

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
March 10, 2020
Headquarters Library

Present: Chairperson Frank Wells and Commissioners Brian Boms, Nancy Grbelja, Barbara McMorrow, and Mary Ann Musich; also present Freeholder Lillian Burry, Director Judi Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici

Absent: N/A

Guests: Meghan Bennett, Special Counsel; Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant

The meeting convened at 11:03 am.

Chairperson Frank Wells opened the meeting of Tuesday, March 10, 2020 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 web page the date, time, and place of the meeting.”

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

Chairperson Frank Wells gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from February 11, 2020. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of February 11, 2020 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.

A Motion to approve the closed executive session minutes of February 11, 2020 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.

Chairperson Remarks

Bylaw Modification

Chairperson Frank Wells stated bylaw modification is being requested during this meeting to allow the Library Director to sign vouchers for budget items for which the Commission has already approved. Currently, the Library Director is approved to sign vouchers in the amount of \$9,999.99 and under. Allowing the Library Director to sign expenses already approved by the Commission above the current amount will create greater efficiency and expedite processes.

At the next scheduled meeting, Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici will present to the Commission the goals of the library for 2020 through 2021.

Headquarters Renovation – Project Status

Director Judi Tolchin stated a lot has been going on. A rendering of the meeting rooms was provided to the Commission showing the enhanced areas. The [Settembrino] Architect intends to have the flooring flow across the whole area making it a unified space, pendant lighting will be installed, and acoustical tiles will be added. Laura Migliore, Programming Coordinator has been asked to evaluate the stage and will report the results to Director Tolchin. A request has been made for the architect to include more furnishings and provide movable tables. The rest of the project will remain as planned. A technology meeting room will be established for more laptop areas or where a “go-to” meeting could be held and have a white board installed. The costs submitted are current estimates and may change as additional electrical power sources were requested. The current estimated total project cost is \$3,900,000.00 comprised of \$1,950,000.00 in County Library funds with a potential grant match of \$1,950,000.00. The proposed plan also includes the public address system. A question was asked about what is being done with the old furniture. The disposition of materials was discussed at the previous meeting and the library will offer items to other branches and members. Freeholder Burry previously stated she would speak with Buildings and Grounds to see the possibility of assisting the other libraries in moving furniture to locations that may have difficulty moving furniture themselves.

The initial scope of the project included the restroom, adult reading room, and lobby. The additional scope added is the lobby flooring, lobby furnishings, the meeting rooms, the technology in meeting room eight, and meeting room furnishings. Additionally, an assessment of the movable walls was completed and they are in poor condition. Initially, the library hoped to reface the walls, but due to their current age and condition, that will not be possible. A recommendation has been received from the door company to replace the movable walls. The estimated cost is \$190,000.00. The renovation of the meeting rooms will be contingent upon receiving matching funds from the New Jersey State Public Library Construction Bond Act. If grant funds are not received, the renovation will continue as planned on the adult reading room, lobby, and restroom. There currently is: \$1,762,642.00 in the Capital Accounts, \$25,000.00 in a bequest from Joann Church, \$10,000.00 from the Curtis W. McGraw Foundation, \$65,000.00 from the Operating Budget, and an additional amount will need to be taken from the book budget or salary and wages to cover the balance of \$87,358.00 for a match of \$1,950,000.00.

A Motion to approve the grant application in the amount not to exceed \$1,950,000.00 with matching funds not to exceed \$1,950,000.00 with \$1,762,642.29 in Capital Accounts with a balance of \$187,358.00 comprised from \$152,358.00 from the Operating budget, \$25,000.00 for the JoAnn Church bequest, and \$10,000.00 from the Curtis W. McGraw Foundation with a total estimated project cost of \$3,900,000.00 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.

Freeholder Burry asked if the architect’s proposed design for the meeting rooms has been approved by the Commission. Director Tolchin stated it is the proposed design and does not need to be the final plan. Freeholder Burry expressed dissatisfaction with some of the aesthetics in the proposed design.

Library Liaison Report

Freeholder Lillian Burry did not provide a report during the course of the meeting.

