

Bedford Public Library System
Board of Trustees organizational meeting minutes
Bedford Central Library
July 5, 2022

Mrs. Bahouth called the organizational meeting to order at 12:07pm

Board members present: Debbie Bahouth, Randy Cox, Pamela Palmer, Anna Stevens, Hope Cupit, Natalie Martin

Board members absent: Kathryn Lewis

Staff present: Jenny Novalis, Library Director and Lauren Harper, Forest Library Manager

Mrs. Bahouth asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda. Mr. Cox noted that the public comments should be moved to the first item and motioned to reorder the agenda; Mrs. Martin seconded; all agreed.

Public Comments:

Mrs. Bahouth opened the public comment portion of the meeting. She requested each comment be limited to 3 minutes or less and all comments should be directed to the Chairman of the Board.

Public speakers listed in order along with their stated topic:

Dawn Roberts (Bedford County resident) spoke in favor of inclusivity for LGBTQ+ books in the public library's collection and for their continued display.

Cindy Younghouse (Bedford County resident) spoke in favor of inclusivity for LGBTQ+ books in the public library's collection and read from the ALA's library bill of rights.

Elizabeth Mansel (Bedford County resident) spoke in reaction to the relocation of the pride display at the Forest Library to the adult section and to support continued inclusivity in the collection.

Jessica Scott (Bedford County resident) spoke in support of having pride displays in the libraries. She also read a letter from Bedford County resident Beth Hein who was unable to attend the meeting. The topic of the letter was to support all the things a public library does and to support the continued acknowledgement of all groups/people.

Mrs. Bahouth thanked the residents for their comments and closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Organization of the Board:

Mrs. Bahouth asked for nominations for the FY23 Board of Trustees chairman. Mr. Cox nominated Debbie Bahouth. Mrs. Bahouth asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. Mrs Bahouth said, all those in favor of Debbie Bahouth as chairman for the July

2022-June 2023 year say “Aye”, those opposed say “No”. The ayes have it, and Debbie Bahouth is elected chairman.

Mrs. Bahouth asked for nominations for the FY23 Board of Trustees vice chairman. Mr. Cox nominated Pamela Palmer. Mrs. Bahouth asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. Mrs Bahouth said, all those in favor of Pamela Palmer for vice chairman for the July 2022-June 2023 year say “Aye”, those opposed say “No”. The ayes have it, and Pamela Palmer is elected vice chairman.

Mrs. Bahouth asked for nominations for the FY23 Board of Trustees treasurer. Mrs. Cupit nominated Anna Stevens. Mrs. Bahouth asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. Mrs Bahouth said, all those in favor of Anna Stevens as treasurer for the July 2022-June 2023 year say “Aye”, those opposed say “No”. The ayes have it, and Anna Stevens is elected treasurer.

Mrs. Novalis addressed the Board with a resolution readopting the BPLS bylaws noting the amendment to article IV, section 8 regarding board member participation and virtual meetings.

Mrs. Palmer made a motion to approve resolution #Lib 070522-01.

WHEREAS, the purpose of the bylaws is to help the Board conduct affairs in a timely and efficient manner by incorporating the general principles of parliamentary procedure found in Robert’s Rules of Order’s and applicable Virginia Laws; and

WHEAREAS, at this, the organizational meeting of the BPLS Board of Trustees, the Board is readopting and reaffirming the Bylaws of the BPLS Board of Trustees.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the attached Bylaws are hereby adopted as amended:

Voting yes: Mr. Cox, Mrs. Cupit, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Bahouth

Voting no: none

Absent: Mrs. Lewis

The motion passed.

Mrs. Novalis addressed the Board to readopt the 2020-2025 long range plan per the Library of Virginia’s requirements to receive state aid. Mrs. Bahouth noted the plan in on the library’s website. Mrs. Martin motioned to readopt the 2020-2025 long range plan; Mrs. Palmer seconded; all agreed.

Mrs. Novalis addressed the Board to reapprove the FY23 calendar of meetings. She stated it was presented one meeting too early, by mistake. The Board reviewed the calendar. Mrs. Cupit motioned to approve the FY23 meeting schedule; Mrs. Stevens seconded; all agreed.

