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**GREAT NECK LIBRARY  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2021, AT 6:00 P.M.**

A regular meeting of the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees with an Executive Session was held on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, at the Main Library, 159 Bayview Avenue, Great Neck, NY 11023 and via Zoom [Agenda attached]

The following Trustees were present constituting a quorum:

Weihua Yan – President  
Liman Mimi Hu – Vice President  
Barry Smith – Secretary (*via Zoom*)  
Chelsea Sassouni – Treasurer  
Scott Sontag – Assistant Treasurer  
Kathleen Gold – Assistant Treasurer

Also Present:                      George Trepp – Interim Director  
   Steven Kashkin – Business Manager

Absent with Prior Notice:     Josephine Mairzadeh – Trustee

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by President Yan at 6:13 p.m. He stated that the three staff appointments under New Business will be moved to the beginning of the agenda to accommodate those in attendance.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PUBLISHED AGENDA**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **(a) Appointment of Head of Adult Services & Reference**

**Upon motion by Trustee Gold, seconded by Trustee Sassouni, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Irina Zaiants to the position of Full-Time Head of Adult Services & Reference with a six-month probationary period at an annual salary of \$86,000.00 effective April 29, 2021.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)  
              Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Interim Director George Trepp shared that Ms. Zaionts was the previous Head of Reference’s “right hand person” and has served the library for over 20 years. President Yan congratulated Ms. Zaionts on behalf of the entire Board.*

### **(b) Appointment of Senior Librarian II Children’s Department**

**Upon motion by Trustee Gold, seconded by Trustee Hu, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Kathryn Baumgartner to the position of Full-Time Senior Librarian II Children’s Department with a six-month probationary period at an annual salary of \$62,000.00 effective June 1, 2021.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)  
Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Interim Director George Trepp said that Ms. Baumgartner has been doing an excellent job for the library as the Children’s Librarian at the Parkville Branch and that he is very delighted with this appointment. Trustee Hu noted that Great Neck is a family-oriented community making this appointment a very important one. She congratulated Ms. Baumgartner on behalf of the entire Board. Ms. Baumgartner thanked the Board and added that she is looking forward to embarking on her new role.*

### **(c) Appointment of Facilities Manager**

**Upon motion by Trustee Gold, seconded by Trustee Sassouni, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Ever Zelaya to the position of Full-Time Facilities Manager with a six-month probationary period at an annual salary of \$67,000.00 effective May 26, 2021.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)  
Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Interim Director George Trepp stated that Mr. Zelaya has already been acting in this role since the previous Facilities Manager’s retirement and doing an exceptional job. He is pleased to make this recommendation. President Yan said that he has heard only good things about Ever regarding his commitment and dedication to the Library. He congratulated Mr. Zelaya on behalf of the entire Board. Mr. Zelaya thanked the Board for this opportunity. He expressed his pride in working for this institution and looks forward to continuing to serve the people of this community.*

## **MINUTES**

### **Regular Board Minutes**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu, it was,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve the Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Board meeting as presented.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

### **Executive Session**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu, it was,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve the Minutes of the May 10, 2021 Executive Session as presented.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

## **TREASURER/BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees accept the following financial reports which have been reviewed by the Audit Committee:

- a. May 25, 2021, Treasurer’s Report;
- b. Warrant dated May 11th, 2021 through May 16th, 2021 which has been reviewed by the Treasurer, the sums set against their respective names, amounting in the aggregate to \$378,738.27.
- c. Payroll Warrants for pay dates April 8th and April 22nd, 2021 which have been reviewed by the Treasurer, (in the amounts of \$140,923.09 and \$135,821.61, respectively,) for a total of \$276,744.70.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

## **PAYROLL CHANGES**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees accept the Payroll Change report of April 1 through April 30, 2021 as presented, which has been reviewed by the Audit Committee.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

## **REPORTS**

### **Building Committee**

Trustee Smith gave kudos to the Building Committee and Interim Director Trepp for getting the library up and running while adhering to the coronavirus guidelines. He deferred to Mr. Trepp for updates on the upcoming landscaping and branch renovation projects which include several resolutions on tonight’s

agenda. Dr. Smith shared that he was unable to join the meeting in person due to the arrival of his second daughter, Aria, who was born five days ago. Interim Director George Trepp provided the tentative timelines, included in his report, for the upcoming landscaping and branch renovation projects. He announced that the Station Branch furniture lottery ended with 21 winners being randomly chosen by computer. The winners will be notified once the furniture is ready for pickup. Mr. Trepp stated that Cindy Simeti generated a flyer in several languages which has been sent out through social media informing patrons of Station's closing date.

