

BARTLETT PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES
TRUSTEE TRAINING
SATURDAY MAY 20, 2023
9:00 a.m.

Location: Meeting Room, Bartlett Public Library District
800 S. Bartlett Road, Bartlett, IL

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting of the Bartlett Public Library District Committee of the Whole was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by President Hopkins.

ROLL CALL: President Peggy Deyne; Vice President Peggy Bucaro, Treasurer Dave Barry; Secretary John Sias; Monica Boyer, Lynn DeSmidt, and Joe Olsen, Trustees.

STAFF PRESENT: (Absent: Director Karolyn Nance.)

TOWN HALL: None.

AGENDA:

Cindy Fesemyer, Training Facilitator with Fesemyer Consulting, LLC, was introduced to the trustees. The training session began with an identification of the five high-level topics which will be covered -- fiscal health, library director oversight, policies, advocacy, and trustee etiquette -- followed by attendee introductions and a warm-up on listening skills.

1. Fiscal Health:

At the end of the meeting trustees will create an agenda "wish list" for use in developing an agenda that can help structure meetings annually or over the course of a number of years in order to address policy review, bylaws review, and other work to look at where the Library is at, what it is doing, and what it might do in the future, making sure that board plans for the coming years are in step with what the staff need, what the Library needs, and what the community needs.

Ms. Fesemyer made a statement about the confidentiality of the individual trustees' personal information and contributions to the discussion; and that in meetings of the trustees generally, constructive conversation is useful, and it is fine to disagree with each other but not to be disagreeable. (Re No. 5 Trustee Etiquette.)

Ms. Fesemyer provided some background on her education and experience, including that she attended library school from 2010-2012, spent 14 years in nonprofit administration, fundraising, and leadership, followed by working with the Wisconsin State Library in Madison where she was the consultant to the 380-plus public libraries in the state. The majority of her work currently involves strategic planning and serving as a library consultant.

After receiving some guidance on effective listening skills, trustees paired up to learn about each other: their occupation, if they are retired, what they do with their time in addition to work, how long they have lived in the area, a skill or passion they bring to the board, and a question they would like to have answered today.

Requests for discussion topics that Ms. Fesemyer received were: How to progress through an agenda, and the appropriate use of committees of the whole.

Trustees were asked to consider what are the traits and qualities of a good listener.

Board Meetings and Committee Meetings: Ms. Fesemyer stated that when the board of trustees meets to conduct business, it has to comply with Open Meetings laws. The Agenda outlines what will be discussed at the public meeting, the agenda must be posted at least 48 hours (two business days) in advance of the meeting, and a quorum must be achieved for each meeting. The same rules for open meetings apply to a committee of the whole and subcommittee meetings.

The Bartlett Public Library District Board of Trustees has standing committees of finance and facilities. The standing committees are listed in the library board bylaws, which should also be regularly reviewed. Some libraries also have a standing personnel committee, which hires a library director and reviews the director on a regular basis. The board should communicate regularly with the director and make sure that the board and the director are on the same page as to the management of the library, and performs an annual formal review. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight.)

The holding of a committee of the whole meeting on a monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly basis can result in the regular board

meeting progressing more timely and prevent excessively long regular board meetings. A meeting of a budget committee, held as a committee of the whole meeting during the first quarter of the calendar year, or the board treasurer meeting with the director before the board meeting, can cut down on some of the discussion related to the annual budget.

Director Wessel was stated to be a very good communicator in making sure the board is aware of what is going on in the library, including emailing the board the monthly packet in advance of the board meeting.

Roberts Rules were discussed with respect to the process for moving and seconding a motion, followed by allowing time for board discussion on the motion.

Discussion was had regarding the use of a voice vote versus roll call vote. In the period of the pandemic and the State Order permitting remote videoconferencing for board meetings, a roll call vote was preferred for Zoom meetings due to lags in audio streaming. The library may necessitate a roll call vote for every decision involving the expenditure of funds; and such a requirement should be stated in the library's bylaws. The board has the option to choose whether to call for a roll call vote for all voting decisions, or it has the freedom to determine which decisions must be made via voice vote versus roll call vote. A roll call vote may be requested by a trustee on any matter.