Mrs. Bahouth asked if everyone has had a chance to read the minutes from the previous meeting and if there were any corrections or additions. Mrs. Cupit noted a correction to the wording in

the last line: instead of purposed, it should read purpose. Mrs. Cupit motioned to approve the June 14, 2022 minutes with the noted correction; Mr. Cox seconded; all agreed.

Director's Report:

Mrs. Novalis presented the revised circulation policy to reflect the changes in circulation rules for those collections not accruing overdue fine after September 1. The major points were recapped. The Board discussed the changes and noted that some of the language in the last part of the policy section was vague, it would be better to define when the replacement cost of an item will be charged to the person – at 42 days overdue.

The library has no formal policy on display themes, materials or designated display areas. Currently each branch manager or her designee determine what the displays are for their own branch. The point/purpose of displays are to increase circulation of materials. The staff at Bedford Central report that an average of 8 books a day are checked out from the display furniture here. That is between 300 and 400 a month. Patrons have told us that the stacks are intimidating and so pulling a selection of books out of the shelves area for easy access is another reason to have displays.

The Board discussed a few points from the sample policies from other states, such as defining the purpose of displays; specific criteria to use when putting displays together; the spaces available for displays at the various branches, and that adult materials not be included in displays in the children's area. Mrs. Novalis noted that with the exception of Bedford Central, there is no visually designated children's only area, separate from the other areas of the library. Mr. Cox said that parents should be aware of what their young children are checking out, no matter where the book comes from. Mrs. Palmer agreed, and noted that the library needs to respect the parent's ability to decide what their child checks out. Mrs. Bahouth noted that there appears to be consensus to draft a policy for library displays and tasked staff with having a draft available for review at the September meeting.

Mrs. Novalis reported on the summer reading program stats. To date, attendance is up at all the shows from last year. 5 'big' shows had attendance of 1429 vs. 1612 from all the June and July shows in 2021. and there are still two more shows to go in July. Over 400 came out for the magicians show alone. The benefit of these shows is that they promote literacy, get people into the library and generally people end up checking out more books. Beanstack app dashboard shows over 1000 kids have signed up for the online portion of summer reading program (logging time reading books), and have logged the equivalent of over 10,000 days of reading during the program. Full stats and report will be available after the conclusion of summer reading program.

Financial Reports:

Mrs. Novalis presented the end of June library incomes and expenses. She noted that there are still some final adjustments to make before reporting on the total yearend figures. There was no discussion.

Board Member Comments:

Hope Cupit : Mrs. Cupit appreciated the Robert's Rules script that was handed out before the meeting and the copies of the other library's display policies.

Pamela Palmer: Mrs. Palmer stated as a follow up to the Facebook posts about the statement from the library regarding the display at Forest. She was not able to see the comments at first since she does not use Facebook, but after the fact, she saw there were 116 comments which was less than the over 800 stat that was reported and wondered where the others went. Clarification that the 819 stat was for views of the post and not comments.

Hope Cupit : Mrs. Cupit said she was visiting the Forest Library and was glad to see Essence Magazine there, it had a picture of a black, lesbian couple on the cover. She could use it as a teaching moment, to speak to her grandchild, parents need these teaching moments. There is a history of discrimination in Bedford County against black people, her grandchild has witnessed it first hand as other 3/4/5 year old kids were calling her hair ugly, calling her ugly because she is the only black child in the class. Where did these kids learn that behavior? Not really sure, as a society, how to fix that but she is considering taking her grandchild out of Bedford County schools and enrolling her in a Lynchburg school. If we allow discrimination there what is to stop LGBTQ discrimination. The Library should be open to everyone.

Natalie Martin: Mrs. Martin stated that sounds like a closed minded community; that was a great teaching moment

Pamela Palmer: Mrs. Palmer reiterated that respect is the bottom line, not to make it an us vs. them issue, but to respect other people's choices.

Debbie Bahouth: Mrs. Bahouth noted that groups should not be telling us who to hate. It is a slippery slope, everyone in this country is equal. We will not tolerate harassment or threats to the staff.

Natalie Martin: Mrs. Martin reiterated that the library needs to be a safe place and needs a good middle road approach.

No New Business

Mrs. Bahouth asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Stevens motioned to adjourn, Mr. Cox seconded, all agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40pm.