaming Township Library Service Contract Update:** Kreps met with Chikaming Township Trustees and the New Buffalo and Three Oaks library directors to discuss the renewal of the Chikaming Township Library Service contract and to share statistical information about Chikaming patron usage at each library location. The contract affords Chikaming Township residents the option to choose one of the three libraries as their “home library.” New Buffalo and Three Oaks libraries have requested an amendment to this contract which would assess a \$25 fee for each Chikaming patron/household to obtain a library card; BPL, however, does not support assessment of this fee. We await feedback from the Chikaming Township Trustees as to their recommendation for moving forward.
- **Additional Topic - Library Atmosphere:** Board members encouraged the library staff to continue making an effort to be warm and welcoming to patrons entering the library by being visible, greeting them, using their name (if known) and to create/encourage rapport with regular library users. This is especially needed during the pandemic while many patrons and staff are wearing masks and trying to maintain social distance; we always want to cultivate a pleasant, friendly atmosphere at the library.
- **Additional Topic – Library Millage ballot information:** The Berrien County Elections Office has confirmed that our upcoming millage renewal can appear on either the August or November 2022 ballot. Each option has a deadline by which the Election Office must receive ballot language. August ballot deadline is May 10th; November ballot deadline is August 16th. The board will discuss this topic in more depth in upcoming Board Meetings.

Action Items:

- **Approval of Bills:** Motion made by Wilk to approve payment of October 2021 bills totaling \$29,374.18. Motion seconded by Janoskey. Motion carried.
- **Approval of 2020 – 2021 Audit Report from Kruggel Lawton, CPAs:** Motion made by Wilk. Motion seconded by Collins. Motion carried.
- **Approval of Board Officers:**
President: Ed Valauskas (incumbent)
Vice President: Liz Bogue (incumbent)
Secretary: Rick Fuller (replacing John Wilk who stepped down)
Treasurer: Jim Kole (incumbent)

Motion made by Wilk. Motion seconded by Collins. Motion carried.

Communications and Correspondence: None

Meeting adjourned: 10:30am

Next meeting: December 14, 2021, 9:00 a.m. at the library.

Submitted by

Dennis Kreps

Approved by the Secretary: _____ Date: _____