

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes

Tuesday July 26, 2016

Headquarters, Manalapan, NJ

Present: Chairperson Renee Swartz; Commissioners Peter Doyle, James Gray, Frank Wells; Freeholder Lillian Burry, Liaison; Judith Tolchin, Director; Heidi Amici, Assistant Director

Absent: Commissioners Don Burden, Grace Abramov, and Nancy Grbelja

Guests: Muriel Smith, Consultant; Barbara Stanhope, Employee

The meeting convened at 10:16 am

Chairperson Swartz greeted all attendees and requested it be reflected in the minutes that Freeholder Burry's enthusiasm to participate in meetings and be a spokesperson for the library is deeply appreciated.

Freeholder Burry opened with the following statement:

"The Library Commission has complied with the regular requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act by giving written notice to the Press and County Clerk's Office and by posting on the Library webpage the date, time, and place of the meeting."

Everyone in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Swartz asked if there were any corrections or additions that needed to be applied to the last meeting's minutes. Director Tolchin stated that, as a clarification, it cost \$38,000-\$40,000 per year on a 5 year contract to retain the Westlaw legal collection (both print and online) at the Eastern Branch. Print costs without vendor discounts would have equaled that cost. Freeholder Burry asked if this cost also included the jail legal collection. Director Tolchin replied that the jail pays for their collection and reimburses the Library. Staff costs for making collection recommendations, ordering, processing, distributing, and billing M.C.C.I are not reimbursed.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gray to approve open public session minutes of June 7, 2016, seconded by Commissioner Frank Wells, and unanimously approved.

Chairperson Swartz stated that the main thrust of this midsummer meeting will be to discuss the interior renovations for the Headquarters library, as it is reflected in the agenda. Additionally, a more aggressive public relations campaign needs to be put in place. Chairperson Swartz feels that the library's presence has been neglected despite being a truly important cultural presence in the county. An example of this was reflected in a newspaper article covering a July 4th unveiling

of the Declaration of Independence print at the Allen House in Shrewsbury. Despite the library's starring role in the unveiling, the library was barely mentioned in the article. Therefore, Chairperson Swartz stated the importance of promoting the library to the public. This push should not be done primarily by the staff; however library staff should be more involved in promoting big library events. Mrs. Swartz plans to enlist the help of Muriel Smith, public relations consultant, as well as contact editors of prominent media sources in the area. Additionally, she mentioned making connections with Brookdale TV and radio stations as well as the Patch. Contact was also made with Colleen Hampton, who had done an exceptionally eye-catching display at Eastern Branch during the Alice in Wonderland program, to put forward a proposal in which she would be paid to do similar library displays in the future. The library's annual report was sent to all mayors and council members throughout the county—a positive move and further push to promote the library.

Freeholder Burry suggested connecting with the county tourism department to expand publicity. Also, she wants to see the library further connect with other county departments and take on more of a county perspective. She cites the opening of the county fair as an example. The library, besides having a table at the fair itself, could also set up a display about the fair at some of the major branches.

Chairperson Swartz believes that greater publicity as well as planning further in advance is the recipe for higher program attendance and more public interest. There has been a bit of a hole in program planning since the space of Donna Mansfield's former position as head of programming has yet to be filled. Director Tolchin stated that the library is actively seeking her replacement at this time.

Chairperson Swartz questioned Director Tolchin if four large, blockbuster programs with heavy publicity, and advance planning which cover all age groups would be something that the library/library staff could handle at this time. Director Tolchin stated that at current staffing levels, this would be unlikely. Chairperson Swartz questioned why current open positions weren't being filled. Director Tolchin stated that there have been many retirements and a high turnover rate in staff. Open positions within the library system have been posted on the county website as well as through NJLA. Chairperson Swartz also mentioned she is currently talking to the Rutgers School of Communication and Information about recruiting recent graduates for these open positions. Swartz again emphasized that more publicity as well as more staff/manpower would help keep the library from being held back.

