

Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township

January 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Julie Haywood, Jesse Gallagher, Jessika McLaughlin, Nathan Schultz, Myron Goldman, Tim Gaudreau, Jeff Chirico (Commissioner Liaison), Mary Kay Moran (Executive Director), Nicole Lynch (Assistant Director), Maddie MacKenzie (Administrative and Communications Associate), Elizabeth McGoran (Head Librarian, Elkins Park Branch).

Public Comment: None.

Consent Agenda:

- a. President's Report
- b. Director's Report
- c. Statistical Report
- d. Friends Reports
- e. December Minutes
- f. Finance Reports
- g. Committee Reports

Questions and Comments: The board briefly discussed details from the Profit & Loss Report. Mary Kay Moran explained that the one-time grants listed were applied to the 2023 budget, not 2024. The Unrestricted donations from the community came in above budget and above what was projected for 2024. Mary Kay Moran will send Myron Goldman the detailed P&L.

Motion: Myron Goldman moved to adopt the Consent Agenda, Tim Gaudreau seconded the motion, and the agenda was adopted.

Sunshine Announcements: At the last board meeting in December, the board held an executive session on personnel.

Librarian's Report: Elizabeth McGoran (Head Librarian, Elkins Park Branch). See attached report.

Commissioner's Report (Jeff Chirico): Julie Haywood informed Jeff Chirico that the commissioner's report consists of upcoming developments, policies and events relevant to the library system or the community. Jeff Chirico told the board that the township commissioners are working with the architects to adjust the facilities plan to reflect the feedback the township received from the community. The commissioners are hoping to have a revised plan to share with the public in February.

Public comment: none

New Business:

Conflict of Interest Forms: Mary Kay Moran handed out conflict of interest forms to the present board members and requested that the members attending virtually complete and submit them in the next couple of weeks. Julie Haywood reminded the board that the Conflict-of-Interest Policy was included in the new business packet.

Strategic Plan Update (Mary Kay Moran): Throughout the year, CTLS staff have been chipping away at the action items on the timeline of strategic plan activities. In December, the Strategic Plan Implementation Team held a day-long reflection on the year's activities.

- Mary Kay Moran shared comments from this reflection on the year's improvements and differences with the board.
 - CTLS Staff have more access and input in the training process based on their learning styles and goals. The leadership team changed the performance review process to emphasize input from staff.
 - Nicole Lynch led a team of CTLS staff in developing a culture statement that was presented at Staff Development Day. The culture statement will be on posters hanging in all the CTLS branches, on the employment opportunities section of the website and included in job postings.
 - Current and incoming staff understand the principles that guide the interactions between each other, and library users and staff have expressed pride and appreciation for the culture statement.
 - CTLS is visible, accessible and solicits more input from community members than ever before. CTLS has increased its presence and participation in community spaces outside of the library, including preschools, senior centers and the Cheltenham schools.
 - Staff participate in outreach events and can suggest other opportunities for consideration.
 - Teens are kept informed about library events and services through monthly school visits, and teen volunteers and the Teen Advisory Board are active all year long.
 - CTLS social media is more consistent and cohesive. Different kinds of content are being created, and the library system is reaching new audiences.
 - CTLS connects with the youngest readers and makes books and reading a fun social event. CTLS connects young readers by providing craft kits at the La Mott and East Cheltenham communities and providing story times and crafts to the Cheltenham Summer Camps. Even when the seasonal branches are closed, CTLS continues to reach out to those communities.
 - CTLS provides tools which assist library users in locating titles and information which might be of a sensitive nature without the intervention of a staff member. Staff created lists on sensitive topics located around the libraries by Dewey Decimal numbers that patrons can look at and self-select. Staff also created reader's advisory lists specific to CTLS collections to help with suggestions on many topics.
- Mary Kay Moran summarized that overall, the Strategic Plan Leadership Team and CTLS staff were very ambitious but achieved most of the goals set for 2023. As 2023 was a foundational year for the new strategic plan, CTLS had to form teams and build processes and procedures to get started with the strategic plan. Mary Kay expects that this year's list will not be as extensive, and CTLS will be able to do a deeper dive into the activities planned for 2024.
- Jessika McLaughlin commended Mary Kay Moran and the CTLS leadership on the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Board members shared positive feedback on CTLS's visibility in the community and upcoming outreach opportunities. Mary Kay Moran explained that each CTLS employee attends at least one outreach event per year. In 2023, CTLS implemented a spreadsheet for each event liaison to

record notes about attendance, information shared, and connections made. Julie Haywood encouraged the board members to attend CTLS outreach events.