### **Interim Director's Report**

Interim Director George Trepp reported that since the release of the CDC's new Coronavirus guidelines, many patrons, particularly young adults, have not been wearing masks while inside the library. He is seeking board guidance on this matter, which will be discussed later in tonight's meeting. Mr. Trepp shared that the library will be receiving a \$10,000 grant courtesy of Assemblywomen Gina Sillitti. It will be used for the purchase of three mini servers and a photo scanner. He announced that the Equity Audit has started with Dr. Rivers sending out a staff survey. The board survey will be going out shortly. Mr. Trepp stated that Barry Weill of Levels earned a video tribute from the teens he works with, which has been placed in his personnel file.

Text of George Trepp's, Interim Director, written report dated May 2021 is below:

The May report will start with items that are on the agenda for the Board's consideration, as follows:

#### **Corona Virus Guidelines:**

As you may know the Center for Disease Control and New York State issued new guidelines impacting those that are fully vaccinated, beginning Wednesday, May 19. Basically, the guideline advises that fully vaccinated individuals need NOT wear masks; however, businesses are authorized to continue to require masks in their establishments if desired. **Unvaccinated individuals must continue to wear mask in all public settings.** Capacity limits were also eliminated only limited by available space to maintain the six (6) feet for social distancing; **however**, social distancing can be eliminated if proof of full vaccination is provided in the form a paper form, digital application or the State's Excelsior Pass. For areas where vaccination status is unknown and proof is not provided, the required six (6) feet of social distancing still applies until more residents are fully vaccinated. Since the Library opened for browsing and seating on Tuesday May 4, the previous mask mandate was enforced; however, as I traversed the building several times on Wednesday and Thursday it was evident that patrons were not masked. Not wanting to confront patron, the honor system was adopted and signs were posted that stipulated **Be kind and wear a mask if NOT vaccinated.** Obviously, this has led to much confusion; consequently, **Board guidance is sought, as is the case with a number of member libraries. Complicating matters is children under 12 have no vaccines as yet;** therefore, they should be wearing masks in the Children's Department but some parents are not aware.

Regarding the Library, the task force will meet Monday, May 24 with these remaining issues; reopening at 9:00 a.m., patron service until 9:00 p.m. or 5:30: and Friday nights. The Quiet Study rooms will reopen on the 24th but because they are enclosed seating will be limited and some outdoor programming has and will continue to be offered. On site programming is not anticipated as yet. Statistically and as of Thursday, May 20, the prior seven day was .014 for Great Neck;.014 for Great Neck Estates; 0.14 for Great Neck Gardens; 0 for Great Neck Plaza 0. The latest from the State has 61.3% with the first dose and 51.7% completely dosed. With respect to the staff, 73.1% are fully dosed and another 14 % have received one dose totaling 87.1 %.

#### **MDA Designgroup Proposed Restroom Scope:**

At a revised cost of \$10,500, reduced from \$18,500, MDA's Elizabeth Martin proposes an architectural scope for tasks to make changes in the Station Branch restrooms. The tasks include the following:

- Survey the spaces and evaluate requirements.
- Develop a written scope to guide the architectural and engineering work.
- Select products for the design.
- Develop design drawings and share with engineering company
- Communicate and coordinate with the engineers through their portion of the design.
- Develop product cut book of specifications and products
- Develop working drawings for the Change Order.
- Incorporate engineering drawings and specifications into architectural documents.
- Transmit drawings to general contractor for pricing.
- Respond to general contractor inquiries and review bids.
- Review general contractor bid, submittals and samples.

- Generate punch list items
- Coordinate work.

There will be architectural and engineering changes to both bathrooms including an investigation of the low water pressure, new floor and wall tile, new ADA compliant sinks, new hand dryers and soap dispensers, toilet compartment work, at least two ADA compatible wall mounted mirrors and more. The Building Committee has reviewed the scope and architectural changes and recommends the proposal, as Martin has been extremely generous in the hours that have not been billed.

**Main Building Shelving Project:**

At a total cost of \$60,903.70 the main building shelving project is presented. The project consists of the following elements:

- The children’s department will see 110 additional shelves by increasing the height to 54”.
- The new fiction section will add three (3) double faced units; thereby, adding 24 additional shelves.
- The biography section will add five (5) double faced sections creating 40 additional shelves.
- The young adult/non-fiction area will extend thirteen (13) ranges by adding one (1) section to each range, creating 78 new shelves.
- The reference area will add five (5) double faced units, creating 30 additional shelves
- Audio-visual will add four (4) double faced sections, creating 56 new shelves.

The vendor is Creative Library Concepts who did the shelving for the renovation and the costs are:

- Steel shelving \$36,395.50. (State Contract)
- Wood end panels and countertops \$19,618.20. (State Contract)
- Glass end panels to match existing \$4,890 (Custom from Creative Concepts)

The lead time for the shelving approximates 12 weeks. The project was reviewed at the building committee and recommended to the Board for final approval.