Mrs. Swartz requested that Commissioners should be prepared to discuss suggestions for future programming at the next meeting. For example, this year is the 100th anniversary of National Parks. Freeholder Burry noted that the recent popularity of *Hamilton* is something that the county library should tie into their programming due to the historical significance of Alexander Hamilton in New Jersey. Additionally, one of the choreographers for the musical is from Colts Neck. Commissioner James Gray mentioned Robbie Andrews from Manalapan who is headed to

Rio to compete in the Summer Olympics. A post-Olympic, welcome home program in the fall for all Monmouth county Olympians would be an exciting and very popular program. Attendees agreed that this is something to heavily pursue as the next big library program.

Attention was then given to Freeholder Burry who reported that a public proclamation was made honoring the library for its “Library in the Palm of Your Hand” campaign. This proclamation cast great visibility on the library’s services as well as emphasized the celebration of public relations campaign.

Assistant Director’s Report on Technology

Heidi Amici stated that the tech department has opted out of upgrading the system’s 400 computers to Windows 10, despite the upgrade being free at this time. In a test run, Windows 10 made machines run slower, and would require a large amount of staff support that could be better focused elsewhere. For example, Heidi is currently getting quotes on touchscreen public catalog machines. She would like to begin replacing the old PAC’s with these and begin installations in September. Robo-caller services are delayed a couple of weeks due to a problem with the phone lines. Heidi is working on getting this fixed, and robo-calling will launch soon.

The library’s mobile app is currently being provided for the system by the Boopsie platform. The app has been very popular and useful: having been accessed 600,000 times in 6 months. According to statistics, the app is most heavily used to search the catalog, place holds, and access library accounts. The library locator function is also frequently used. Boopsie was originally recommended by the state library, and costs \$10,000 a year, However, there has been a switching of gears as of late, and Capira has emerged as a new, more advanced platform in library app technology. Costing \$2500 more a year, the Capira app has push notification capability, as well as “iBeacon” technology which uses location services to alert users. For example, anyone with the Capira library app would be able to receive alerts in the library about programs happening at that time as well as alerts regarding their accounts. The app runs better and is more technologically up to date than the current Boopsie app. Self-checkout is also a function of the Capira app, which could potentially eliminate the need to buy self-checkout machines discussed in previous meetings.

Chairperson Swartz suggested that in conjunction with the Olympian program in the fall, to have a display set up during the event showcasing what’s new at the library with a special focus on technology. Heidi also suggested raffling off two Amazon Kindles since they can be acquired at an affordable price. Enlisting the services of Rick Brancadora to make a video-commercial highlighting the library’s tech services was also an idea brought up by Heidi. The commission discussed a date to hold this program, and tentatively selected October 23rd.

The chairperson commended Heidi on bringing forward new library technology to the attention of the commission.

The library soon will issue internet-only cards for guests who want to use the internet. The issue of charging a minimal fee for these cards was discussed. Chairperson Swartz suggested a slight charge would be a good thing because it would provide revenue for the library. However, the decision to charge or not charge for internet cards was postponed until next meeting due to the fact that it could involve changing current library policy.

The last item on the assistant director's agenda was to inform the commission that the library received a subsidy to bring in an attorney from Somerset County to talk to the library staff about "privacy in the library in the Internet age". Normally, this would cost \$1,000; but with the subsidy; the cost for the presentation is \$250. The presentation will be on November 4. Heidi attended a previous presentation by this attorney at NJLA and thinks it will be extremely educational for the staff. Heidi also invited the commission to attend this presentation, which would count towards their trustee credit hours. Chairperson Swartz stated that while staff education is important, it is equally important for the commission to be made aware of the details of the attorney's presentation because it may involve the issue of library policy. Library policy is the sole responsibility of the Commission.

Motion to approve the minutes from the executive session on June 7, 2016 was made by Commissioner James Gray, seconded by Commissioner Frank Wells, and was unanimously approved.

Motion to schedule the next closed executive session on September 13, 2016 at Eastern Branch was made by Commissioner James Gray, seconded by Commissioner Frank Wells, and was unanimously approved.

Director's Report

June financial report was introduced by Director Tolchin into the public session as documents.

Motion to approve the June financial report was made by Commissioner Frank Wells, seconded by Commissioner Peter Doyle, and was unanimously approved.

