

**BRANDON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Special Meeting**  
**January 18, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.**  
**304 South Street**  
**Ortonville, MI 48462**  
**Meeting Room**

*“The Brandon Township Library is the center of community activity and experiences.”*

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Roll Call
- 3. Approval of the Agenda Action Item
- 4. Approval of the Minutes, December 21, 2021 Action Item
- 5. Call to Audience
- 6. Director Review for R. Higgerson Action Item
- 7. Public Comment
- 8. Adjourn Action Item

**Next Regular Meeting:**  
**January 25, 2022 @ 5:00 pm**  
**Community Room**

## MINUTES

**BRANDON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Regular Meeting December 21, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**  
**304 South Street**  
**Ortonville, MI 48462**  
**Community Room**

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

NAME: V. Cole

TIME: 5:00 pm

### 2. PLEDGE

### 3. ROLL CALL

NAME: Cole

NAME: Gault

NAME: Hagen

NAME: Rathburg

NAME: Taylor

NAME: Wills

Student Liaison: Salter

### 4. AGENDA

CHANGES: None

STATEMENT: "Motion to approve agenda as presented."

MOTION: J. Taylor

SECOND: H. Wills

VOTE YEA: 5

VOTE NAY: 0

### 5. MINUTES

CHANGES: Missing word in 12.1 2022 Calendar- STATEMENT: "Motion to **approve** the 2022 Calendar as presented."

DATE: November 30, 2021

STATEMENT: "Motion to approve the minutes as amended."

MOTION: J. Rathburg

SECOND: J. Taylor

VOTE YEA: 4

VOTE NAY: 0

\*H. Wills Abstained

### 6. CALL TO AUDIENCE

DISCUSSION: Three in attendance, no comments

### 7. FINANCIAL REPORT

7.4 Approve expenses paid for November 2021

DATE: November 2021

DISCUSSION: R. Higgerson explains that when she is creating the budget she allows for an increase in costs, which means there may be an excess of funds in the line item or cost center at the end of the fiscal year.

STATEMENT: "Motion to approve the expenses paid for November 2021 in the amount of \$75,869.15."

## MINUTES

MOTION: H. Wills  
VOTE YEA: Roll Call; 5

SECOND: J. Rathburg  
VOTE NAY: 0

### 8. COMMUNICATION

DISCUSSION: None

### 9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### 9.1 Parking Lot RFP Bids

DISCUSSION: V. Cole advocates for an ad-hoc committee (V. Cole, H. Wills, K. Rocheleau) to speak to the company representatives for clarification on the bids before accepting any contract for the new parking lot.

J. Rathburg asks that the committee look into what kind of, if any, warranty the companies offer.

V. Cole received an email from Circulation Manager, S. Ault, about looking into the possibly for better handicap parking space accessibility when redoing the parking lot.

STATEMENT: "Motion to approve the ad-hoc committee of V. Cole, H. Wills, and K. Rocheleau."

MOTION: J. Rathburg  
VOTE YEA: 5

SECOND: J. Taylor  
VOTE NAY: 0

### 10. NEW BUSINESS

#### 10.1 Pay Grade 2022 Revision (Min Wage Increase)

DISCUSSION: R. Higgerson proposes the new Pay Grade Scale for 2022. The only change was made in Grade 1 due to the increase of Michigan minimum wage.

STATEMENT: "Motion to approve the 2022 Pay Grade as presented."

MOTION: H. Wills  
VOTE YEA: 5

SECOND: J. Rathburg  
VOTE NAY: 0

#### 10.2 2022 Attorney Rates

DISCUSSION: R. Higgerson presents a letter from Foster Swift, BTPL's law firm, regarding an increase in hourly rates. Foster Swift specializes in library law. H. Wills asks if this increase will require an increase in the 2022 budget. R. Higgerson assures that it does not.

