

TREDYFFRIN TOWNSHIP LIBRARIES (TTL)

Minutes of the Board of Trustees (BoT)

Thursday, February 27, 2020

7:30 PM at Tredyffrin Library

Presiding: John C.T. Alexander, President

Board Members Present: (constituting a quorum):

Anthony Ferris

Mike McTiernan

Christa Melotti

Johanna Pauciulo (Secretary)

Tim Ross (Vice President)

In Attendance:

Ben Auslander, citizen

Margie Auslander, citizen

Jean Cook, citizen

KS Bhaskar, Board of Supervisors

Kate Currigan, President, Friends of TPL

Marianne Hooper, Staff

Chris Kibler, Library Director

Rachel Kramer, Staff

Peggy Layden, citizen

Bill Matthews, citizen

Diane McTiernan, citizen

Beverly Michaels, Branch Manager

Pearl Nudy, citizen

Rob Rose, citizen

Jennifer Whip, citizen

Joe Whip, citizen

Mr. Alexander called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Several members of the public attended to express their opinion regarding proposed adult programming for June 2020 (LGBTQ+ Pride Month). At a prior board meeting adult programming librarian Zoe Mills submitted proposed programming notes and ideas for 2020, including potential programs for June relevant to LGBTQ+ Pride Month. Proposed programs included films, a discussion panel and a party. Proposed programming has been revised to dispense with a party and continue with films and a discussion panel. Final programming has not yet been determined.

Mr. McTiernan proposed that he would personally pay for rental space outside of the library for them to use for LGBTQ+ programs. Mr. McTiernan made a motion to adopt a library policy stating the following: "No library facility or programming resources shall be used for the promotion of any political or controversial viewpoints. Such political and controversial viewpoints being defined as those which are by their subject matter or agenda polarizing and which would therefore generate a substantial degree of opposition and controversy in Tredyffrin Township which provides the bulk of the library's funding. Example: If a white supremacy group wanted programming in the library, if a nudist Religion wanted programming in the library, if a LBGT group wanted programming in the library, if a gun rights advocacy group wanted programming in the library. The answer to all of the above types of programming would be no as library policy prevents any library facilities being used for promotion of any political or controversial viewpoint. That is not the library's job. These four meeting/ function/topics above are not the responsibility of the Tredyffrin Library". The motion was not seconded.

Mr. Auslander presented a letter dated 02/26/2020 which is attached hereto at the request of Mr. McTiernan. Mr. Kibler responded that he was willing to meet with Mr. Auslander at a mutually convenient time to discuss programming ideas.

Mr. Whip commented that he was supportive of Pride Month programming and found it disgraceful that members of the community would be against it on moral grounds.

Ms. Nudy commented all people should be welcome at the public library as it is a safe space to discuss issues and disseminate information.

Ms. Cook commented that library programs should not emphasize sexuality. Programs focused on sexuality, religion and politics are dangerous.

Ms. Auslander commented that libraries are a place to explore and should not have programs which introduce topics of sexuality to children. Programming decisions should not be placed on the library director alone.

Minutes

The December minutes were submitted by Ms. Pauciulo for approval. Mr. Ross motioned to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Ferris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report – Mr. Kibler

Written report submitted.

Friends of TPL Report – Ms. Currigan

Written "decade" report submitted. Next book sale is March 19 – 21.

Friends of Paoli Library Report – Ms. Michaels

The Friends group has disbanded as Ms. Van der Krol resigned. The library staff is doing some of the Friends tasks such as book sales. A book sale will be held April 29 – May 4. The library has also partnered with Mission Reads to dispose of and sell books, Mission Reads provides a laptop and software and picks up all books for 75% of the proceeds.

Fundraising Report – Ms. Kramer

Written report submitted. Ms. Kramer circulated a prospecting worksheet targeting significant donors.

New Business

Nominations for Board President and Secretary - Ms. Pauciulo motioned to nominate herself for Secretary and Mr. Alexander for President. Mr. Ferris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Board will vote on the nominations at the March meeting.

Nominations to Recommend Library Board of Trustees Candidates - Ms. Pauciulo motioned to nominate Bill Matthews and Rob Rose to serve on the BoT. Mr. Ferris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominations to Recommend Library Foundation Board Candidate - Ms. Pauciulo motioned to nominate Rod Herrell to serve on the Foundation Board. Mr. Ferris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Petty Cash Funds for the Libraries – Ms. Pauciulo motioned to approve the petty cash funds set forth in the Library Director's Financial Report. Ms. Melotti seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Library Programs and Community Outreach – See above Public Comment. Ms. Nudy advised that she is interested in conducting a program at the library concerning firearms safety. She has over 40 years of experience in the sale and use of firearms.

Tredyffrin Township Supervisors – Mr. Bashkar

Mr. Bashkar is the new liaison. There are no updates relevant to the library from the BoS at this time.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 26, 2020, 7:30 pm at Tredyffrin Library.