If the City or the Library is convening a community event such as development of a comprehensive plan, the Library may want to publicly notice that it is possible a quorum of trustees may be in attendance.

The trustees should make sure that a majority of the board is not present in a subcommittee meeting. Ms. Fesemyer advised the board that no board business should be conducted prior to the meeting convening nor after the meeting has adjourned.

A trustee who attends a committee meeting is not considered a member of the public; they are a trustee attending a meeting. If four trustees are in a location and talking about library business, the meeting must be noticed. A committee cannot take an action; a committee can review information and bring to the board a recommendation for action on a item.

Closed Sessions: In statute in Illinois there are 24 legitimate reasons why a board can hold a closed session, but most of the reasons do not apply to a library. Closed session has to be properly noticed on the agenda.

Discussion was had regarding an attorney's advice on whether a board may enter into closed session without advance notice; e.g. if an issue arises during that meeting that requires the board to do so. The most common reasons for a library to go into closed session include: discussing the library director compensation or behavior, or who to hire; if a trustee is suddenly moving out of state and their seat needs to be filled; if the Library is considering the purchase of a real estate parcel and the board would like to discuss the specifics of that; or if the Library is involved in litigation.

Discussion was had regarding whether to address longer topics during a committee of the whole meeting rather than at a board meeting in order to keep the board meeting less lengthy. Ms. Fesemyer suggested a trustee could contact the library director via email before a meeting, after the trustees received and reviewed the board packet, and ask the director to address a particular issue or item at an upcoming board meeting, not at a committee of the whole meeting.

How to progress through an agenda: The board president has the responsibility to make sure that the conversation flows during the board meeting including directing a conversation back to the agenda or calling the question. New leadership is enhanced when other people are given the opportunity to speak and to listen to each other. The board may need to set a time for board discussion, and set aside a portion of the agenda to allow people to speak; not necessarily that the bylaws would be changed to accomplish this, but they should be reviewed and edited every few years. (Re No. 3 Library Policies.)

2. Library Director Oversight: Ms. Fesemyer stated that trustees can contact the library director to seek information on a topic of library business "offline" in advance of the board meeting, and the director should not be "called out" in a public meeting. The director is the face of the library and deserves respect from the board members at public meetings and to be reflected positively in the media. (Re No. 5 Trustee Etiquette.)

Trustees should review the agenda ahead of time and read any documents linked to the agenda ahead of time in order to arrive at the board meeting ready to discuss library business, keeping trustee comments concise.

3. Library Policies:

Ms. Fesemyer recommended the Library include information on the agenda for individuals who need an assistive listening device or other disability accommodation for a board meeting to contact the library to make that request. Many libraries also include this information for advance requests to provide accommodations for programming.

Virtual meetings: If the Library has an option to attend a meeting via Zoom, staff will want to communicate that option to the public. Providing the link and the phone number to persons with disabilities in order to access a meeting via Zoom meets the open meeting requirement for those persons.

Each month staff can schedule speaking to portions of the upcoming budget, e.g. programming and materials, to provide trustees more detailed understanding of what comprises the respective line items in the budget.

Library director oversight is the trustees' responsibility, and policies are 100% under the board's purview. Staff will likely bring to the board's attention policies that are due to be reviewed and updated. When policies have been updated, a review date should be noted on each policy. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight.)

Some libraries are creating a programming selection policy which may or may not be part of the materials selection policy. The selection policy should include an accompanying form to challenge the policy. The American Library Association has sample policies available.

4. ADVOCACY:

Ms. Fesemyer stated that a board responsibility is to provide advocacy for the Library. When trustees are out in public, they are always a library trustee. Each trustee should know why they personally are a trustee and have a couple reasons in mind as well as a couple of bullet points about what is going on at the library to share with the members of the public when the trustee is out around town. Trustees should be a positive force for the

library, especially publicly facing, because the library needs to continue receiving the financial backing that it is receiving.

