

Pottstown Regional Public Library

Board Meeting

Board Meeting: September 26, 2023 5 PM

Community Room (In Youth Department) and Zoom

Board Members Present	Board Members Absent	Staff Present
President: S. Holloway Vice President: D. Arms Treasurer: Secretary: S. Drauschak Board member: Board member: T. Brown - joined late Board member: Board member:	S. Dolan B. Brogley J. Steinman	Executive Director: M. Lipsky Staff member: M. Velez Development Coordinator: M. Sossman Guests: R. Bouher, A. Ferencin

A quorum was met: No

Meeting called to order at: 5:02 PM

Meeting was recorded.

Board Packet:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qA2LBBcGLHyw2ZZvTLzWsbTfPhMhcca2?usp=sharing>

Welcome & Introductions:

Welcome guests: R. Bouher and A. Ferencin.

Congrats on the PrPL completing the requirements for the designation of PA Forward Gold Star Library status! M. Lipsky thanked her staff for all the work put into earning the Gold Star. Also, congratulations on earning the Mercury's 2023 Best Library award!

Review & Approve Meeting Minutes: June 27, 2023; August 29, 2023 (Special Meeting); September 6, 2023 (Special Meeting).

- Minutes were not reviewed or approved due to not having a quorum of Board members.

Treasurers Report:

- Starting in 2024 we will add a monthly treasurer's report including a snapshot of the previous month.

Discussion: PrPL Development Plan

M. Sossman, Development coordinator, explained the development plan for the PrPL which included:

- August/September - Non-donor Appeal. Letters were sent to people who have not previously donated to the library and generated over \$5000! We now have their information for Bloomerang.
- October – Annual Appeal. Letters will be sent to people who have previously donated to the library.
- M. Sossman and M. Lipsky have reached out to corporate donors. Victory Bank donated \$500. They have also reached out to Trivent and Truist Bank.
- M. Lipsky has sent individual letters to all township commissioners and Borough council members asking for continued and increased financial support of the library. She, along with S. Holloway, met with the finance committee of Lower Pottsgrove and is working on setting up meetings with West and Upper Pottsgrove to make presentations. M. Lipsky attends the monthly meetings of the Borough of Pottstown.
- M. Sossman discussed a planned giving program – people can set up monthly donations with credit cards. People could also use rewards from credit cards and donate them to the library.
- Board members are asked to be ambassadors for the library and help develop community partnerships. Who do you know?
- S. Holloway would like a sample speech to use with potential donors.
- We will be developing a Capital campaign to address full upgrades to the building and parking lot, starting with the envelope of the library (outside of the building – roof, etc.).
- The library continues to apply for grants. M. Lipsky is working on a security and safety grant from the state that would benefit all patrons and staff.
- We recognize that we have community issues to deal with, specifically working with the homeless. Libraries are at the front lines for homeless people.
- M. Lipsky has been addressing issues that are being discussed on social media. Should Board members respond to discussions? It was suggested to “like” M. Lipsky’s responses.
- M. Sossman feels our Board meets too many times during the year. We could meet quarterly, with more meetings in the fall and winter. Committee meetings could be more frequent than Board meetings. Events such as Bingo night, Halloween event, and the Cookie Walk are acquisition events, passive events – meant for stewardship and not major fundraising events. The Board’s job is to support the events, make connections, and tell our story.
- D. Arms asked what the Development committee should be doing? He would like to meet with M. Sossman and M. Lipsky before the next Development committee meeting. He also asked about EITC credit – Educational Tax credit that was mentioned at a previous Development meeting. M. Sossman and M. Lipsky will look further into EITC.

