



BERKS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Board of Directors Meeting
May 15, 2024 7:00PM
Hybrid Meeting
MINUTES

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of Berks County Public Libraries was held using a hybrid format, in person and via the Microsoft Teams platform, on Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

Board Members Present: Ginny Hand – President; Helen Flynn - Vice President; Dr. Debbie Noel - Secretary/Treasurer; Jason Brudereck, Arleny Pimentel

Board Members Absent: Mary Ellen Wells, Xiomara Toledo

System staff present: Karin Rezendes, Deputy Administrator/Outreach Services Coordinator; Jeff Smilko, Technology Coordinator

System staff present online via Teams: Stephanie Williams, Library System Administrator

District staff present: Marissa Guidara, Youth Services District Consultant

Advisory Committee members present in person:

Mike Najarian, Bethel-Tulpehocken Public Library
Linda Roebuck, Muhlenberg Community Library
Jerry Richter, Reading Public Library
Melissa Adams, Reading Public Library
Sherry Cameron, Reading Public Library
Ann Bohara, Village Library
Julian Marshall, Womelsdorf Community Library
Wendy Marshall, Womelsdorf Community Library

Advisory Committee members present online via Teams:

Jason E. Wenrich, Bernville Area Community Library	Natasha Donaldson, Mifflin Community Library
Chrissy Mittura, Boone Area Library	Jennie Rodriguez-Priest, Mifflin Community Library
Nicole Sapna, Boone Area Library	Julia Becker, Reading Public Library
Rob Kistler, Boyertown Community Library	Carlos Jenkins, Robeson Community Library
Melissa Hartman, Brandywine Community Library	Chris Thomas, Schuylkill Valley Community Library
Mariel Jordan, Exeter Community Library	Ben Robitzer, Sinking Spring Library
Kate Schuler, Fleetwood Area Public Library	Lisa Hoopes, Spring Township Library Association
Chelsea Williams, Hamburg Public Library	
Dorothy Brobst, Hamburg Public Library	
Gerry Hynes, Kutztown Community Library	

Call to Order: Ginny Hand called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance: Ginny Hand led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment:

Prior to the start of public comments, Ginny Hand read a public comment response statement, from the Berks County Public Library Advisory Board, to a public comment made by Mr. Broome at the last meeting. The response thanked him for his public comment at the February 21, 2024 meeting. However, it is not within the role of the Berks County Public Libraries Advisory Board, nor the Berks County Public Libraries' System Administrator role, to investigate personnel matters at member libraries. He was encouraged to attend the next regularly scheduled Exeter Community Library Board of Trustees meeting to share his concerns.

In-person Public Comments:

Mike Najarian, Bethel-Tulpehocken Public Library Trustee, spoke in regards to the pending Berks County Public Library System Member Facilities Review Policy. He specifically expressed concerns related to the excessive scope of the language, the impracticality of the process, the slow response time required by the Board, and his perception that the Board would be taking decision making power away from independent library Boards.

Sherry Cameron, Reading Public Library Trustee, spoke regarding her concerns related to the Facilities Review Policy. She thinks the policy has unnecessary bureaucratic procedures and would be enforced with punitive financial consequences.

Melissa Adams, Reading Public Library Executive Director, shared that the Facilities Review Policy was of great concern to the Reading Public Library, especially the potential for punitive financial. She feels the policy draft, as written, contains vague language. She asked that the Board table the policy until further clarification is provided by the state regarding criteria.

Julian Marshall, Womelsdorf Community Library Trustee, echoed the concerns addressed by the previous commenters in relation to the pending Berks County Public Library System Member Facilities Review Policy. He pointed out that the Womelsdorf Library property is owned by Womelsdorf Borough and that the library staff and Board may not even be aware of upgrades the Borough may consider making at any given time.

Virtual Public Comments Read Aloud by the Advisory Board:

Jason Wenrich, Bernville Area Community Library Trustee, shared concerns related to the new Spark Catalog System. He expressed that some patrons feel the system is not working properly, that system searches are too broad, and the system sends too many texts. He feels the new system has been a major disappointment. He also felt the system was brought out too fast.

Roger Broome, patron of the Exeter Community Library, shared his concerns with personnel decisions being made at the Exeter Library. He called for the resignations of several Exeter Library Board members as a result. Mr. Broome also addressed a number of bylaws of the Exeter Board that he believes are not properly enforced.

Approval of Minutes: Debbie Noel amended the minutes to include the attendance of Chrissy Mittura, Boon Area Library. Debbie moved to accept the minutes, with that correction, of February 21, 2024. Jason Brudereck seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Debbie Noel noted that the 2024 budget has no unusual expenditures and is moving along at the usual pace.

Debbie Noel moved that the report be accepted as presented. Helen Flynn seconded. The report was unanimously accepted.

Correspondence: None.

Administrator's Report: Karin Rezendes, Deputy Administrator/Outreach Services Coordinator, shared the report in the absence of Stephanie Williams, Library System Administrator. Karin highlighted the following items:

- Williams completed her compliance reviews for the System Membership Agreement for reporting year 2023. Four libraries did not meet standards in reporting year 2023 and received letters highlighting the deficiencies.
- The County's 2025 budget process opened in late April and Williams and Padilla-Santos are actively preparing our department's budget request.
- With the help of other System staff, Orischak prepared materials for the BCPL Awards Ceremony, which was held March 6 at the Agricultural Center. Noah Lenstra, Associate Professor of Library and Information Science for University of North Carolina Greensboro, later interviewed Orischak where she discussed the current process of the awards in addition to its successes and areas for improvement. [The article is posted on the Webjunction website.](#)
- On June 4 at 6-8PM and June 6 at 1-3PM, Orischak will be holding two workshops at System HQ for libraries and boards on utilizing the Return-on-Investment (ROI) calculator. Other tools will be shared, along with how to use these values when crafting targeted messaging strategies. Orischak has prepared her presentation along with library examples for her workshop sessions. Registration: <https://forms.gle/Lnr9Vwn77FBpBpHw8>

Committee Reports:

Advocacy Committee: Arleny Pimentel shared that the Advocacy Committee met virtually on April 4. They discussed the Pennsylvania Library Association's ASK document for the fiscal year 2024-2025 state budget. The committee developed two templates for member libraries to use with their state legislators, to advocate for increased funding in the Public Library Subsidy line of the state budget. Libraries are encouraged to share any responses they receive from legislators with the System Administrator, Stephanie Williams.

