



RUSSELL LIBRARY

A great place to be.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Virtual meeting via Webex.com, 6:30 p.m.

- **Present:** Trustees Atherton, Becker, Berlind, Hadley, Jones, Nelson, Skowera, Williams, and Wisneski; Library Director Burkey; Administrative Assistant Tsahalis
- **Excused:** Trustees Duggan, Fulton, Russell
- 1. **Call to Order:** President Wisneski called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.
Mission Moment: Trustee Hadley expressed her admiration for the video produced by Trustee Duggan, the successful Russell Company Annual meeting of June 22, and the outreach efforts of the Board.
- 2. **Public Session/Comment:** There were no members of the public present and no questions submitted.
- 3. **Approval of Minutes:** It was moved (Trustee Atherton) and seconded (Trustee Becker) to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2020 Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
- 4. **Administration Report – Ramona Burkey, Library Director:** the full report will be attached at the end of the minutes. Library staff have been busy planning for a limited July 13 re-opening of the building to the public with browsing only; there will be no chairs, no computers, and no programs. Masks will be required of staff and patrons for the health and safety of all. Patrons who cannot wear a mask can take advantage of curbside service. New trustee Alison Williams was asked to introduce herself and mentioned that this was her third period of living in Middletown; previously she had been a student at Wesleyan, returned for several years as a chemistry professor, and for the past 11 months has been serving as Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. She comes from a family of readers, is a sports junkie, a semi-professional oboist, and is eager to help Wesleyan be more engaged in the community. Following her introduction, other Board members gave brief self-introductions.
- 5. **Old Business:**
There was no old business.
- 6. **New Business:**
Board President Wisneski, as chair of the Executive Committee, proposed the following slate of officers for the year 2020-2021: President, Eamonn Wisneski; vice-president, Shanay Fulton; Treasurer, Andrew Becker; Secretary, Wendy Berlind; fifth Executive Committee member, Steve Nelson. It was moved (Trustee Skowera) and seconded (Trustee Atherton) that the slate presented be elected. The motion passed with the abstention of Trustee Becker.
- 7. **Committee Reports and Recommendations:**
 - a. **Executive Committee Report:** President Wisneski reported that the Committee met two weeks ago to discuss the proposed officer slate, issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and library re-opening, and filling the vacancy on the Board while adding a new member to the Russell Company.

- b. Finance Committee Report: Trustee Becker, Chair, reported that the committee has not met in the past few months and has two new members, Trustees Duggan and Atherton. The endowment has decreased in the past month from \$1,285,000 to \$1,181,000 but that the stock market is improving and the committee is satisfied with the guidance it is receiving from Essex Financial Services. There was a planned \$10,000 withdrawal from the endowment last month.
- c. Governance Committee Report: Trustee Skowera, Chair, reported on a special meeting last month to review the policy on emergencies and disasters. The policy which follows gives the Library Director agility to respond quickly to urgent situations.

In anticipation of public health emergencies, natural disasters, declared states of emergencies, and other threats to the safety of Russell Library patrons and employee, the Director of Russell Library will maintain procedures incorporating guidance from local, state, and federal agencies and best practices from peers. These procedures should set forth various stages of operations for the Russell Library to address:

- *Status of onsite staffing levels*
- *Status of public-facing services*
- *Full or partial closure of physical facilities*
- *Precautionary measures and other steps to minimize danger to patrons and employees. The procedures should also outline conditions which merit changes to the above. These procedures should be updated as new information is made available. The Director is empowered to implement the procedures and subsequent changes to preserve the health and well-being of Library patrons and employees. Any substantive changes to the procedures should be presented to the Board of Trustees at its regular meetings.*

The Board voted unanimously to accept this policy. Trustee Skowera also reported on a regular meeting of the committee to discuss an orientation process for new board members. He noted also that the by-laws pertaining to Board oversight of personnel matters seems to grant too much power to the Board and not enough to library administration.. The governance committee will work on amending that section of the by-laws.

- d. Strategic planning: Co-Chair Wisneski reported that the committee has not met recently due to the pandemic. The committee plans to re-start the public input process in view of the recent pandemic and new library procedures. Library Director Burkey said that her self-evaluation will set out interim goals while the group works on long-term planning.

8. **Adjournment:** It was moved (Trustee Berlind) and seconded (Trustee Atherton) to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Regular Board meeting: Tuesday, September 15, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Berlind

Wendy Berlind, Secretary