

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OSSINING PUBLIC LIBRARY
Work Session
Thursday, January 11, 2024, 5:00 PM
2nd Floor Conference Room
Ossining Public Library, 53 Croton Ave., Ossining, NY;
11 Prince Rd., West Yarmouth, MA

Draft Minutes

In person: Shandi Speller, Althema Goodson, Amanda Curley, Philip Rice, Meghan Huppuch, Karen LaRocca-Fels (*departed approximately 6:15PM*)

Remote: Alice Joselow

Absent: Cecilia Quintero

Call to Order

At 5:03PM Amanda Curley called the January 11, 2024 Work Session of the Ossining Public Library Board of Trustees to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mission and Vision: The Ossining Public Library enriches, connects, and inspires our community and is the community's center for lifelong learning.

Board Discussion

Policy/Personnel/Bylaws Committee

First Reading: Draft Revised Use of Meeting and Performance Spaces Policy

- Reservations and Cancellations
 - Policy does not currently identify who in the library would respond to applications. This should be added for clarity.
 - Alice Joselow suggested creating a generic email for room reservations. Karen LaRocca-Fels suggested she make this operational decision in line with future hires.
 - The calendar sends automated response when people request a reservation.
 - Edits:
 - Trustees agree to the first sentence of the proposed language (take away "within 2 working days").
 - Application – add "policy" to name of policy and add link to policy so that it can be easily accessed and referenced by those making reservations.
- Parking – new section

- Shandi suggested speaking to the village board about parking concerns.
- Althema added asking where could patrons park to use our space/for events (especially while we have 16 spots out of commission).
- Karen agreed that the Board needs to have serious conversation amongst ourselves and subsequently with the village/village board about parking to get recommendations from them. Last Saturday the library had to have four staff in the parking lot dealing with that instead of working inside.
- The Board would like to be able to provide alternatives – ex. municipal lots – but needs to speak with village first. The alternative parking options could be created separately as a document for multiple uses.
- Edits:
 - Suggested that it simply say “Limited parking...and not guaranteed”
 - Remove “all applicants are requested to utilize offsite parking”
 - Remove third proposed sentence as well
- Nonprofit reservation fees
 - Karen LaRocca-Fels reminded the Board that nonprofits will newly be charged a reservation fee according to updated policy. This is in response to the staff time needed to facilitate all events. Library programs that are cosponsored will not be charged.
 - This may be something the Board will hear about from the public. Comparison of fees shows that our fees are still lower than other libraries.
 - Current draft has Board approving any waivers.
 - Shandi Speller suggested creating a sliding scale based on self-reported budget. Phil Rice suggested simplifying to two options (above/below X budget).
 - Shandi Speller asked why community groups can't use school district spaces for meetings. Amanda Curley shared that the school district has been approving/denying use of space according to whether the majority of people who are part of a group live in the school district.
 - Edits:
 - Page 2 – last bullet about nonprofit orgs will be moved up to under other nonprofit info

Bylaws – attendance clause

- No edits to sections 1, 2, 3
- Section 4(a)
 - Charter gives a range of 5-9 members. Karen LaRocca-Fels raised a concern about unclear wording. What is a “certified resolution”? We want to ensure that it's harder than passing a resolution to change the number of board members.
 - Karen LaRocca-Fels proposes “The Board shall consist...Any change in the number of trustees will require a change to bylaws, following the process as outlined in section 11(a) Amendments.” She will get exact wording from the attorney.
- Section 4(c)
 - Shandi Speller asked: If a trustee is unable to attend for some reason,

how does it benefit the library and the Board to dismiss them? Today's context is different than when this was created.

- Phil Rice shared that the benefit of a bylaw about absenteeism is the risk that a trustee doesn't attend most meetings without consequences.
- Shandi Speller posited that there's a difference between a trustee being absent for an unknown reason and not being in communication.
- Althema Goodson disagrees with this bylaw. The work sessions were meant to complement regular meetings and offer space for preparation and discussion as opposed to doubling as building and grounds conversations. Adding work sessions and special meetings to this attendance requirement is a lot considering illness, changes in work requirements, etc. It's not clear what remote participation will be legally allowed after June 30, 2024.
- Amanda Curley asked: What's the obligation of any member to attend meetings if work sessions are not required – or as important – as regular meetings? What obligation/expectation should we have for trustees?
- Shandi Speller asserted that someone who's sick should not be required to share information with Board and work sessions were not originally included in this. We're elected – we need to take removal of a board member seriously. It's up to us to define what makes sense for us to include in the bylaws today.
 - Refine what we mean by “work sessions” - preparing for upcoming regular meeting and have deeper conversation
- Althema Goodson – There have been ebbs and flows with trustees' schedules and ability to be present. We should revisit work sessions because availability has shifted – those of us who have jobs are required to be at work in-person more.
- Shandi Speller agreed with Althema and shared that having people in different stages of life and doing different things on a board is so valuable.
- Meghan Huppuch reminded the Board that remote attendance is covered by Open Meetings Law and as Althema mentioned we'll have to wait to see how that is updated in June 2024.
- Edits:
 - Proposed language: During a fiscal year, it is the expectation that trustees attend scheduled regular meetings. When a trustee has absences without communication or participation, that trustee will respond to inquiries about absences with the Board president.
- 4(f)
 - Amanda Curley shared bullet points on Open Meeting Law and will send the document to the Board.
 - Since the Open Meeting Law continues to change, Meghan Huppuch suggested that the Board create a companion document with the current Open Meeting Law details to link to for reference so that we can ensure we're in compliance rather than incorporating it into the Board's Bylaws as bullet points.
- 4(g)

- Shandi Speller reminded the Board that there's thin line between exercising admin responsibility and all of us staying in our own lane.
- 5 (iii)
 - Shandi Speller shared her perspective that a Board member shouldn't have to be the secretary taking minutes for regular meetings. We should aspire to have office admin take minutes.
 - Amanda Curley shared that the benefit of the person taking minutes being on the Board is the insight they have and relationship where you can clarify.
 - Phil Rice said that having someone outside of the Board taking minutes can lead to an inaccurate record of meeting.
 - Amanda Curley invited Meghan Huppuch to write a description of what she's doing as secretary (might include support from library staff).
- 6
 - No comments/concerns
- 7
 - No comments/concerns
- 8(g)
 - Amanda Curley proposed "...prefers attendance of treasurer of two board meetings or work sessions. Ongoing communication with the chair of the finance committee is required."
 - Althema Goodson shared that the treasurer should be required to attend the reorg meeting and audit/budget meeting.
 - Alice Joselow agrees on audit but asked what purpose does attending the reorg meeting serve?
 - Althema Goodson responded that the reorg meeting sets the tone for the year, sign papers, take oaths.
 - Philip Rice will reach out to Jaime and see what he can learn about his availability. The Board will discuss this further once we have that information.
- 10(h)
 - Add work sessions and their definition – let's talk about this at the next work session

Board will continue by-laws discussion at next work session.

Adjournment

At 6:49PM Meghan Huppuch moved to adjourn the Work Session. Shandi Speller seconded. The motion passed 6-0.