

Great Neck Library
Policy and Bylaws Committee
Tuesday, December 15, 2020
Via WebEx

Board Members:

Liman Mimi Hu, Chair (MH)
Weihua Yan (WY)
Barry Smith (BS)

Library Professionals:

George Trepp (GT)
Nicholas Camastro (NC) absent with notice

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Great Neck Library's Policy and Bylaws Committee was called to order by MH at 11:05 AM.

MH noted that the point of having three readings on policy changes prior to the final vote is to have a discussion on the edits. At the board meetings and at every policy meeting there will be discussion that may result in changes to the policy in the midst of its three readings. She stated that she sent an email to GT with the correct version of 200-10, 20, 40 and 50 that those were the policies that should have been voted on at the board meeting. MH reported that minor changes were made to the aforementioned policies after its first reading but the corrected version was not brought back to the board for its second and subsequently third readings. BS suggested to starting from the beginning of what the board approved and what has been changed to these policies to clear up confusion. MH explained that what occurred is that after the policies were brought to the board for a first and second reading, suggested changes made by the board were not implemented resulting in the policies to be voted on. The committee agreed that going forward a tracked changes and clean copy of all policy changes will be provided at meetings to prevent confusion.

Current Policy Discussion

Circulation Policies

GT reported that he went through all the circulation policies and determined that the bulk of them are procedural. He noted that the one item requiring clarification is fines which needs to be further discussed and ultimately brought forward to the board. He also asserted that the Circulation Manual needs to be reviewed within the contents of the 700 section of the Policy Manual. JP stated that although most of the policies may be procedural it is important to keep them in the policy manual to encourage public participation. GT responded that most of the items in the circulation policies are aimed at the staff not the public and, therefore, do not need to be included in the manual. MW questioned where the removed policies will be placed if they are removed from the policy manual. She cautioned against relying on historical knowledge. GT agreed and stated that a staff circulation manual, along with a procedure manual, will be created.

Section 900

MH announced that this section was discussed at the last meeting and all the recommended changes have been incorporated. She noted that they will keep the commercial component of the programming language because that is what makes the Great Neck Library unique and also because Great Neck is a not-for-profit entity. MH continued that the committee had agreed that there should be language included specific to

attendance requirements. She added that procedural language was removed from the policies. MH noted that the tracked changes for these policies have been included as backup to this agenda. GT wondered why there was a distinction between tax paying patrons and recommended that GNL card holders and residents be one category and non-residents be a separate category. MH acknowledged GT's input but reads the policy as a way of encouraging Great Neck residents to obtain a library card.

The committee agreed to move the revisions to Sections 900-10 and 900-20 and the removal of Sections 900-30, 900-40, 900-50 and 900-80 to the board for a first read.

Section 100

MH recommended for the entire Section 100, which includes 100-10 (Bylaws), 100-20 (Freedom of Information Law and Open Meetings Law) and 100-30 (Other Applicable Laws) to be removed and replaced with the mission statement of the library (Section 500-10). The by-laws do not need to be included in the manual as they are a reiteration of the law. MH added that at trustee training it was recommended that the mission statement be moved to a more prominent section of the policy manual. MD said that GNL is a private association and at the time it did not have to follow the regulations of FOIL and Open Meeting Laws. She stated that GNL voluntarily adopted both laws in order to provide a ground for the public forum so they have the ability to obtain documents when they want and also require the board to hold open and fruitful meetings for the library. MD said the by-laws should be kept in the manual so that the board and public can reference them at their convenience. BS agreed that it is important for the library to reference the law that the policies are based on. JP said that she does not oppose the removal of Section 100-10 but recommends that it be published somewhere, perhaps as an addendum at the end of the manual. She continued that people need to know the law and that the library should provide it. After discussion, the committee agreed to remove the language in Section 100-10 but include it, as a reference elsewhere in the policy manual.

By-Law Changes

MH announced that they are going to start a preliminary discussion on language changes to the by-laws. Any recommended changes will be added to the ballot of the Library's Annual Election in October 2021 for a vote by all members of the association. She stated that under Article VII all board administrative language will be removed because the board governs and the director manages. MH said that there are three or four instances of this throughout the section including Article IV and Article VII (subsection H) and noted that the document with tracked changes is included with today's packet. JP agreed that daily administration should fall under the library director but also stated that the board is somewhat responsible for administration as the director reports to them. She said that the language needs to be revised to clarify this. MH concurred but added that the director's job performance is evaluated by the board on an annual basis and that it is their job to ensure that the director is adhering to the policies in the manual not to interfere in the daily operations of the library. JP responded that the director does not have carte blanche over the library and that it is a mistake to take out all the guard rails where the board can continue to act in their roles as representatives for the tax payers. MH said that the by-laws are clear in that the board's job is to govern not direct. WY clarified if JP was referring to the language in Article VII, subsection which states "*The Board shall appoint the Director of the Library who shall have general charge of the Library and its branches under the direction of the President of the Board...*" JP said that he is correct because it is about changing the language that takes away responsibility from the board. She thinks that it is an error to remove that language and feels that it does not, in any way, take away from the authority of the director. WY noted that the responsibilities of the board is clearly stated in Section 200 of the policy manual and asked JP if she feels that is not sufficient. MH added that, in addition, Article IV of the by-laws clearly states that the government of the library should be vested in the Board of Trustees, not the director. BS agreed with MH and WY and said that the goal with these changes is to take the weight off the director and to put the board

in its place. JP feels that reiteration of important items is necessary and also thinks that removal of this language limits board and public participation.

Removal of Nominating Committee

MH shared that after the last election there has been feedback in the community regarding the elimination of the Nominating Committee. She stated that there is a significant loophole in the policy in which the founders of the library did not contemplate the situation where there may be no nominee for a vacant seat. MH said it is not ideal for there to be no names on the ballot and for seats to be filled by write in candidates. JP understands the concerns and is not so sure about the usefulness of Nominating Committee, however, if there is no committee other problems will arise and there needs to be a full discussion on this matter. BH said that in order to look forward we need to look back and determine why the Nominating Committee was created in the first place. MW said the role of the Nominating Committee is to seek candidates that are ready, willing and able to serve on the Board of Trustees. She asked what the alternative would be if there is no Nominating Committee. GT said that the Roslyn library operates with a Nominating Committee who solicit for trustees and make recommendations. They require 30 signatures on petitions for a contested election. GT shared that Locust Valley also has a Nominating Committee who solicit trustees, however, they seek out candidates with specific skills. Oceanside does not have a Nominating Committee. Instead, their board and staff recruit community activists to fill seats on the board. School district libraries rely on sitting trustees and administrative staff to obtain candidates. Generally, candidates must submit an application to the school board with 25 signatures or 2% of the number that voted in the previous annual election, whichever is greater. MH reminded everyone that at the last policy meeting the committee agreed that the Nominating Committee should not endorse candidates and if that is the case, what is their purpose. MD said that she is ambivalent on this issue but that when soliciting candidates focus should be made on the specific talents that the Board of Trustees need.

Meeting adjourned at 12:34 PM.

Submitted by Gina Chase

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Action Items

George Trepp

1. Place revisions to Sections 900-10 and 900-20 to the next BoT meeting for a first read.
2. Place removal of Sections 900-30, 900-40, 900-50 and 900-80 to the board for a first read.