

Phillips Public Library Board of Trustees  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 31, 2023

**Trustees present (in person or via zoom):**

Bruce Marshall, Jenny Markle, Becky Steinbach, Laura Tomaszewski (zoom), Galen Azbell, Marc Peterson, Meredith Hueckman (Beth Tenut--not yet officially seated)

**Trustees absent:**

Brittany Weisrock

**Staff present:**

Rebecca Puhl, Jody Eckert

**Call to order/establishment of a quorum**

Meeting opened by Becky S. at 5:05 p.m.

**Public Comments**

No individuals signed up to speak.

**Comments on questions from the public submitted at the December (early January) meeting**

1 submitted and answered during the Jan. 5th meeting

- Question: Is Rick Morgan still on the board? Why does his name remain on the agenda?
- Answer: He has appointed a proxy. We will remove his name from the agenda.

**Communication and Correspondence**

none

**Approval of 1/5/2023 minutes**

Motion made by Bruce

Seconded by Meredith

To approve the January 5, 2023 minutes as presented

Motion passed.

Point of Order (made by Bruce): Marc has been appointed by the Mayor, Galen is appointed for now; both are able to discuss and vote in this meeting. The chair invites Beth to participate in discussions, but she may not vote until the County Board officially confirms her appointment.

**Reports:**

**1. Treasurer's Report**

No expenditures from board funds. A full report will be given in Feb. No action needed.

**2. Director's Report**

Becky provided comments on her written report. Also, Jen from U-Create! is doing the craft connection next month. Book clubs are running well. The book sale is going well. Tremendous Thursdays are still trying to get off the ground. Becky is open to suggestions for day, time, or ways to increase interest. (Jenny wonders if the after school program might want to send kids over on the bus. Marc and Becky will look into the idea.) Moose BINGO went well during Winterfest. The annual report is due at IFLS this month, so Becky is extra busy. No action needed.

### **3. Staff Meeting Minutes**

Written minutes provided. No action needed.

### **4. Circulation report**

Circ is not up to pre-COVID numbers, but the numbers are improving. E-books are still not being counted. Becky P. and/or Galen will look into options for better charts that are a little more readable. Circ reports will continue to be offered each month. Meredith was able to get stats directly from John Thompson as well; she provided copies to Becky. Becky asked the board to spread the word about the changes in the children's section so that community members feel comfortable bringing their families back. We should get information out about resources available to families to link cards, use pins, etc. to make parental monitoring of kids' materials easier.

(Meredith stepped out 5:29 for a minute.)

#### **Unfinished Business:**

##### **1. Discussion/Action on COVID-19/Mask Requirements**

Becky P. would like a general guide in place for catastrophic or emergency events to take the place of the Covid policy. This will be discussed at a reasonable time in the future.

##### **2. Discussion/Action on Library Building Project**

Becky is struggling to find available shelving. Her goal is to have a plan for budgets and remodeling stages in place by May so that she can write grants and look for funding. Bruce is interested in investing board funds in CDs so that they can accrue interest for building/remodeling projects and other projects in the future. Having a time-line would make this possibility more feasible. This can be discussed further next month during the Treasurer's report. No action needed.

#### **New Business:**

##### **1. Discussion/Action on challenged library materials**

Becky's note: Now that weeding is done, inventory will happen. This will hopefully catch any other books similar to those challenged and get them shelved and/or stickered appropriately. Other difficult topics among the children's books might be moved to the family discussion section as well (ie, divorce).

*What Are Your Words* by Katherine Locke

Discussion: Bruce would not choose this book for purchase by the library nor read it to his children or grandchildren, but he feels that it is fine to move the book to the gender section.

Motion made by Bruce

Seconded by Galen

To move this book into the Family Discussions, Gender subsection.

Role Call vote:

Marc-yes

Meredith-yes

Bruce-yes

Becky-yes

Galen-yes

Jenny-yes

Laura-yes

Motion passed.

## **2. Discussion/Action on Empty Board Seats**

Becky has sent a letter out to interested board candidates along with the questionnaire. The returned forms will go to the Mayor and the County Board Chair.

Bruce stated that he has offered to help the Mayor and the County Board Chair regarding any questions they may have regarding appointing library trustees.

Bruce also commented on the issue of Meredith's representing herself to the county board rather than as an official representative of the library board. She was there as herself and not as a representative.

Meredith mentioned that she attended the meeting only as a private citizen and stated that she was giving her opinion and did not attend as a board representative. She asked that in the future Becky contact her rather than sending out an email to everyone if any questions arise.

Becky P. mentioned that the minutes from the meeting state that Meredith was there to represent the library board. She thinks the county board minutes should be adjusted so that it does not say that Meredith represented the board. Bruce agreed that we should contact the secretary regarding the minutes.

The board agrees that we could be more careful in the future to identify ourselves as NOT in an official capacity when expressing our views to any board or group.

Jenny provided a candidate list to make sure the board is current regarding the potential candidates. Becky P. indicated that Matt Arneson and Rebecca Trimner declined being potential board members, so the list will be updated. She also stated that all of the remaining candidates were sent the new questionnaire. If anyone does not receive it, he or she can give Becky an email address for a digital copy of the document.

Questions came up at the City council meeting about Galen's mother being an employee and Galen's being on the board. Jenny explained the process of how that issue came to be brought up: Concerns from the community months ago led to Jenny's contact with John Thompson. With information from John regarding ethical concerns both financially and in the chain of command, Jenny contacted Rick Morgan (then board president) about the situation; he assured Jenny he

would pursue the issue. However, the issue still was not settled by the time Rick resigned as board president. Recently, Jenny received a question from a City Council member regarding the library board appointments on the city agenda, and she had to be honest regarding the unresolved concern. The council member chose to bring up the concern at the council meeting. Bruce does not see the conflict of interest as overly difficult; he also followed up with the Mayor and provided material to him and suggested contacting the city attorney. Becky will officially, on behalf of the board, ask Chuck to contact Bryce regarding this issue.

**3. Discussion/Action on Phillips Public Library Board Bylaws**

Good discussion and recommendations from the board. Requested changes will be made by Becky; and Galen will work on the wording for Article IV, Section 8. An updated version will be brought to the board next month. No action taken.

**4. Approve January 2023 Bills**

Motion made by Jenny

Seconded by Meredith

To approve January 2023 bills “above the line” in the amount of \$14,834.53 and “Below the line” in the amount of \$70.00.

Motion carried.

**5. Reading of questions from the public for comment at the January meeting**

- Question: Lynn Boers asks why she did not receive a questionnaire.
- Answer: Lynn provided her email address, and Becky will send her the form by email.

**6. Discussion/Action on Budget Statement**

Proposed statement to be posted on the website along with the updated budget:

Dear Community,

In the interest of transparency and clarity, we offer you the 2023 Phillips Public Library budget, approved by the Board of Trustees (November 29, 2022) and by the City Council. This final, [amended] version of the budget contains carefully considered and updated amounts in several budget lines and attempts to reflect the board’s desire to provide for the maintenance of the library as a valuable resource for our community.

Sincerely,

The Phillips Public Library Board of Trustees

Motion by Bruce

Seconded by Marc

To use the statement prepared by Jenny with the addition of the word “amended” in sentence two.

Motion carried.

**7. Other new business to add to the agenda for the next meeting**

--financial matters mentioned previously by Bruce  
--board code of conduct discussion

**8. Set date and time for next meeting**

The next meeting will be held *Thursday, February 23, 2023*, at 5:05 p.m., in the library community room. A zoom link will be provided.

**Adjournment:**

No motion to adjourn

No Second

Becky S. adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Markle