New Business:

- Envelope Proposal Questions
We have an Envelope Assessment report (September 11, 2023) from BECS (Building Envelope Consultants and Scientists) that was emailed to all Board members. B. Christman of EI Associates is looking for grants and has a grant writer on staff to write grants. D. Arms suggested we look at full repairs of the building, and not partial repairs to be completed at a later date.
- Nominations for New Board members – Need at least 3 new Board members for January 1, 2024 start. We need passionate library people especially with financial backgrounds and fundraising experience.
- Nominations for Officers – Positions Open = President (1-1-24 to 12-31-25), Treasurer (1-1-24 to 12-31-25). We need to look at the qualifications for officers in the PrPL By-Laws.
- Select Dates for December or January Annual Meeting. If we choose December for our annual meeting, we won’t have all the necessary financial data for the year. No decision was made.
- Reach out to potential Liaisons: Starting in 2024, we could invite liaisons to come give a report if

they wish to do so. This would help us reach more people and develop relationships and more connections with the community. Possible liaisons with: Friends of the Library; Upper Pottsgrove Township; Lower Pottsgrove Township; West Pottsgrove Township; Borough of Pottstown; Pottsgrove School District Administrator; Pottstown School District Administrator; Pottsgrove School District Student Liaison; Pottstown School District Student Liaison; Hill School Administrator; and Hill School Student Liaison. Student liaisons could see how a Board functions and practice public speaking. It was also noted that many of the townships are sharing and promoting library information on social media.

Old Business:

- **Vanguard Account:** We have not had to use any of the funds moved from the Vanguard account. Lower Pottsgrove is giving the library the funds for summer reading, and the library will no longer have to ask for the funds. The funds will automatically go to the library. Vanguard has not contacted M. Lipsky or S. Dolan to have their names added to the account. There will be a Zoom Finance meeting on Thursday, September 28, to discuss the Vanguard funds.
- **Student Cards:** Both school districts have been contacted.

Executive Director Report – M. Lipsky

- Operational report in Board packet and attached.

Committee Reports: Board was asked to review prior to meeting and come with any questions.

- **Development Committee Highlight – D. Arms – Minutes in Packet**
 - M. Lipsky thanked Board members that made donations to the library in August and September.
 - Paige, the library mascot, will be put on Bloomerang generated thank you letters. The thank you letters will be put in the Board library mailbox for Board members to add a personal thank you note.
- **Finance Committee Report - S. Dolan**
 - There will be a Zoom Finance meeting on Thursday, September 28, 2023 to discuss the Vanguard funds.
- **Governance Committee Report – S. Drauschak – Minutes in Packet.**
 - Approval of PrPL By-Laws – draft – September 14, 2023. Not approved due to lack of Board quorum.
- **Property Committee Report – B. Brogley (absent)**
 - No report.
- **Strategic Planning Committee Report – M. Lipsky**
 - No report.

Staff Comments: No comments.

Public Comment: No comments.

Announcements, Other Business:

July Bingo night was successful! M. Bealer did a great job organizing the event.

Baby Paige's, (library mascot) are available for sale at the circulation desk.

The meeting adjourned at: 6:26 PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates and Times:

Development Committee: 2nd Thursday of the month: Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 10 AM.

Governance Committee: 2nd Thursday of the month: Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 11 AM

Finance Committee: Tuesday, November 7th at 4:30 PM – in the Library mezzanine - prepare recommendation to approve July, August, September financial reports to recommend for Audit, budget review and start 2024 budget.

Property Committee: Tuesday, November 7th at 5:30 PM in the Library mezzanine

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, October 24th at 5:00 PM in the Library Community Room.

Friends of the Library Meeting: Monday, October 16th at 10:15 AM in the Library mezzanine

Appointments with Executive Director to schedule, email: mlipsky@mclinc.org or text: 610-334-2409

Minutes submitted by: S. Drauschak Secretary of the PrPL BOD

Director's Report:

August & September Operational Information Report– M. Lipsky, Executive Director

Operations Update:

- **Summer Reading** was a huge success! Be sure to read the reports from Adult Programming and Youth Programming for exact numbers and photos!