#### 10.3 REVISED Equipment Use Policy

DISCUSSION: The Library recently received a grant to purchase five Hotspots to lend out for patron use. As the previous policy referred only to "laptops", this revised version changes the wording to "equipment" to cover future purchases.

Further revisions made by Board are:

- Change title to "Technology Equipment Use Policy" and "Technology Equipment Borrower Agreement"
- Remove from Item I.A- (The "laptop" or "hotspot")
- Change I.B.2- "A Borrower is allowed to borrow one laptop and/or one hotspot at a time."

## MINUTES

- To update the policy name from "Laptop Use Policy" to "Technology Equipment Use Policy" in the Agreement

STATEMENT: "Motion to approve the Technology Equipment Use Policy and Technology Equipment Borrower Agreement as revised."

MOTION: H. Wills

SECOND: J. Rathburg

VOTE YEA: 5

VOTE NAY: 0

### 10.4 REVISED Equipment Borrower Agreement

DISCUSSION: See 10.3 REVISED Equipment Use Policy

## 11. Strategic Plan Update

DISCUSSION: S. Quick happily reports that 54% of the Strategic Plan objectives have been completed.

V. Cole asks the Board to review Section 1 as it is assigned to the Board. She would like to have updates recorded for the next quarterly update in March.

J. Taylor asks: if the library is confident in the completion of the plan by the 2023 deadline; if each objective not started should have an individual plan/deadline in place by the next update; and if the names of previous employees listed on an objective should be updated with current employees.

S. Quick responds: The Library is confident that we can complete the plan within the time frame, barring any unforeseen closures or circumstances; that individual due dates for the objectives can be daunting if not met for any reason (i.e. delays on preceding projects, unexpected projects or closures, etc.); the names of previous employees working on an objective are kept for recording purposes but leaders and current project members are also included.

## 12. COMMITTEE REPORT

DISCUSSION: In the next month, Trustees are to contact V. Cole by email to inform her of which committees they would like to be a part of. Committees will be reassigned at the January meeting.

H. Wills proposes the assignment option that the three seniors Trustees (Cole, Gault, Rathburg) mentor the new Trustees (Hagen, Taylor, Wills) by having one experienced and one new Trustee on each committee.

### 12.1 Professional Development (Cole, Rathburg)

DISCUSSION: None

### 12.2 Friends Liaison (Rathburg, Cole)

DISCUSSION: There is meeting tonight at 6:00pm. The Silent Auction fundraiser brought in approximately \$700 in profit to the FOL!

### 12.3 Student Liaison (Hagen, Cole)

DISCUSSION: With the recent events at Oxford High School, T. Salter spoke that the Library is even more needed by the community as a gathering place and education center. She is eager to work with the Board, staff, and students to determine different programs that would get students in the Library.

## MINUTES

### 12.4 Advocacy (Wills, Gault)

DISCUSSION: H. Wills encourages the Board to watch the webinar "Intellectual Freedom" that is available on the United for Libraries website. The webinar talks about materials selection policies, reconsideration policies, crisis protocols and communication in relation to the current world troubles.

There are also two bills that the committee is watching and will update the Board as they progress.

### 12.5 Budget and Fund Balance (Gault, Wills)

DISCUSSION: None

### 12.6 Evaluations (Cole)

DISCUSSION: None

## 13. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

DISCUSSION:

### 13.1 Staff Reports

DISCUSSION:

### 13.2 Library Statistics

DISCUSSION: None

## 14. CALENDAR REVIEW

DISCUSSION: January: Fiscal Year Begins

## 15. PUBLIC COMMENT None

DISCUSSION: Patron (no name)- In response to the Student Liaison's ideas for programs relating to the recent tragedy at Oxford High School, patron warns that mental health professionals for teens are in high demand and may be difficult to find for programming.

## 16. ON HOLD

## 17. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

SUBJECT: Committee Assignments

SUBJECT: Crisis Communication Protocols and Policies Discussion

SUBJECT: Board and Trustee Insurance/Coverage

## 18. ADJOURN

STATEMENT: "Motion to Adjourn."

