

Bedford Village Free Library
Board Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2024

ATTENDANCE:

In-person – Ann Cloonan, Caroline DeFilippo, Ted Eigel, Colleen Gelfand, Scott Harrison, Artika Loganathan, Alison Todd; via Zoom – Olivia Peters

BOARD GOVERNANCE:

The February meeting minutes were approved.

The main focus of this particular meeting will be to begin brainstorming questions and talking through potential advantages/disadvantages in advance of the April 5 meeting about switching to a “Chapter 414 model” for BFL’s annual funding. It behooves us to attend the meeting as thoughtfully prepared as possible, as Jerry Nichols is an expert in this type of funding and will be at the meeting to answer questions, as will Terry Kircher (Director of WLS), Ellen Calves and hopefully other members of the Town Board.

Currently, BFL is funded by an annual discretionary appropriation from the Town Board (approximately 69% of our budget), and we fill any funding gaps with our own fundraising. In recent years, there have been questions concerning the differences in funding for each of the Town’s 3 libraries, so going forward, Ms. Calves would prefer to not have to decide on each library’s annual appropriation. Thus, the Chapter 414 model of funding has been proposed as an alternative.

Chapter 414 refers to the chapter of the 1995 laws in New York State in which Education Law 259 was amended to enable libraries of any type to enable the citizens of a municipality (village, town, city or county) served by the library to decide how much to tax themselves for library services. This vote must be held on the date of the general election in November and officially establishes the municipal budget appropriation for the library. This type of vote is often referred to as a “414 vote,” a “municipal ballot vote,” or a “local vote.” We would need 25 signatures to get this vote on the ballot.

For any town vote under this model, each of the 3 libraries would be voted upon simultaneously, and the allocations amongst the 3 would have to be totally transparent. Voters would either vote yes or no on the proposed allocations.

We had a long discussion about our logistical and practical questions concerning a funding switch, all of which have been typed up by Scott in a separate document, which is on the shared drive.

In a nutshell:

Our main questions addressed the issue of reverting back to the non-414 approach should the Chapter 414 model not work for our library in the end (i.e., Would that be possible, and, if so, what would that process look like?), and whether there would be a cap on the amount of funding we could seek each year.

Our main concerns addressed were the politicization of our library and its funding, the expense of communicating with our Town voters about our budget and annual needs ahead of each election, the fact that funding under the 414 model is on an all-or-nothing basis, and whether we want to be the first town (that we know of) that uses a 414 model to simultaneously fund multiple libraries.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:

The newsletter will go out at the end of March.

Kelly and Christa will join us for the May meeting to discuss Summer 2024 programming.

On March 14 at 3:30pm, we will have a celebratory tea for the winners of the high school writing contest.

The annual poetry contest will take place in April, and the ice cream social celebrating winners will be on May 22.

Dr. DiYanni will once again be joining us to discuss poetry in April.

We have two upcoming author talks: Carola Lovering on April 25, and Jimin Han on May 9.

Bedford Farms is opening (in the old Bedford Nursery) on March 11, and they will likely plan something celebratory for adults around that time.

Staff reviews are almost done, and the cupola fix is complete.

Upcoming meetings will be: 4/17, 5/8, and 6/20.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22pm.