

Annual Meeting
Library Association of Ringwood Inc.

December 12, 2016

7:30 PM

M.J.Ryerson Middle School – 130 Valley Road, Ringwood NJ: Cafeteria

ATTENDANCE: Library Director, Elise Bedder (the “Director”), Heather Manley Caldwell, Heather Nemeth, Karen Marcus, Amy Boyle Geisel (ABG), Ed Thomas, John Sumislaski, Anne Siebecker, Susan Rakosi Rosenbloom, Lisa Straubinger, 99 members of the Association.

Call to Order and Statement of Meeting Notice: The meeting was called to order at 7:40pm by Heather Nemeth and she read the following statement: Adequate notice of this meeting was provided in the usual course to the Suburban Trends, the Record, Herald News, WGHT, Channel 77, the Borough Manager and the RPL website. Notice was posted inside the RPL and Notice of the proposed amendment to the By-Laws and Constitution was mailed to each member and posted inside the RPL in accordance with the By-Laws/Constitution of the Assoc.

Approval of Minutes, Agenda:

Packets consisting of four documents were distributed at the door: Minutes from 12/14/15 Annual meeting, Agenda for meeting, Notice of suggested amendment to By-Laws/Constitution which was mailed to all members and a press release with the monthly Board meeting schedule.

Former library director, Andrea Cahoon interrupts Heather Nemeth with appoint of order concerning several issues: agenda must be adopted by the assembly, the assembly can revise the agenda (according to the 11th edition of RR, p. 372) so that we can talk at any time during the meeting, the agenda doesn't say that we have the right to nominate from the floor, the agenda does not say that we have an economic report, the agenda confuses the terms public and member.

Amy Boyle Geisel disagrees with Ms. Cahoon's assessment of Robert's Rules regarding the agenda. The agenda is already set and it is not the Board's custom to permit amendments to the Agenda, so the Board would like to proceed with the explanation of the election procedures and follow the existing agenda. Amy Boyle Geisel asks if there is a motion to amend the Agenda, Andrea Cahoon makes the motion, Tom MacAllen seconds and after a verbal vote with show of hands, the motion fails.

Heather Nemeth continues explaining the rules of the public meeting mentioning that we need to leave the premises by 9:30. The purpose of this meeting is to elect five board members and to amend the By-Laws/Constitution of the Association. For all other business, the next regular meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 23, 7:30 at the library and all are welcome to attend.

Andrea Cahoon interrupts Heather Nemeth stating that the agenda does not identify who comprises the nominating committee and therefore the agenda needs to be revised. She wants the agenda to state:

1. anyone can speak at any time.
2. only library association members in good standing can vote only for officers but the public can vote for the amendments.
3. nominations from the floor should be taken.
4. There should be a Treasurer's Report.

ABG responds that according to Article VII: Elections of the Library Assoc. of Ringwood, Inc. Constitution and By-Laws A-D, all of the people in this room are members and therefore can vote for officers and for the amendments. A show of hands reveals that everyone in the room except for one person is a member of the Library Association. She continues to explain the voting procedures. There was a nominating committee comprised of Karen Marcus, Heather Nemeth and ABG who recommended the five candidates two months ago at a regular Board meeting.

Tom MacAllen: A point of order: Where in the By-Laws does it allow people to vote prior to nominations from the floor? ABG: There is nothing in the By-Laws stipulating when people are allowed to vote. Tom MacAllen makes a motion to have a public session prior to the voting on Trustees, Robin Canetti seconds. The motion is put to vote by verbal yes or no and the motion fails.

Approval of Minutes from 12/14/15 Meeting:

Amy Jolin makes a motion to vote to accept the minutes from 2015 annual meeting. Arlene Hess Thorn seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously with 1 abstention, Audrey Donellen.

Election of Trustees:

Board President Heather Nemeth authorizes ABG to handle the election procedures as Chairperson Pro Tempore according to Robert's Rules Ch.47. This is the slate of candidates recommended by the Board of Trustees:

Amy Boyle Geisel (ABG), Karen Marcus, Anne Siebecker, Susan Rakosi Rosenbloom and Lisa Straubinger. These are 5 out of the 9 Trustees of the Board, the term is 2 years.

ABG asks if there are nominees for Trustee from the floor. Andrea Cahoon nominates Peter Sando and Robin Canetti. Ms. Cahoon reads a prepared statement regarding her nomination and the candidates. Tom MacAllen seconds the nomination. Andrea Cahoon holds up signs with the names of the two candidates. ABG explains that these candidates are write-in and their names can be filled in on the ballot. Amy Boyle Geisel asks Peter Sando and Robin Canetti if they have any questions regarding the position, do they understand the time commitment; attend meetings, read documents, be informed and vote on Library issues? There is a list of the 2017 Board meetings, get a copy and ensure that you can attend all meetings.

Robin Cannetti: A Point of Order: Can she address the membership prior to the elections? Her prepared speech will last longer than 2 minutes.

