

**Great Neck Library**  
**Policy and Bylaws Committee**  
Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
Via Zoom

**Board Members:**

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

**Library Professionals:**

George Trepp (GT)  
Nicholas Camastro (NC) *excused*

**Members of the Public:**

Marietta DiCamillo (MD)  
Marianna Wohlgemuth (MW)  
Varda Solomon (VS)

**Call to Order**

MH called the meeting of the Great Neck Library's Policy and Bylaws Committee to order at 7:03 PM.

She provided an overview of what the committee has been working on and where they are now. MH shared that under the leadership of the previous Board president, and with the input from an industry professional, a review and overhaul of the library's current policies and bylaws was started. She said priorities were placed on reforming the Board and the conduct of meetings to improve their efficiency.

MH asked for a moment of silence to be observed in response to the tragedy that occurred last night in Atlanta and to honor those who lost their lives.

**POLICY DISCUSSION**

Section 100

Revision of Section 100-10 (Mission Statement): MH said this section has been discussed in detail at previous meetings but has been brought back to include a reference to the Open Meetings Law. The revision to this section is the replacement of the bylaws with the mission statement. MH clarified that the bylaws still stand, as changes to them can only be made through a vote at the annual meeting.

Revision of Section 100-20 (Applicable Laws): MH stated that the outdated language from the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws has been replaced with general language. She noted that the library continues to abide by these two laws.

Removal of Section 100-30 (Other Applicable Laws): MH announced that this entire section will be removed since it is included with Section 100-20.

Section 400-80 (Policy: Continuing Education Support)

MH stated that this section is being revised for clarity and to make it more applicable to staff. GT reported that the library auditor was consulted to ensure that it complies with tax law. He said that the staff is the most important resource the library has and that we want them to take advantage of educational opportunities that improve their skills and knowledge as applied to the library. GT noted that there is a budgetary and individual cap for this. The individual cap of \$5k is based on tax law. Also, if there are too many people applying for the benefit, the amount of money budgeted is prorated amongst them. This policy

requires satisfactory completion of the class and the staff member must stay a year after its completion. He added that you cannot apply for the education benefit if the course you are taking is a requirement for the job. MD asked if a legal document will be created to ensure staff who receive this benefit stay in employment for the year following. GT said that it can be as formal or informal as the Board desires. BS questioned what the budgeted amount is for continuing education. GT responded that it is \$15k. MH believes this can be an added item to discuss during union negotiations.

## **BYLAW CHANGES**

### Removal of Nominating Committee

MH shared that last year's policy committee was in agreement to not give the Nominating Committee the power to endorse candidates. She said that the feedback from the community has been to eliminate the committee. MH said that GT discovered that all but two libraries on Long Island still operate with a Nominating Committee. She explained that the process for libraries without one is for interested persons to provide a petition with a minimum of 25 signatures to be placed on the ballot. MH said the question is whether or not the Nominating Committee should be removed. She noted that this change would require a vote by the members of the association at the library's annual meeting in October. GT shared that there is a new law that lowers the number of signatures on a petition to 25. WY said that this is a temporary decrease due to the pandemic. He feels that the purpose of the Nominating Committee is to promote the community's interest in the library board but that they should not be endorsing candidates. WY thinks that the choice of a candidate should be left to the community itself. MW said that last year was an anomaly, most likely because of the pandemic, as the Nominating Committee did not complete their function to seek candidates to fill seats on the Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee. She stated that the bylaws should not be changed based on a once in a lifetime incident and that going forward, they should be able to provide potential candidates for the positions. MW announced that she has served on the committee for over 10 years in the past and that it works. She implores the Board not to change the bylaws at this point as we are currently in a volatile situation and it may create animosity. MH appreciates MW's service to the library but stressed that consideration of the Nominating Committee's removal is not personal. She added that the majority of libraries throughout Long Island function very well without one.

MH said that, in her opinion, a Friends of the Library would be a better medium to promote the library without any politics. She said that the petition process will create an even playing field for all interested individuals and will give the voters more freedom to really get to know the candidates and vote based on that. BS concurred with MH in that there may be better ways to create community interest in the library. He also believes that 100 signatures on a petition for a relatively new member of the community may be a little tough to accomplish and that consideration should be given to that. MD asked what happens if no one decides to run. MH said that they will mirror the school district by providing a deadline for when to submit their petition. She added that there should be a clause for situations where no petitions are turned in, perhaps having the board step in to provide names, but that this item is up for discussion. JM added that if there is a viable candidate who has enough interest to put together a campaign then you have the right person and that is someone you want on the board. She agrees that the library does not need a Nominating Committee and that a campaign can move forward without one. MH said that she will start working on the language for this resolution to be reviewed and discussed at the next policy meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Submitted by Gina Chase

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**Action Items**

**George Trepp**

1. Place revisions to Sections 100-10 and 100-20 on the next BoT agenda for a first read.
2. Place removal of Section 100-30 on the next BoT agenda for a first read.
3. Place revision of Section 400-80 on the next BoT agenda for a first read.

**Mimi Hu**

1. Prepare language pertaining to elimination of Nominating Committee for review at next policy meeting.