MOTION: J. Taylor

VOTE YEA: 5

TIME: 6:12 pm

SECOND: H. Wills

VOTE NAY: 0

**Next Meeting:  
January 25, 2022 5:00 pm  
Community Room**

**REBECCA HIGGERSON****Major accomplishment during her employment 2015 to 2022**

When Rebecca arrived in January 2015, she entered the position of Director, having earned the position based on her experience, interview answers and likeable persona. She had prepared for the interview by reading all available minutes of past board meetings, everything on the website, all newspaper articles and interviewing other library professionals in the area. She was aware of the challenges facing BTPL. When offered the job at a substantial reduction of \$50,000 per year, she accepted saying she understood that was all we could afford, having paid \$1000 for her airfare to attend the interview. In fact, prior to her arrival, the previous director was being paid \$58,000 a year and 12% of her income into retirement. Rebecca has earned 6%.

What she found was a staff struggling with no qualified Director for many years as the previous 3 directors were fired or left voluntarily before dismissal. A budget deficit barely repaired, staff depressed due to reduction in benefits, the building in need of repairs and upgrades, and programming and materials underfunded and selected on outdated criteria.

She received salary increases which brought her to parity with other library directors in the area with similar Class after 5 years.

She tackled the challenges in her practiced way. She researches, consults with other directors and professionals using many resources she has cultivated during her career. During her tenure she has accomplished much.

There is a current fund balance of close to the annual budget of approximately \$1,000,000.00. When the \$400,000 is moved to a defined reserve, leaving approximately six months undefined reserve.

The building has been renovated, the mechanicals repaired and/or updated as needed, the leaks that had persisted for years were finally diagnosed and repaired, the roof repaired, repairs to water pipes and well repairs. These repairs and improvements were made after years of misinformation and neglect. Not willing to risk further fraud, Rebecca took responsibility for every item in the building and gradually had all the electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning, and construction problems repaired.

The budget for materials and programming were brought to acceptable levels, and many improvements in purchasing and analyzing usage resulted in upgrades.

Concern for turnover was analyzed and several valuable staff has been lost due to opportunities at other libraries with full time and/or benefits. She now has 9 out of 16 of the staff working full-time with benefits, making for a more stable staff complement. But not all staff changes were losses. Rebecca's support of current staff members has resulted in several underperforming employees achieving success. This has been due to her reluctance to terminate employment without effort. She coached, encouraged, and found duties better suited for a few employees who continue to contribute happily to BTPL.

When she arrived, additional training was not encouraged or required. After minimum requirements (12 hours per person per year) were established, the enthusiasm and creativity increased. The staff now looks for ways to learn, share and benefit from many forms of education, resulting in a wave of creativity that is obvious from the minute you enter the building to the resulting programs, ideas, and usefulness of the library.

Rebecca also raised the profile of Brandon Library state-wide through outreach with her many presentations for the Library of Michigan, Michigan Library Association, Friends of Michigan Libraries, and the Loleta Fyan Small and Rural Libraries Conference.

When the pandemic hit, and the shutdown occurred, the staff did not lose pay due to the budget strength. The results were staff working from home when possible, to prepare for a return to opening. By that time, the administration had researched policies, strategies, and building revisions. Changes were implemented, protective devices and barriers installed to protect staff and patrons. The library was fully open to the public beginning July 6, 2020 and closed or reverted to curbside only when internal Covid exposure occurred or when numbers increased and other libraries moved back to curbside.

During every year, Rebecca worked to update, upgrade, and add to the policies and procedures making the Board of Trustees aware of needs and improvement.

The strategic plan she organized and then turned into an actual working document is unprecedented at this library. It has been the guide for improvements, even when changes due to Trustee turnover, pandemic responses, and other situations threatened disruptions.

Yet, during all these years of tremendous effort and successes, the board failed to offer bonuses or more benefits commensurate with the value she produced.

Now is the time.