Director Tolchin requested a decision by the commission to be made on what to do with the copy of the Declaration of Independence previously on loan to the Allen House. Should it be displayed at Headquarters, or rotated throughout the branches? Commissioner Doyle suggested a rotation, as anything owned by the library should be able to be accessed by the whole system. However, Commissioner Gray and Chairperson Swartz were more in favor of it remaining at Headquarters due to the risk of it being potentially lost or damaged in rotation. The item is likely insured by the county, as it falls under the umbrella of the library's "art collection"; but Director Tolchin is looking into verifying this. The item has been professionally restored and framed. The funds for this framing and restoration were generously donated by Windsor Galleries in Colts Neck. The commission decided to postpone the decision on what to do with the print until the next meeting. In the meantime, Director Tolchin agreed to reach out to the branches to see if they would be

interested in having the item rotate to their local libraries. Commissioner Doyle brought up the example of the Atlantic Highlands Branch as potentially being a good candidate due to the fact that the elementary school is a block and a half away from the library and would be a good educational resource and experience for the local students.

Director Tolchin requested the Commission issue a decision about the library closing early on Saturday, December 24. In the past, the library closed at 2:00 PM and 1:00 PM when Christmas Eve was on a Saturday. The Commission recommended, rather, that the library be closed for the whole day. Director Tolchin noted that would mean that the library would be closed for 3 days in a row – December 24 – December 26th as Monday, December 26th is the county recognized holiday.

Commissioner Gray made the motion for the library to close on Saturday, December 24, which was seconded by Commissioner Frank Wells, and unanimously approved.

Director Tolchin brought to the attention of the commission that the Trustee Institute will be on Sept 10. One commissioner would be able to attend for free, and attendance would be a good way to fulfill requirement for trustee credit hours that ensure library state aid.

County council made arrangements for special counsel to review branch and member agreements with towns. Agreements have not been updated since originally issued with many dating back to the 1960's and 1970's. Many current agreements are outdated, and meeting room rules, etc. should be revisited. Chairperson Swartz stated that this would be a good discussion for the next meeting, which gives the Commission time to come up with a wish list of recommendations for the agreements.

Director Tolchin announced to the commission that the library is actively seeking two candidates for the Career Connections Grant which funds two positions, one at the Eastern Branch and one at Headquarters for job seeker Assistance. Grant funding totals \$100,000.

The Master Gardeners of Shrewsbury do an extraordinary job of maintaining the property of the Eastern Branch. They are petitioning to get an additional garbage receptacle to match one that is already on the library property.

Repairs have been done by county carpenters in the children's room and DVD area of Headquarters and continuing throughout the building. Future repairs will be sealing the windows, repairs to the sidewalks and parking lot, and automatic doors at Headquarters. The Shade Tree Commission has also done a wonderful job planting on the premises of the Eastern Branch. Director Tolchin extends gratitude and recognition to Freeholder Burry for helping to make these repairs and renovations possible.

Director Tolchin has put together a plan of action for a facelift of the Headquarters library. Chairperson Swartz believes it to be prudent to enlist the help of a professional consultant to assist in bringing this plan into fruition.

Public Comments

Using herself as an example, Ms. Stanhope, a library employee for 8 years, cites her salary as being lower than NJLA's suggested minimum standard. She expressed concerns about promotional tests and salary increases. Chairperson Swartz advised that first these issues must be taken up with administration. Director Tolchin stated that some of these issues are usually resolved through collective bargaining. Stanhope also mentioned that insurance money is being paid for all employees; but part time employees don't receive insurance. Stanhope questioned where this insurance money was being allocated. Director Tolchin stated that the library pays an average percentage rate over all wages, as do all the county departments, which is a decision by the county and not a decision the library makes. Barbara Stanhope thanked the commission and concluded.

Director Tolchin distributed a choice of logos for "Library in the Palm of Your Hand" campaign of which the commission agreed unanimously on one.

Motion to go into executive session at 12:25pm was made by James Gray, seconded by Frank Wells and unanimously approved.

At 1:50 pm, Commissioner Doyle departed the meeting. Seeing that there was no quorum after Commissioner Doyle left, the meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2016 at the Eastern Branch library at 11:00 am.

Submitted by Valerie Rago