Finance Committee: Debbie Noel reported the Finance Committee met in-person at System HQ on May 1 and discussed the first draft of the 2025 Funding Formula using the 2023 data points, and the 2025 Funding Formula Instruction Sheet. The committee will meet again on June 5 at 12PM to review second drafts of the 2025 documents and begin a rough draft of the 2026 Funding Formula.

Nominating Committee: Jason Brudereck reported the Nominating Committee met virtually on April 30 to discuss two terms ending as of December 31, 2024. Jason will be seeking a reappointment from the Board of Commissioners to begin his second term in 2025. Ginny Hand will not be renewing her term. The committee discussed potential candidates for consideration. Jason will reach out to assess their interest in joining the Advisory Board.

Old Business:

Robeson Community Library's Compliance Update was not provided during the meeting, as the presenter had technical difficulty. This will be added to the August Advisory Board Meeting Agenda for an update.

New Business:

The Berks County Public Library System Borrowing Policy was approved by library directors in January, and by this Board in February. However, we needed to eliminate a section about temporary cards, as those no longer apply in Spark. We also made language more consistent about non-traditional items. The library Directors already approved these updates by a virtual vote. Debbie Noel moved to accept the updated Berks County Library System Borrowing Policy. Arleny Pimentel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Two documents, The Berks County Public Library System Member Facilities Review Policy and the Berks County Public Library System Public Comment Policy, were presented for members of the BCPL Board to review for approval at the next meeting. Melissa Adams, Reading Public Library Executive Director, provided some additional information to the Board related to the Facilities Policy for the Board to consider when reviewing the policy as written.

Bernville Area Community Library's written Compliance Update noted the Library Director graduated May 6, 2024, thereby completing her required education.

Village Library of Morgantown's Compliance Action Plan, presented by Ann Bohara, noted the steps to be taken to bring the Village Library into compliance:

- Carol Donahue was hired as Director on March 1, 2024 and will attend Northampton Community College's Library Technical Assistant program to complete her required 15 credits for her specialized diploma.
- Carol works 25 hours weekly.
- Carol plans to have her 10 CEs by December 31, 2024.
- Carol completed the Certification Extension Request Form and Ann provided a copy to the Advisory Board.

Womelsdorf Community Library's Compliance Action Plan, shared by Julian Marshall, noted he has located a Director and made a verbal offer that was accepted. Once agreements are signed and employment is assured, Julian will report back.

District Consultant Reports: Marissa Guidara, Youth Services District Consultant, provided the following report:

District Negotiated Agreement- The proposed new contract and budget for district services is now in the hands of all of the library directors for review. It will be discussed and voted on at

the upcoming Directors Meeting this month, and implemented for the start of the district year in July. As always, the proposal represents a constructive look at the best district services and resources to benefit all of our libraries; and this year also addresses some updates to Interlibrary Loan service and procedures, and to the Libby/Overdrive shared collection management and development.

Celebrating Our Stories Workshop with Robin Gow – Reading District Libraries’ Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee is hosting a district-wide event featuring local poet Robin Gow. Robin will be facilitating a writing workshop called Celebrating Our Stories, which will focus on how all of us are storytellers. The event will be held on Saturday, June 15 at 1 pm at the Wyomissing Public Library and is open to all libraries’ patrons to attend.

Announcements: Ginny Hand shared an email she received from Judy Ellsworth regarding the Friends of the Berks County Libraries Book Bonanza 2024. The highlights:

- The new location for the Book Bonanza is at the county's South Campus, 400 E. Wyomissing Avenue in Mohnton, the entrance is located at the back of the building.
- Volunteers can attend an open house/walkthrough on Wednesday, May 29, from 1:00-3:00. If you are free, please feel welcome to come.
- The donation/sorting schedule begins the week of June 3: Mondays from 9:00AM-12:00PM, Tuesdays from 9:00AM-12:00PM and Wednesdays from 5:00PM-7:00PM. In addition, on the third Saturday of each month from 9:00AM-12:00PM (June 15, July 20, and August 17).
- Volunteers are needed to help accept books from the community and carry them (on rolling carts) back to our space, and to begin the sorting process during those same hours.
- The 2024 Mini Sale will be 3 days long, Friday, September 20 from 10:00-7:00, Saturday, September 21 from 10:00-7:00 and Sunday September 22 from 10:00-5:00. Volunteers will be needed throughout the sale.

Jason Brudereck shared three items:

- In response to a comment heard, he wanted to be clear that he has visited Bethel-Tulpehocken Public Library.
- He mentioned the Reading Eagle had a wonderful article spotlighting the new Bethel-Tulpehocken library facility.
- He also congratulated BCPLB member Arleny Pimentel on her recent completion and graduation of her Master’s Degree program in Leadership.

Adjournment: Ginny Hand moved for adjournment. Jason Brudereck seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Noel
Secretary, BCPL Board

***Upcoming Meeting Dates:
August 21, 2024 7:00 PM
System Headquarters: 1040 Berks Road, Leesport PA 19533***