Commissioner Emeritus Request

Renee Swartz has requested to retain the title of Commissioner Emeritus, with no voting rights. Special Counsel Meghan Bennett requested time for review. Freeholder Burry reiterated there are currently two open Commissioner appointments. The Board of Chosen Freeholders makes all Commissioner appointments. If the two seats are not filled, the Commission will need to be formally reorganized and the by-laws amended.

A Motion for the Commission to request the Board of Chosen Freeholders appoint representatives to the two open Monmouth County Library Commissioner seats and request Renee Swartz and Grace Abramov be considered for said appointments was made by Nancy Grbelja. A second was not received. Motion Failed.

New Jersey State Public Library Construction Bond Act – Application Update

Commission Resolution for Grant Application

Director Judi Tolchin stated a resolution will be needed as part of the application for the New Jersey State Public Library Construction Bond Act Grant. The resolution comes from the application packet received. Resolution One states:

“This document must be included with the completed application as documentation that the public library is authorized by its Governing Body (the Monmouth County Library Commission) to submit this application. The Monmouth County Library Commission hereby certifies that permission has been granted to apply for the project grant entitled New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act for the purposes described in the application in the amount of \$1,950,000.00/\$3,900,000 total project cost. The filing of this application was authorized at the official meeting of the Governing Body of the Library held on March 10, 2020.”

Signature will be required from Chairperson Frank Wells with certification signature from Special Counsel Meghan Bennett. Similar resolutions will be needed for any other Township’s applications.

A Motion to approve Resolution One for the Monmouth County Library to go forward with their application and authorize Chairperson Frank Wells to sign the application was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.

Director Tolchin stated Resolution Two will most likely be needed for the Township’s applications with authorization from the Governing Body of the Library (the Monmouth County Library Commission). The Township’s may alter their resolution in conjunction with their application. The grant is competitive and the Commission previously authorized Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici to evaluate the prioritization of projects based on the approved criteria rubric.

A Motion to authorize Resolution Two for the Wall Township, Marlboro Township, and Howell Township applications, should they chose to apply was made by Barbara McMorro and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Eastern Branch Sculpture – Project Status

Director Tolchin stated Harry H. Gordon, LLC will need to delay installation. The new projected installation date is the first week of June 2020.

Director Tolchin suggested waiting until the installation of the sculpture is complete before planning the dedication event. A question was asked if Franco Minnervini, the Artist has been contacted. Director Tolchin has not yet spoken with Mr. Minnervini, but she will soon and Freeholder Burry stated she would like to speak with him as well.

A question was asked about the Eastern Branch 50th Anniversary recognition event. Initially, this event was combined with the sculpture dedication. It was suggested this portion of the event still occur on May 17th. Director Tolchin will coordinate with Kim Avagliano, Eastern Branch Manager and keep the Commission apprised.

Meeting Room Booking Fees

Director Tolchin received notice from the New Jersey State Library that meeting room fees are not to be charged. Currently, the Monmouth County Library charges a booking fee of five dollars. The New Jersey State Library communication suggested libraries include a suggested donation for meeting room use, rather than charge a fee. This will help diminish barriers for the public in using the meeting space. An updated version of the Meeting Room Policy reflecting this change will be presented for review at the next scheduled meeting.

A Motion to eliminate the booking fee from the Meeting Room Policy and replace it with a suggested donation, effective immediately was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Financial Report

February Financials - Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets

Director Judi Tolchin submitted the February 2020 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets wherein the 2020 detail budget account charged year to date is \$1,612,248.47 posted to the temporary budget of \$4,458,562.00. This total includes encumbered amounts. The 2019 reserve budget includes \$1,330,315.27 remaining unencumbered. The remaining capital account for the renovation is \$60,486.02 unencumbered from the first capital appropriation of \$977,000 and \$1,485,770.84 unencumbered from the second capital appropriation of \$1,497,000.00 for a total of \$1,546,256.86 remaining unencumbered as of February 29, 2020. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby including lobby furniture. The Capital Account for the Eastern Branch ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) ramp was included in the summary for informative purposes only, as the project is not managed by the library. The reports are submitted into the meeting record for Commission approval.