BY ELECTRONIC DELIVERY AND THEN BY CERTIFIED U.S. MAIL

February 26, 2020

Mr. Chris Kibler
Director, Tredyffrin Public Library
582 Upper Gulph Road
Strafford, PA 19087

Dear Chris:

As you know, I write to you as a longtime Tredyffrin Township resident and taxpayer. Furthermore, my family has invested numerous volunteer hours to support the Library across a variety of roles and settings. We are both strong supporters and customers of the Tredyffrin Township Public Libraries.

Public library programming is an important asset for our community, making use of taxpayer funded facilities and a finite quantity of space, time and resources¹. Clearly a Library that is paid for in large part by the taxes of Tredyffrin residents, must also be a library that entertains diverse programming. It is therefore critically important in making library programming decisions, that we carefully consider the interests, well-being and values of the many and varied groups within our township. In that sense, decisions regarding what programming to support at the Tredyffrin public libraries are as important as decisions about what programming to **not** support. Indeed, there are categories of programming which will, *by their very nature*, be as offensive to certain parties as they are cherished by others. **In terms of programming with controversial viewpoints then, the real choice will become either one of entertaining all major controversial viewpoints or entertaining none of them.** The path of entertaining "none of them", has largely been our history in this Township; this by choosing to produce largely 'good and welfare' programming. Good and welfare programming constitutes widely accepted and valued topics such as nutrition, safety, travel, literacy etc. I advocate that the Tredyffrin Township Libraries return to this posture by focusing once more on the historic and successful model of such 'good and welfare' programming.

As you likely know, a public library is generally regarded as a limited public forum for First Amendment purposes. See *Kreimer v. Bureau of Police for Town of Morristown*, 958 F.2d 1242, 1259 (3d Cir. 1992). In this context as a limited public forum, once the library has made the decision to open itself for the expression of controversial views, **it cannot then impose restrictions on the range of viewpoints**. See *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia*, 515 U.S. 819, 829 (1995) ("Once it has opened a limited forum, however, the State must respect the lawful boundaries it has itself set. The State may not exclude speech where its distinction is not

¹ Township spending on the Tredyffrin Libraries was approximately \$1,738,205 in 2019 according to the Township budget. In 2018, Tredyffrin Township funding provided 73% of the Tredyffrin Libraries' overall funding according to the Chester County Library System Annual Report, page 33.

'reasonable in light of the purpose served by the forum,' nor may it discriminate against speech *on the basis of its viewpoint.*")

Now that we have the precedent of programs in our libraries such as for two years in a row hosting "Drag Queen Story Hour for Children", and soon will have an "LGBTQ+ Pride Month" planned for June of 2020, whereby LGBTQ+ causes will have center stage, **we have changed our course away from that of simple 'good and welfare' programming.** It seems that the Township Supervisors support this new openness to controversial and political viewpoints on First Amendment grounds – and do so even understanding that such programming is deeply offensive to a segment of the population, which is their right. But I would remind you, and remind the Township Supervisors, that in this *limited public forum context*, **the First Amendment applies to all viewpoints and to all groups.** People who, despite having compassion and kindness towards LGBTQ+ individuals, find public library programming such as that outlined for June of 2020 offensive to their deeply held values and beliefs, must also have a voice and must also receive a share of township resources and a stage for their own cherished viewpoints. *Any failure to do so will surely open the Library and the Township to legal challenges based on First Amendment grounds.*

This brings me to the main point of my letter, which is a programming proposal. Many people in our community feel that the protection of and *respect for life from conception to grave* is the critical moral and ethical issue of our day. This is an issue which deserves to be highlighted and discussed with programming driven by a community group supportive of the cause of "right to life" – just as the Drag Queen and LGBTQ+ Pride programming has and is being driven by parties who cherish those causes. In such a light, October has been designated "Respect Life Month" nationwide. The Library would provide a perfect setting for programming in our community to highlight this cause. **Chris, I write to you asking for a meeting to discuss the outlines of a set of robust programming at the Tredyffrin Township Libraries for Respect Life Month starting with October of 2020.** My friends and I shall expect that this programming will be *at least* equivalent in resourcing and prominence to that of June's upcoming Pride Month activities. I would like to discuss a series of films, speakers and materials to be displayed in the Library in a manner equivalent in prominence and billing to that of the LGBTQ+ Pride month programming. On behalf of the millions of babies murdered in our country since the Roe v. Wade decision, I look forward to raising awareness of and support for the Right to Life cause using the platform of the Tredyffrin Township Libraries.

Thank you very much for your time; I look forward to our meeting.

Respectfully,



Benjamin M. Auslander

cc: Mr. John C.T. Alexander, Mr. William F. Martin, Mr. Patrick M. McKenna Esq., Mr. Murph Wysocki