Board Notes

- Retreat was held: Tuesday, August 8, 2023 from 3 - 5:30 PM.
- A Board resignation was accepted at the Special Board Meeting on September 6, 2023.

Technology Update

- M. Lipsky, J. Carraghan, and N. Forst continue to work closely with MCLINC to share the duties of the MAC position with help from MCLINC.

Building Updates

- **The Envelope Report** was sent via email to all Board members for review. We will discuss next steps under new business.

Funding Updates

- **Fronheiser:** The trust was dissolved, and we were promised 40%. We received the final check for just over \$3300.
- **Victory Bank Foundation:** I met with B. Vitiello in early September, who mentioned the creation of a new Foundation through Victory Bank. We were awarded \$500 to begin our New Angel Fund to offset the costs that we may incur with the new student cards.

- **Lower Pottsgrove Township:** S. Holloway and I met with the finance committee on September 14th. We asked what they will consider covering of the \$24.27 per capita cost to run the library. We are waiting back. However, they are rolling the summer reading funds set aside into the main distribution so that we no longer need to request that money. They will cut a check for \$2125 this week for 2023.
- **Upper Pottsgrove Township:** I have begun communication with M. Reddick regarding the funding. I shared the slides of the presentation that I hope to give to the commissioners, and the sections of Library code that state the municipalities must cover the \$5 per capita for us to maintain state funding.
- **West Pottsgrove Township:** D. Arms is assisting in setting up a meeting with West Pottsgrove.
- **Pottstown Borough:** I sent the presentation to J. Keller with the request to present to the finance committee or all councilors. He is fairly confident we can get an increase. Stay tuned!
- **I sent a personal letter to every Commissioner/Councilor and Township manager** requesting consideration for increased funding of the library.
- **I sent a letter to Taylor Swift:** Worth a shot, I pointed out that she went to elementary school in Pottstown, and we could use the help. You never know!
- **I have developed a 2024 Business Sponsorship Tier Program:** that I will present with M. Sossman.

Staff & Volunteers

- **Staff Changes:** We accepted the resignation of S. Garner in the beginning of September.
- **The new organizational chart** to best use available funds is finished and uploaded to the Google Drive. This is the best use of staff and time currently. I will be presenting a recommended change which will take place either August or January 2024. As of the writing of this report, we have 8 openings.
- **Job Openings:** We are currently short-staffed, mostly in the evenings.
- **Department Changes:** We welcomed L. Hazeltine and H. Kappenstein to the Youth Services Department in August.
- **Hiring:** We are in the process of hiring for Main Circulation & Youth Services.
- **Staff Status:** 9-20-2023 we have 8 Full Time staff (3 Salary, 5 Hourly), 11 Part time staff. This does not include the 2 seasonal employees which make a total of **21 on the rolls**. As of the writing of this report, we have 8 openings.
- **Volunteers:** No Change.

Continuing Education & Meetings Attended since last Board meeting

- **Community Meetings:**
 - 8-3-23 – PALA PALS Group Practicum Meeting
 - 8-8-23 – MCLINC MAC Meeting
 - 8-8-23 – Board Training retreat
 - 8-9-23 - PALA Public Library Division
 - 8-9-23 – Borough Council Committee of the Whole
 - 8-11-23 - PRPL Board retreat Recap with Trina
 - 8-18-23 – TriCounty Chamber Ambassador Meeting
 - 8-18-23 – Chamber Member Social
 - 8-22-23 – Meeting with T. Reed and S. Holloway
 - 8-24-23 – 2nd Interview with Rhonda
 - 8-24-23 - 2nd interview with Autumn
 - 8-29-23 – Meeting with T. Reed
 - 8-29-23 – Heavens and Earth Planning Meeting
 - 8-29-23 – Special Board meeting
 - 8-30-23 - Meeting with S. Dolan
 - 9-5-23 – Presentation at Lower Pottsgrove Township Meeting
 - 9-6-23 – Special Board meeting
 - 9-7-23 - Halloween Fest Planning Meeting
 - 9-12-23 – Mac Meeting in Norristown