At this juncture the report returns to the previous report, leading with Capital Projects:

I. Capital Projects:

At this writing, the decision to waive the permit fees for the Station Branch construction is awaited but Mr. Belziti will be called on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 3 and the move out will start the next day. The Parkville Branch paperwork has been submitted to the State Education Department and an expedited review has been requested by the architect. A very tentative timeline for Station is as follows:

- May – July State Review
- Bidding starts Mid/Late July
- Bids due Last week of August
- Bid award September 21 Board meeting
- Construction begins End of October
- Completion End of February

Regarding the Landscape Project, the Contractor response are due June 1 with the award at the June 22 Board meeting; work to start late August/September with the front perhaps earlier and project completion in December.

II. Daily Operations:

- Following the \$10,000 grant from Senator Kaplan, the Library also received notice of another legislative grant pursuant to a request in March to Assemblywoman Sillitti. The requisite application was completed asking for three (3) mini-servers and a photo scanner, which were budgeted for 2021-22. The \$10,000 will fund the mini-servers and a tad more than half of the photo scanner.
- Regarding the Equity Audit, Dr. Rivers reports that the staff survey is nearing completion and will go out next week. Dr. Rivers is also in the process of reviewing the Policy Manual and will have some recommendations in her final report.
- VRD and their mechanical engineer, Premier Mechanical Services, were on site Tuesday, May 11 to test the HVAC units. Aside from some maintenance issues, which have been addressed, the engineer reports, “minimal design criteria for controlling vibration and sound transfer... other than some basic acoustical lining on the duct system. To be discussed further.
- Pursuant to several emails back and forth, Jerry Weinstein’s tree donation and plaque have been finalized. Hopefully the plaque will come next week.
- During this period, there were several interviews for the Facilities Manager and the Senior II in the Children’s department. The recommendations are on the agenda
- Negotiations with the Lakeville Branch owner were successful completed but review of the revised lease awaits completion of the review of the Station Branch lease by the attorney. Related thereto, the school district was asked to consider the amount of rent for the Parkville Branch but this may require discussion amongst the two Boards.
- With respect to the website, public suggestions have been solicited on the website and on social media. There have been a handful of suggestions thus far and those have been acknowledged and forwarded to the Library’s web master.
- Kudos to Barry Weill, senior professional I in Levels, who earned a video tribute from the teens he works with, as those patrons “ended their show with a 5-minute video on all of the ways Barry has had a positive influence on their lives.”
- Staff interviews for the Director continue with seventeen (17) employees from Administration, Adult and Reference, Circulation and Technical services having provided their perspective.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **(a) Proposed Policy Change(s)**

**Upon motion by Trustee Hu, seconded by Trustee Gold and after discussion, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees revise Section 100-10 (Mission Statement) from the Board Policy Manual. [copy attached]

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

*Board Comment: Trustee Hu explained that the existing bylaw text will be replaced with the library's mission statement. President Yan said that the language in Section 100-20 has been replaced with general language and that the library continues to follow the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws. Trustee Sassouni clarified that the Library's Bylaws continue to exist in an independent document. President Yan confirmed and reiterated that any bylaw change must be voted on by all members of the association. He requested that the Library Bylaws be placed on the website.*

**Upon motion by Trustee Hu, seconded by Trustee Gold, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that Great Neck Library Board of Trustees revise Section 100-20 (Applicable Laws) from the Board Policy Manual. [copy attached]

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

**Upon motion by Trustee Hu, seconded by Trustee Gold, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that Great Neck Library Board of Trustees remove Section 100-30 (Other Applicable Laws) from the Board Policy Manual. [copy attached]

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **(d) Approve Purchase of Additional Shelving for the Main Library**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Gold and after discussion, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve the purchase of additional shelving for Children's, Young Adult, Media and Adult sections at the Main Library from Creative Library Concepts in the amount of \$60,903.70; such funds to be taken from the Equipment, Furniture and Fixtures line in the General Fund.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Interim Director Trepp reported that shelving will be added as follows: Children’s Department 110 additional shelves; New Fiction Section 24 additional shelves; Biography Section 40 additional shelves; Young Adult/Non-Fiction 78 additional shelves; Reference 30 additional shelves and; Audio Visual 56 additional shelves. Trustee Sassouni confirmed that multiple bids were not required due to the State Contract pricing.*

**(e) Approve Additional Architectural Services from MDA Designgroup for the Station Branch Restrooms**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sontag, seconded by Trustee Gold, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve additional architectural services from MDA Designgroup for the Station Branch Restroom renovation in the amount of \$10,500.00; such funds to be taken from the Branch and Special Services Fund.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)  
Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Board Comment: President Yan explained that this additional service is for the bathroom renovations which were not included in the original design.*

**(f) Approve Engineering Services for the Station Branch Bathroom Renovation**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu and after discussion, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees approve additional engineering services from Cameron Engineering for the Station Branch bathroom renovation at costs not to exceed \$4,500.00 to be charged to the Branch and Special Services Fund.