Governance:

Succession Policy (Jessika McLaughlin): The Governance Committee has reviewed the Succession Policy and are recommending it to the board for approval. The Succession Policy establishes the general framework for succession planning in the case of board member and leadership vacancies.

- **Motion:** Myron Goldman moved to approve the Succession Policy, Tim Gaudreau seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Board Retreat: The board retreat will be held on Sunday, February 11 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The District Consultant, Tracey Reed will be facilitating a portion of the retreat, and it will be focused on a reflection on the board goals of the strategic plan. There will be a board member self-evaluation to complete, and if there is other prework, Jessika McLaughlin will send it out as soon as possible.

External Affairs:

Annual Appeal: Jesse Gallagher shares that in this year's campaign yielded more individual donors and CTLS staff used new tools, gained practical and strategic knowledge and collected more metrics and data for evaluating the appeal.

- Nicole Lynch updated the board with the results from the 2023 Annual Appeal.
 - This was the first year that CTLS took a multi-pronged approach to the annual appeal, utilizing social media, in-branch posters, bookmarks with QR codes, and email blasts to spread the word. The email campaign provided the most significant additional push. In planning the email campaign, Mary Kay Moran and Nicole Lynch researched timing and strategies that can be used going forward. The social media material and planning process created for the annual appeal are also part of a larger social media overhaul. As of this meeting, the annual appeal has raised just over \$28,000, which is \$7,600 more than last year. The average donation amount has increased slightly and CTLS had 75 more individual donors than last year. CTLS leadership expects to see donations continue to trickle in over the next few weeks. In terms of next steps, CTLS will evaluate the collected metrics and data collected on the email blasts and work on donor stewardship and appreciation.
- Tim Gaudreau asked about the methods CTLS uses for email collection. Mary Kay Moran explained that CTLS collected emails at the open house, and new library card applicants can opt in to the e-newsletter.
- The board discussed additional efforts made to encourage giving. Mary Kay Moran and Azsa Hill worked to reduce pain points on the giving web page. The top 500 donors from the previous year received handwritten notes in their appeal letters.
- Myron Goldman and Mary Kay Moran briefly discussed how the annual appeal fits into the 2024 budget. The annual appeal funds received before December 31 fall into the fiscal year of 2023, but the remaining balance will carry into 2024. Myron Goldman predicted that the revenue line, including year-long giving and the annual appeal funds, could offset the small deficit in the budget.

- This year's annual appeal budget was reduced to \$5,000, and the costs came in \$500 under budget. Nicole Lynch will be looking at the response rate for mailers vs emails.
- CTLS uses Little Green Light to track donations throughout the year, including the annual appeal. On Little Green Light, CTLS can tag each donation with the campaign it's a part of and generate responses to donors, including a thank you letter from Mary Kay Moran. This year, Nicole Lynch cleaned up the tagging system to ensure donations are accurately categorized.

Open House Planning (Jesse Gallagher): The External Affairs Committee is planning to host this year's CTLS Open House on Thursday, April 11. The committee is working on updating the community stakeholders list, to accurately inform who to invite to events and outreach. Jesse Gallagher will send out a link to the list after the meeting for board members to look over and edit.

Internal Affairs:

2024 Budget: The Internal Affairs Committee is recommending the 2024 budget for approval. Mary Kay Moran shared a few budget highlights with the board.