- 9-13-23 - PALA Public Library Division
- 9-14-23 – Meeting with LPT Finance Committee
- 9-14-23 – Volunteered at the Chamber Golf Outing
- 9-15-23 - TriCounty Chamber Ambassador Meeting
- 9-15-23 – Meetings in Collegeville, Norristown, Upper Merion
- 9-18-23 - Friends of the Pottstown Library Board meeting. (No Meeting in August).
- 9-19-23 – Chamber member Breakfast
- 9-21-23 - Meet with Orphans and Oddfellows
- 9-22-23 – PALA Southeastern Chapter meeting
- **MCLINC Directors & District Meetings:**
 - 8-16-23 – MCLINC Directors Meeting in Norristown
 - 9-25-23 – MCLINC Finance Committee Meeting in Upper Dublin
 - No - District meeting in July or August – Next meeting in person on 9-27-23 in Norristown
- **Development Consultant Meetings** held 7-31, 8-4, 8-10, 8-29, 9-1, 9-5, 9-6, 9-13, 9-22, 9-26
- **Webinars/Training:**
 - 8-3-23 – Social Workers in Libraries
 - 8-9-23 – Staff Led Strategic Planning
 - 8-10-23 – Creating a culture of fundraising webinar
 - 9-13-23 – Patron Point Demonstration with MCLINC
- **Staff Meetings:**
 - 8-22-23 - one-on-one meeting with E. McNichol.
 - I meet with the Assistant Directors every Tuesday.
 - J. Carraghan and N. Forst meet with the circ supervisors and youth supervisors every other week.
 - Next Staff meeting is October 12, 2023 at 8:30 AM.
- **Conferences:**
 - ALA conference: I plan to attend next year in San Diego, CA.
 - PLA conference 2024 in Columbus OH.
 - PALA Conference 2023 in the Poconos October 1st through the 4th. M Bealer, M Velez, and M Lipsky will attend.

Submitted by Mindy Lee M Lipsky – Executive Director

Youth Services Report – September 2023 – C. Johnson, Youth/Teen Librarian

Outreach

- Sept. 9 11:30-1:30 – Lower Pottsgrove Community Day - handed out flyers; brochures for library resources and services; promoted upcoming programs.
- Sept. 15 – International DOT Day Ringing Rocks Elementary School - Story and craft.
- Sept. 20 - 6:00-8:00pm – Family Shopping at the Book Fair: Station for families to visit before/after they shopped to learn more info about the library.
- Sept. 23 10:00-3:00 – Upper Pottsgrove Community Day – flyers; brochures for library resources and services; promoted upcoming programs.

Successes

- Positive interaction with child patron (age 3) and his grandmother in the YSD. Child helped “clean-up” and played hide and seek with a rubber duck. Child and his grandmother usually come to PJ story time and the child is usually very shy, so this interaction has been the best by far.
- Positive Email from patron (received Sun., Sept. 3) -- In an email with the subject “Just a Pottstown citizen...”, a woman said, “Continually impressed by the roster of activities you folks put on”. I replied to thank her for the feedback, explaining, “That’s so nice to hear, thank you! We don’t get direct feedback like this as often as you’d think, so we appreciate it!” She responded, “My pleasure! Keep up the good work with your colleagues -- you are much appreciated!!!”

- Positive Play & Connect - Mondays 10:30 from Sept. 11 – Oct. 9, 2023. PRPL is registered as a Family Place Library, and one requirement for FPLs is to hold two 5-part programs a year for families with children 0-3 years old. We set up play stations (coloring, imaginative play, reading, fine/gross motor skills, community resources, and tumble play) in the Community room. While children determine the direction of play, parents, have the opportunity to make connections with the library staff and community resource professionals from organizations such as Family Services, the YWCA, and Community Health & Dental Care. Families are encouraged to come to all five sessions to meet the different CRPs, and they do not have to stay the entire time. No structured activities are led by the staff. The program is for free-play time, which also promotes the use of our tactile resources. Only a few families attended the first session, but we are hopeful that more will join in, especially since our Spring sessions were mostly no-shows. The parents expressed satisfaction with our resources, and interest in the unusual program format.
- Book displays for September-October: Banned Books; Spooky Books; and a Fall themed Interactive Display – using leaves and a tree.