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)  
Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Board Comment: Trustee Sassouni stated that if it is determined that the water pressure issue is truly a building wide one, then it is the landlord’s responsibility to fix, not that of the library. All trustees concurred.*

**(g) Accept Holiday Closings & Sunday Hours**

**Upon motion by Trustee Hu, seconded by Trustee Gold and after discussion, it was, subsequently TABLED,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees accept the September 2021 to August 2022 Schedule of Holiday Closings and Sunday Hours as presented.

*Board Comment: President Yan recommended tabling this motion as there are many questions on it before approving.*

**VOTE:** Yes, in person – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)  
Yes, via Zoom – 1 (Smith)

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **(e) Discussion on CDC Mask Guidelines**

Interim Director Trepp asked for board direction regarding the library's mask mandate. He shared that since the CDC and NYS issued new guidelines impacting those that are fully vaccinated, more and more patrons are in the library without masks. Trustee Hu said that she is reluctant to remove the mask mandate and continuing to have this policy in place will allow for more hesitant patrons to utilize the library. President Yan agreed but does not want to penalize those who have received their vaccinations and sides with following NYS guidelines. Trustee Sassouni concurred with President Yan and added that the library has to be part of moving society along. Trustee Gold stated that an unfortunate reality is that people who choose to not get vaccinated tend to also not want to wear masks, therefore, using the honor system is risky. Trustee Hu added that although New York is doing well there is a rise of cases in Asia and, New York as a travel hub will get a lot of international visitors. She is in favor of holding on to the mask mandate a little bit longer. Trustee Smith opined, from a medical point of view, that in an outdoor space, patrons can do without the masks but that we should hold steady to the indoor mask mandate due to the COVID variants in Asia, specifically the one in India, which we still do not know if the vaccine protects us against. Trustee Gold said that if the mask mandate is lifted for adults, it will be more difficult to enforce the mask wearing for children. Mr. Trepp stated that if the board agrees that everyone must wear a mask then a guard is necessary. Trustee Sassouni feels that enforcement should be the responsibility of the staff rather than spending thousands of dollars on a guard. President Yan concurred. Mr. Trepp respects this decision as long as the board understands that inevitably there will be some who will resist the mask wearing. After further discussion, the board agreed it best to keep the mask mandate until the next board meeting, at which time it will be revisited.

### **OPEN TIME**

R. Gilliar: 1) The security guard is not providing security at all, which she has witnessed first-hand on her various visits to the library. She agrees that taxpayer money should not be utilized for a private security guard and that enforcement should be the responsibility of the staff. 2) Great Neck has upwards for 42k residents and local government is effective because there has always been a hand and glove relationship between the elected officials and the people who sit in a public space. There are seven people on the library board who are expected to have good questions and discussions before voting on items but it was never expected that be the be all and end all of the meetings. Although she was initially taking notes, she stopped as there is no point if public input is not taken until after a vote has already been made. She would like the periods where the public is allowed to speak to be reconsidered as it is unhelpful to the board and also undemocratic. President Yan thanked Ms. Gilliar for her input. He recognized the importance of public input but last year the policy was changed to give the public the opportunity to speak at the start and end of the meeting. With that being said, President Yan, noted that no policy is set in stone and it can always be revisited by the Policy Committee.

N. Camastro: 1) Since thousands of dollars are being spent on renovations for the Station and Parkville Branches, he would like the board to ensure that the bathrooms will be accessible to the physically challenged. This concerns him because, although millions of dollars were spent on renovations of the Main Library, there is not one bathroom that can be used by a patron with physical limitations without



staff assistance. Trustee Sassouni recommended looking into adding a hydraulics mechanism to at least one of the bathrooms in the Main Building. 2) Staff consistently works at enforcing library policy but it puts them in an impossible position when people become completely resistant and aggressive when asked to wear a mask. Trustee Sassouni said it should never get to the point of a physical altercation. Trustee Hu agreed and never wants staff to engage in a confrontational conversation as their safety comes first. The board asked Mr. Trepp to come up with a procedure to follow in these situations.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

## **DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

June 22, 2021- Board Meeting

Trustee Smith exited the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu and after discussion, it was,**

RESOLVED, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session for a discussion of Litigation and Personnel Matters.

**VOTE:** Yes – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

**Upon motion by Trustee Hu, seconded by Trustee Sassouni and after discussion, it was,**

RESOLVED, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees exit Executive Session.

**VOTE:** Yes – 5 (Yan, Hu, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

No action was taken in executive session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm on a motion by Trustee Sontag and seconded by Trustee Hu.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Barry Smith  
Secretary, Board of Trustees