- CTLS will receive a slight increase in our state aid.
- This year's lean budget allows for a salary increase of 3.5% for staff.
- The MCLINC dues and the E-rates charges are the biggest increases in the budget, due to the change to the member dues formula and the seasonal closures of the East Cheltenham, and La Mott branches. There were some increases in publishing and utilities, and minimal inflation-related costs, but nothing new was built into the budget. Mary Kay Moran hoped we could hire a part-time marketing/outreach staff member this year but will try adding that position next year. If necessary, CTLS will cover the deficit with surplus money that's expected from the 2023 budget. Due to the small size of the deficit, Myron Goldman expects that the deficit could be made up with surpluses throughout the year.
 - **Motion:** Julie Haywood called for a motion to approve the budget with the stipulation to use the 2023 surplus to cover the deficit in the 2024 budget if necessary. Myron Goldman moved to approve the budget, Tim Gaudreau seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Investments: Nathan Schultz reminded the board that CTLS currently has approximately \$500,000 invested with Truist. The interest rate on those investments has decreased significantly over the year. The Internal Affairs Committee has been discussing purchasing FDIC-insured CDs through PLGIT. with interest at 5%+ in interest for 12 months. Mary Kay Moran recommends that the board moves the money soon, before increase rates decrease further. The board will also need to let PLGIT know if the signatures will be the same as on the other PLGIT accounts, which are currently Mary Kay Moran, Nicole Lynch and Nathan Schultz.

- **Motion:** Julie Haywood called for a vote to approve moving the \$500,000 currently invested with Truist into two separate \$250,000 CDs with PLGIT for a period of 12 months with the interest rates that Mary Kay Moran indicated. Myron Goldman moved to approve, Jeff Chirico seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- **Motion:** Julie Haywood called for a motion to approve Mary Kay Moran, Nicole Lynch and Nathan Schultz as the signatures on the new PLGIT accounts. Myron Goldman moved to approve, Jeff Chirico seconded, and the motion carried.

MOU with the Township: Nathan Schultz explained that the MOU is a memorandum of understanding CTLS is proposing between the township and the library system that will codify the roles and responsibilities of both parties in relation to the buildings, structures and communication, etc. Mary Kay Moran will bring the MOU to Alyson Elliott, the township manager, have a conversation, and decide how best to proceed from there. Mary Kay Moran will propose the meeting for February and update the names and dates at the bottom of the document.

Talking Points/Board Education: Mary Kay shared that the Pennsylvania Bureau of Library Development and the Office of Commonwealth Libraries have been considering whether to change the state library statute that guides how libraries do their work and receive funding. Given the current political climate, the Office of Commonwealth Libraries decided instead to update the regulations that interpret the statute and have been gathering feedback on issues like library board structure and the requirements to receive state aid. They expect to have an exposure draft available at the end of February with simplified and clarified regulations in the document.

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries is requesting feedback from library administrators and boards. Mary Kay Moran will send out copies of the exposure draft with a link to a survey you can complete with feedback, questions or concerns. To keep this issue out of the legislature as much as possible, the exposure draft is intended only for the library field until the draft is complete. From the end of February until May, they will be soliciting feedback from the library field. Then their task force will make changes and updates based on the feedback that they received and send it to IRRC, the Independent Regulatory Review Commission. It will then be available for the public and legislators to weigh in on, but not to vote on, which will take about 18 months. Mary Kay Moran is hopeful that the changes made will be helpful to Pennsylvania libraries, which have still not recovered the funding cuts made to libraries in 2009. Julie Haywood recommended that the draft be sent to the Governance Committee first. Mary Kay Moran has included this information and a link to the current statute in the communications toolkit.

Public comment: none.

Upcoming Meetings:

- The next External Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, February 5 at 6:00 PM.
- The Board Retreat will be held on Sunday, February 11 at 9:00 AM at the Glenside Library.
- The next Governance Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, March 11 at 6:00 PM.
- The next Internal Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Zoom on Monday, February 12 at 4:00 PM.
- The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27 at 7:00 PM at the Glenside Library.

Motion: Myron Goldman moved to adjourn the meeting, Tim Gaudreau seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.