

Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township

December 04, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Julie Haywood, Jesse Gallagher, Myron Goldman, Jessika McLaughlin, Jeff Chirico, Tim Gaudreau, Nathan Schultz, Nicole Lynch (Assistant Director), Maddie MacKenzie (Administrative and Communications Associate), Elizabeth McGoran (Head Librarian at the Elkins Park Library), Hannah Miller (Head Librarian at the Glenside Library)

Public Comment: None.

Consent Agenda:

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

Questions and Comments: none.

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

Sunshine Announcements: None.

Librarian's Report (Elizabeth McGoran & Hannah Miller): See attached report.

Commissioner's Report (Jeff Chirico):

Jeff Chirico updated the Board on the Township's budget process. Earlier this year, the Township hired a new director of finance. Her forecasting revealed that the Township is not in the financial position the commissioners previously thought. As a result, there were few budget increases in the Township.

At last month's meeting at the La Mott Community Center, the architects unveiled a tentative design for a multi-use space. The current plan for the La Mott Library space creates a flexible space for the variety of services the library will provide, including moveable shelves and quiet rooms, all located in a visible spot with natural light. The Township received a \$1 million grant from the State Department of Community and Economic Development for the renovation of the Rowland Community Center. Jeff Chirico estimates this grant would cover approximately one-tenth of total renovation costs for the building. The Commissioners are still deciding how to move forward with the Rowland Community Center. The developers of the Melrose Country Club have considered offering the Township a corner of the development to build a pool or community center to replace the Conklin Pool. Due to the general uncertainty, the Township is unsure where those grant funds will go. The state of the budget also raises questions about the facilities plan that the Township passed earlier this year, including a centralized library. Jeff Chirico is hoping for clarity on what the Township will be able to do.

Myron Goldman asked if anything unusual happened to throw off the Township's budget projections. Jeff Chirico shared that his impression is that the finances were affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The lower expenditures due to layoffs combined with the money the Township received from the Federal Government during the pandemic artificially inflated certain budget lines.

Jessica McLaughlin shared that the budget will be finalized at the public hearing on December 18. At this meeting, the Commissioners will receive questions and hear written and oral public comment before the budget is officially adopted. Jeff Chirico encouraged Library Board Members to attend the next Finance Committee meeting on December 11, when the commissioners will vote to send the budget for the final vote on the 18th. Jessika McLaughlin asked if written comments could be submitted beforehand. Jeff Chirico explained that comments can be submitted to manager@cheltenhampa.gov no less than 24 hours before the public hearing, and commenters can also attend via Zoom.

The Board discussed the budget increase requested by the library system, and the Cheltenham tax rate increase. Myron Goldman will further discuss the millage percentage with Jeff Chirico. Jeff Chirico shared that the complete budget is posted on the Township Website and offered to email it to interested Board members.

The Board has decided not to continue to push for a budget increase, but nothing would prohibit a community member to make a comment. Nicole Lynch explained that Mary Kay Moran expressed concern that an organized community push would not foster goodwill with the Commissioners. Julie Haywood emphasized the importance of taking Mary Kay Moran's directive in order to avoid jeopardizing relationships with the Township.

Public comment: Irv Greenberg asked what percentage of the Township revenue comes from property taxes. Myron Goldman said that he does know the exact number, but that the vast majority comes from real estate taxes.

New Business:

Governance:

- **Preview Mini-Board Retreat:** At the last meeting, the Board discussed holding a mini-retreat in February focused on developing an action plan for the year ahead. Board members should be on the lookout for that in February.
- **Save the Date March Virtual Workshop:** Jessika McLaughlin informed the Board that on March 15 there will be a PA Citizens for Better Libraries virtual institute for friends and trustees. Mary Kay will send out more information shortly. Jessika McLaughlin encouraged the Board to attend.

External Affairs:

- **Annual Appeal:** Jesse Gallagher explained that CTLS sent out the 2024 Annual Appeal Letters before Thanksgiving, but it is still too early in the process to comment on the success of the Annual Appeal. Myron Goldman recommended that CTLS and the Friends groups coordinate the timing of their Annual Appeals. This year the EP Friends solicitation went out same week as the Annual Appeal letter. Nicole Lynch added that last year's Giving Tuesday raised about \$2000. This year, CTLS set the stretch goal at \$3000, and raised approximately \$2500 to purchase new Wonderbooks for the Elkins Park and Glenside Free Library collections.