ABG responds that each candidate will have the opportunity to speak but must try to keep it short. She asks if there are any further nominations from the floor. She asks if the new nominees have any questions about the trustee position? There are no questions.

ABG makes a motion to close the nominations. Heather Nemeth seconds the motion. The motion carries. ABG explains that we use a closed ballot system to ensure privacy and avoid embarrassment. Audrey Donellan interrupts to ask if she has something negative to say about a candidate will she be allowed to speak? ABG explains that after the candidates speak, the membership will be allowed to speak in favor of a candidate but not against a candidate. Ms. Donellen argues that she has the right to tell the membership things about the candidates, ABG interrupts Audrey Donellan three times to tell her that "NO Audrey, there will not be nasty comments or calling a Trustees' motives into question, Robert's Rules Ch. XX Section 61." Argument ensues. ABG calls each nominated candidate to speak. Amy Boyle Geisel, Karen Marcus, Anne Siebecker, Susan Rakosi Rosenbloom, Lisa Straubinger, Peter Sando, Robin Canetti each address the membership for 3 timed minutes each. Peter Sando and Robin Canetti are given 4 minutes to speak.

Discussion ensues over the Association mailing list and Peter Sando and Audrey Donellan's attempts to get the membership mailing list ahead of the meeting. Amy Boyle Geisel cites the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA"), N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 and legal advice from three different Library attorneys. Amy Boyle Geisel reads; 'A public agency has a responsibility and obligation to protect a citizen's personal information that is in the possession of a public agency when disclosure of that information would violate the citizen's reasonable expectation of privacy.' Burnett v. County of Bergen, 198 N.J. 408 (2009). We will not give you the membership list so that you can call members like you did Heather Nemeth, Karen Marcus and me on my cellphone to argue this issue and others. We used the membership list to send out notice of the meeting last year and the proposal to amend the by-laws/Constitution. I did the mailing last year and Elise Bedder did the mailing this year. We will not give anyone our membership list unless our membership tells us in writing that it is okay to share their information.

ABG makes a motion to begin the vote and Karen Marcus seconds. The motion to begin the vote passes. Members in good standing are asked to vote. Amy Boyle Geisel addresses the membership: tonight we will use a closed balloting system to ensure privacy. You will each write down your preferences for the 5 trustee positions on your ballots, make a check next to or write in the names of the people you wish to vote for, fold your ballot in half and bring it up to the table and put into the ballot box. PLEASE do not make any other notations on the ballot. Please, do not write in a fictional name or the name of someone who was not a member of the Association on 10/2/16 - that will serve as an abstention. You do not have to vote for 5 people but you have the right to vote for any 5 as 5 Trustee positions are open. Please now make your selections and vote. 8 minute break as members voted.

Amy Boyle Geisel calls the membership back to the meeting.

Amy Boyle Geisel addresses the membership: Are there any other votes? Has everyone who wanted to vote and entitled to vote, voted? Then I move that the voting be closed. Heather Nemeth seconds. The motion carries unanimously. ABG asks the tellers to remove all the ballots from the front of the table, count the ballots and make their report on the vote on their tally sheets provided.

Vote on the Constitutional Amendment:

ABG states, the following amendment of Art.V E. 1 of the Constitution and By Laws of this Association is recommended by the Board of Trustees:

‘All checks drawn on the Association accounts shall be signed by any two of the following: the Treasurer, the President, the Vice President of the Board or the Director.’ ABG states that the Trustees suggest this change so as to have 2 signatures on each check and that the 2 be any of those 3 Officers of the Board and/or Director. This makes it easier if someone is on vacation or if the check is written to the Director or any of the Officers – so that person is not signing their own check. The Board posted Notice of this proposed change inside, outside RPL and mailed copies of this language in Nov.2016, all in accordance with our By Laws Art.IX.

Andrea Cahoon asks what happens if an officer does not want to be a signer of the check? There should be a stipulation that by virtue of the office they can submit paperwork to be a signer. Amy Boyle Geisel responds that this is not an issue, discussions have been had and all who can, are willing to be signators on the accounts. That is why we propose this amendment.

Arlene MacAllen asks for clarification of the wording of the amendment. She is told that the amendment states: the Treasurer, the President, the Vice President of the Board and/or the Director – any 2 of those 4 can sign the checks.

Karen Marcus makes a motion to accept the changes to the Constitution and Heather Nemeth seconds the motion. Motion passes 2/3 vote yes, no opposed, with Audrey Donellen, Wenke Taule and Arlene MacAllen abstaining. Copies of the Association By-Laws reflecting the new amendment will be posted inside RPL as they are now.

Audrey Donellan stood up to announce that she is upset that both she and Peter Sando attempted to get the list of Library Association members but was denied meanwhile Board members were given the list. Since RPL is a private association library, she believes that ABG’s interpretation is wrong and she wants the list of members. ABG responds that based on legal advice and her analysis of OPRA, the Board of Trustees denied Peter Sando’s requests and Audrey Donellan’s numerous requests ABG cited NJSA 47:1a again which states that a public agency has a responsibility to protect the public’s information. Though RPL is a private library association, since we get all of our funding from the town we are in essence a public entity and must adhere to the Open Public Meeting Act and OPRA. As such, the Board will not release the membership list. Audrey Donellan started to address Heather Nemeth and ABG responded that Audrey Donellan was out of order, was not recognized by the Chair and had had several opportunities to talk already.