Strategic Planning: The Bartlett Library has a relatively new strategic plan. Libraries may create a strategic planning/steering committee that is made up of a couple staff people, perhaps a community person, and one or two trustees. The structure can be created of how decisions are made on determining what are the mission/vision statements, goals, and objectives. A strategic plan can be modified as the year goes on. Once a goal has been met with the strategic plan, the Library may want to enhance, add to, or build upon the strategic plan within certain parameters.

As a board culture matter of oversight versus micromanaging, the board must have trust in its director and allow the director to manage their staff. If a trustee has thoughts or ideas that could enhance or help the director, it is okay, as elected stewards of the Library, to make a suggestion to the director. The board's job is to hire the person who takes care of the library on a day-to-day basis; the board hires, evaluates, and can fire that person. The director does those same three things for every other staff person in the building. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight.)

It is not the trustees' place to be a sounding board to staff members. Staff members are welcome to bring an issue to a board meeting and voice anything they want. As a chain of command, staff can bring an issue to the Library's human resource person or the director. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight and No. 5 Trustee Etiquette.)

The library trustees and director are a team. If a trustee is feeling like they don't understand a library process or procedure, they can speak with the director or the board treasurer and have their questions answered offline. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight and No. 3 Trustee Etiquette.)

The regular performance evaluation of the director can be conducted using tools such as staff surveys and/or management team surveys. An outside entity can be hired to conduct an in-depth review of the director. If a board were to consider firing a director, it would want to do so in conjunction with Village HR and make sure the proper legal support was in place. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight.)

Performance improvement plans can be utilized by the director for review of the library staff, and a library board can utilize a performance improvement plan for a director as well. (Re No. 2 Director Oversight.)

Occasionally the need for new policy arises, and most often the library staff will bring that to the board's attention. (Re No. 3 Library Policies.)

Ms. Fesemyer will email to the library the slide regarding the trustees creating an elevator speech, beginning with why the trustee wanted to hold the trustee position. The elevator speech should speak to the passion they have for the library as an organization, why libraries are important, and why this library is important to this community. (Re No. 4 Advocacy.)

Advocacy for the library also includes relationships with municipal leaders and state leaders.

The current trend for strategic plans is for people to write three to five-year strategic plans, and then they may do a quick refresh two, three, four, or five years down the road at a half-day retreat, to modify the goals achieved or to maintain existing goals. When something big like COVID happens, and the library rolled out several new services such as curbside pickup and Make and Take, the Library may want to ask the public via a survey whether to make these new services permanent. If new services are added, other legacy services may need to be dropped depending on staff capacity.

The strategic plan has five main goals. Vision -- the vision statement is like a statement for community consumption; you're telling the community we want to be a welcoming space for everyone.

The mission statement is: To be called the best place to learn and discover.

Ms. Fesemyer wanted to build an agenda wish list, which sounds like it might be useful for the trustees to get into a regular rhythm of what comes when. Know that trustees are looking at financials every month; and trustees receive a director's report every month. If there are any subgroups like Friends, Foundation, library system, trustees could receive regular reports from them every month too. There could always be a facilities report from the facilities manager, something about

the library system, and perhaps a Foundation liaison to attend meetings quarterly or annually and share what is going on with the Foundation. On occasion a trustee may want to attend a Foundation or a Friends meeting to extend those relationships.

The annual report and budget is something that the City needs the Library to do for a facility evaluation. The trustees' job is mostly to listen.

The trustees need to make sure that the agenda reflects what they need to know as trustees to vote appropriately; and the board should prioritize what it wants to hear and when you want to hear it, whether monthly or quarterly for, as an example, policy review or presentations from library departments -- which can raise up staff confidence and new leadership.

5. Trustee etiquette:

The board may want to flesh out an annual calendar and run it by everyone to make sure it reflects everyone's needs.

Ms. Fesemyer believes that especially term limits in leadership are important. She commended the trustees for giving of their time and knowledge they bring to the board and the library for the benefit of the organization and the community.

TOWN HALL: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Trustee Bucaro moved to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Barry.

Roll Call Vote - Yes: Barry, Boyer, Bucaro, DeSmidt, Deyne, Olsen, Sias. Motion carried.