Internal Affairs:

- **Audit:** Nicole Lynch passed out paper copies of the 2023 Annual Audit. Board members have already received digital copies. This year, CTLS again had a clean audit. At this meeting, the Board will have the opportunity to ask questions and vote to formally adopt the 2023 audit.
 - **Motion:** Myron Goldman moved to formally accept the 2023 Annual Audit, Julie Haywood seconded the motion and the audit was adopted.
- **Budget (Nathan Schultz):** Nathan Schultz reminded the board to expect budget adjustments to reflect the library system being flat funded. Nicole Lynch clarified that Mary Kay Moran made some adjustments to cut the budget by \$45,000, but retained the salary recommendations made by MEA. After the commissioners approve the Township Budget in December, the Board will review the full budget for approval at the January Board meeting.

Community Center Updates: The Township has told CTLS to expect a timeline for the La Mott Community Center renovations in early 2025. Library leadership is working under the assumption that the La Mott Community Center will not open during the 2025 season due to the start of construction. The Township is prepared to move forward on the renovations of the La Mott Community Center. The Rowland Community Center is currently expected to be open for the 2025 season.

There was an unexpected major change to the size and layout of the library space in the La Mott Community Center plan at the last facilities meeting. Based on public comment at the La Mott Community Center meetings, Mary Kay Moran relayed that residents are still not understanding CTLS's vision for satellite libraries. In lieu of the Township's hesitance on the central library, and resulting confusion, Nicole Lynch and Julie Haywood anticipate that increased and repeated messaging will be necessary.

Board Approval of New Board Member: Julie Haywood shared that many qualified people applied to the vacant Board position, and the selection committee was impressed by the talent and experience of the applicants. The Board received 17 applications, and interviewed 8 candidates. The Executive Committee is recommending a long-time Cheltenham resident to fill the vacancy. Alycia Kinchloe is the parent of three boys, a PTO member, and very involved in her own law practice with connections in the community and the State.

The Board will be sending invitations to a selection of other applicants to join the Community Advisory Committee. Julie Haywood thanked all of the individuals that applied and encouraged them to stay involved. Jesse Gallagher emphasized that the Friends groups are always looking for new members. Jessica McLaughlin shared that she was not selected the first time she applied and encouraged everyone to stay engaged.

- **Motion:** Julie Haywood requested a motion to recommend Alycia Kinchloe to the Township Commissioners. Myron Goldman moved, Tim Gaudreau seconded, and motion was approved.

Strategic Plan Updates: Nicole Lynch reminded the Board that the SPLIT Team meets quarterly to review progress towards goals and plan for future goals. At the Annual Reflection Meeting next Monday, the SPLIT Team will take time to reflect on the progress CTLS made during the year.

Nicole Lynch shared some of this year's notable accomplishments with the Board:

- Promoting Allie Semon from Library Assistant to Outreach Coordinator to streamline and emphasize outreach.
- Hiring a marketing consultant to help CTLS focus our message in the community and reach people not currently engaged with the library. The consultant will work with CTLS staff to formulate a plan that the library system can implement independently in the future.
- The Youth Services team has focused on preschool outreach. With the Kindergarten Library Card Drive and increased school visits, CTLS has built connections with the school district.
- CTLS has revised many of the public policies as well as the Personnel Handbook.
- After the December meeting, the SPLIT leadership team will update the dashboard with this year's progress.

Moving forward, the SPLIT Team will be working on planning out 2025 goals, including outreach to the senior population, improving programming diversity, and evaluating ADA compliance in our buildings. CTLS will be researching best practices and making recommendations to the Township on current and future buildings. 2025 is the last year of the current strategic plan. The 2025 budget does include funds to invite Amanda, our consultant back to help us refresh the strategic plan for the next three years.

The Board discussed the progress of the MOU, and potentially revising the MOU to reflect ADA compliance.

Public comment: Irv Greenberg shared that he was impressed with the Board's engagement, comradery and sense of humor. Julie Haywood thanked him for his participation and application to the CTLS Board.

Julie Haywood announced that this is Nathan Schultz's last Board Meeting and thanked him for six and a half years of service and process improvements under his leadership. The Board will be naming a shelf in his honor at the East Cheltenham Library or the branch of his choice. Nathan Schultz thanked the Board for serving alongside him and expressed pride at being a part of the Cheltenham Township Library System.

Upcoming Meetings:

- The next External Affairs Monday, January 6 at 6:00 PM
- The next Governance Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 10 at 6:00 PM.
- The next Internal Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, December 9 at 4:45 PM.
- The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 22 at 7:00 PM at the Elkins Park Free Library.

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

The Board moved to an Executive Session.