Stephanie Hirsch states that her husband received an email from a friend asking for support for the election. The email was informational.

Laura Flandera, Erskine Elementary School librarian, wants help understanding what is going on with the weeding. She heard that the library was weeding all books published earlier than 1980. She thinks some books are so worthy that they should be kept because they transcend their age.

Lisa Petri states that the Interim Director did mention weeding outdated books but she did not say not say to get rid of every book over 10 years old. Amy Boyle Geisel suggested that while a worthy topic, library protocol would best be discussed in a separate conversation between Ms.Flandera and Library Director Elise Bedder or Reference Librarian, Wendy Sandford. Laura Flandera agreed to contact them at a different time.

Mr. Sando states that a friend received an email from Ed Thomas's wife, Amy Jolin, referring to a large, group email. He then read the email. Peter Sando stated that he wanted the membership list, if the Board members had the list. ABG replied that the Board would not give out the membership list and he had in fact had his opportunity tonight to address the membership both before and now after the election.

Tara Conway states that she did not get that email. She received the same letter everyone else got about the meeting. Helen Hill states that she did not get the email referred to by Mr. Sando.

Audrey Donellen wants to comment directly about a board member's inappropriate behavior. ABG responds that she cannot direct anything nasty to any board member. Audrey feels that ABG is not allowing her to speak. ABG states that she is sorry if Ms. Donellen feels disrespected, however Robert's Rules is specific in not allowing nasty comments or criticism of a member, Chapter XX Section 61. There are cries from the back of the room to keep the meeting going. 'Tell us the results and let's go.'

Board of Trustee Election Results:

ABG asks the teller to report on ballots, the Trustees as elected are Anne Siebecker, Lisa Straubinger, Karen Marcus, Susan Rakosi Rosenbloom and Amy Boyle Geisel. Andrea Cahoon interrupts to ask for the total number of votes for each candidate. Discussion ensues, and ABG reads from the vote tellers written report; the numbers of votes received were as follows:

Amy Boyle Geisel (71), Karen Marcus (74), Anne Siebecker (79), Susan Rakosi Rosenbloom (73), Lisa Straubinger (76), Peter Sando (28) and Robin Canetti (28). Andrea Cahoon interrupts to ask for the total number of members, ABG responds 99 registered and were in attendance. Andrea Cahoon asks that the numbers be read again, ABG complies. ABG asks the Tellers at the table, is there clear and convincing evidence by way of the ballots received tonight that 5 Trustees have been selected? Are you confident that these results reflect your report? Are you confident that you did not leave the ballot boxes unattended and the report accurately reflects the votes cast tonight? Two tellers respond in affirmative

and are thanked by ABG and Heather Nemeth. ABG declares that there is a clear and convincing majority for each of these 5 candidates and that these 5 are elected as Trustees in accordance with our Constitution/By Laws and Robert's Rules as revised. I join with all the members tonight in thanking those Trustees who have served in the past and I welcome the new Trustees. I know that we will accomplish good things together for the Ringwood Public Library. I thank you all for coming tonight and exercising your right to vote and engage in discussion about our Library. I move now that we have concluded with the voting and we resume the regular business of this Association in accordance with our Agenda, Heather Nemeth seconds and the motion carries with Audrey Donellan abstaining. Amy Boyle Geisel states that as the Elections are done, she is no longer Chairperson Pro Tempore and surrenders the Chair of the Meeting back to Heather Nemeth, President.

Director's Announcements:

Elise Bedder makes a statement and recognizes the former director's 41 years of service to the library. In the future she plans to focus on children and young adults. The Director invited the public to speak with her about anything including the weeding issues.

Public Session:

Robin Canetti states that the new Director has expertise and she strongly encourages the Board to research the function of library trustee. She thinks the Board has been micro-managing the library. She wants the Board to re-think their role. She states that a trustee should not also be a Friend and these roles are clearly defined. Peter Sando repeats that he wants a copy of the membership list and he thinks that the Board is not being fair by withholding that information.

Andrea Cahoon makes a statement that the Board cannot pay the Bills because it did not produce copies of the financial documents and bill pay statement to the membership. ABG responds that it has never been the custom of the Board in its operations to make financial documents available at Board meetings; that the Board never gave out copies of the bill pay statement at any prior meetings. Heather Nemeth responds that the Board will wait on bill pay until a later date.

Adjournment: Heather Nemeth thanked the members for their attendance, wished them Happy Holidays and adjourned at 9:23.

Next meeting Jan 23, 2017, 7:30

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Rakosi Rosenbloom, Acting Secretary
Karen Marcus, Acting Secretary
Amy Boyle Geisel, Corresponding Secretary
December 15, 2016
Approved by unanimous vote 12/11/17