3 Upcoming

- “All Ages Storytime” (Oct. 5 10:30am) – We have received several questions about story time programming for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We already have a small group that likes to attend our Friday story time programs, and another group asked if we would be willing to offer an “all ages” story time. We will have an experimental story time program on October 5 in the Community Room. We plan to discuss how it goes, and if this is something we’d like to offer on a regular basis.
- HalloweenFest (Oct. 20 6:00 PM) -- several youth services staff are assisting the planning of the Halloween event. We will have a murder mystery game, a painting craft, a photo booth, Tarot card readings offered by a local medium, and a meet-and-greet with paranormal investigators followed by a brief attic tour. There will also be light refreshments and hopefully, a beverage tasting.
- Holiday Cookie Walk (Dec. 16) -- planning for the Cookie Walk will begin in late October or early November. We need cookie donations! We encourage unique family recipes as well as cookies that accommodate common allergies (nut free, gluten free, dairy free, etc.)

Adult Programming, August 2023 – M. Bealer, Adult Programming Coordinator

Programs

- In August, we hosted 13 sessions of regular, recurring programs, and 4 special events for a total of 17 programs.
- The end of August wrapped up the Adult Summer Reading Challenge: All Together Now. It was the highest attended adult program with 154 individual readers enrolled.
- Two limited summer series had their final sessions in August. Summer Yoga took place on August 8 and saw 9 attendees. Evening Adult Crafting happened on August 15 and had 2 participants. For Evening Adult Crafting, we made yarn pompom.
- We hosted 1 standalone event during August: an Adult Mario Kart Competition on August 19. We had 6 participants.
- Our recurring programs have continued to have steady attendance: Mahjong, Pottstown Writer’s Group, the PrPL Book Club, and Afternoon Adult Crafting. The majority of these participants are returning attendees who seem to genuinely enjoy their experiences at these programs. In Afternoon Adult Crafting, we made pipe cleaner flowers on August 11 and beaded bracelets on August 25.

Outreach/Community Connections

- J. Fischer of Samana Holistic Center has been instructing beginner-friendly yoga classes for our limited series of Summer Yoga. She has been lovely to work with and has generously split the

entry amount (\$10 per person) with the library. We have begun to plan a regular, once a month evening yoga class to take place at the library moving forward since it has been a very popular program.

Book Displays

- Our free-standing book display was curated as “Learn & Do at the Library” for the months of July and August. It includes flyers for the adult programs occurring in both months with book selections relating to those activities.
- The wall-anchored book display remained the display related to our Adult Summer Reading Challenge: All Together Now, featuring subsections relating to diversity, love, friendship, kindness, and the things that bring us together.

Statistics August 2023

- In August we added 753 items to the collection and marked 100 items for deletion.
- Libby saw 1256 uses between books, eAudiobooks, and magazines.
- Hoopla saw usage of 353 items borrowed.
- Facebook engagement seems to be increasing, and social media engagement has increased over all platforms that we tracked.
- Print Circulation has decreased a bit but that is to be expected as summer reading has come to an end.
- New Registrations:
 - Lower Pottsgrove saw 28 new people sign up for a card.
 - Pottstown Borough saw 83 new people sign up for a card.
 - Upper Pottsgrove saw 13 new people sign up for a card.
 - West Pottsgrove saw 5 new people sign up for a card.
 - We had 7 new people sign up for cards who are not in our direct service area, but are either in Chester, Berks, or Philadelphia counties.