A Motion to approve the February 2020 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

AED Installation

Director Tolchin stated the Automated External Defibrillators (AED) devices have been installed at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and Eastern Branch. The maintenance contract for the devices began on March 1, 2020. Director Tolchin is in the process of notifying the Towns, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Police as to the location of the devices. The final step will be to ask if any staff is interested in receiving training. This will all be completed by the end of March 2020.

Internet Use Policy – Library Patrons

Director Tolchin stated, due to issues that have been experienced at the library, a proposed updated draft of the Internet Use Policy has been submitted to the Commission for review. This policy will allow the library to temporarily suspend internet access to patrons who misuse the library's computer equipment. This type of suspension will not affect other library use privileges, just internet access. A question was asked regarding if the library had an administrator who monitors improper internet site usage. Currently, there is software installed that requires patrons to sign in, accept or decline the internet policy, time sessions, place patrons in a queue, and allows printing, but there is no site monitoring. Computers are located in public areas to deter improper computer usage. A question was asked regarding blocking software. Assistant Director Amici stated each branch's internet service is independent through the Town. A question was asked if Consumer Affairs is involved. Special Counsel Meghan Bennett stated Consumer Affairs would not be involved in the library's internet policy. Assistant Director Amici stated this policy was reviewed against other library's internet policies throughout the country. Ms. Bennett reviewed the language in the policy to ensure there were no first amendment right concerns. The updated policy will be posted. When logging onto the public computers the policy is displayed and patrons must accept or decline before moving forward. If a patron declines, they will not be able to access the internet but they will be able to use word processing programs.

A Motion to approve the Internet Use Policy was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Non-Member Patron Notification Letter

Director Tolchin asked for authorization to notify patrons who are not entitled to services and provide a sixty day notice period of the change in library card status. A suggestion was made to use the nine digit zip code found in the Postal Manual. Currently, the library is using electronic tax records for verification. Assistant Director Amici is conducting a patron registration record review and making corrections. This will aid the library in better reporting going forward.

A Motion to approve the Non-Member Notification Letter was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brain Boms. Unanimously Approved.

A question was asked if the residents from the Sea Girt area will be receiving letters. Sea Girt Library will withdraw effective January 1, 2021 and notification should be given to registered patrons so they may transfer to the services available to paid borrows. The Commission should review paid borrower fees later in the year.

Lunch and Learn – Commission Training

A ten minute Lunch and Learn session was held titled *Short Takes for Trustees* from United for Libraries; the division of the American Library Association for Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations. The training session reviewed what it means to be a Trustee, the difference between Governing Boards and Advisory Boards, the fiduciary responsibilities of Governing Boards, liability, indemnification, and effective relations between Boards and Directors.

Printable Museum Passes

Director Tolchin stated the library has desired providing museum passes to patrons, but logistical obstacles have prevented the library from implementing this service. Additionally, most museum pass programs are sponsored by Friends of the Library groups. The Monmouth County Library is proposing that the museum pass service be supported through the library's budget. This will be a pilot program where digital only passes can be offered using the Event Keeper software already used by the library. The estimated initial cost is \$6,600.00. If the program is successful, the library can consider purchasing a second set of digital passes. Patrons continually inquire about museum passes and if the service could be made available. Other libraries in the area do offer this service. A question was asked if the Friends group would cover this service. As the Friends groups within the system are separate, it is difficult to have this be a Friends group sponsored service.

A Motion to approve the Museum Pass Pilot Program at a cost up to \$10,000.00 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Director's Report

Director Tolchin and Special Counsel Meghan Bennett are still working on the Township Agreements. They want to ensure the Townships are comfortable with the agreements and the responsibilities are clearly defined.

Director Judi Tolchin stated she is in the final stages of completing the State Aid Report and will submit the report soon. She believes the library has adequately met the requirements.

Staff and patrons have expressed concerns regarding COVID-19. The library will continue to follow the advisement and guidelines of the County. The library has been experiencing lower attendance at recent scheduled programs. A question was asked if the library has hand sanitizing stations available. Currently, the library does not have hand sanitizing stations. The library's website will be updated to provide access and links to COVID-19 information.

Monmouth County Human Resources has updated hiring procedures and background checking processes. The library conducts its own interviews, but Monmouth County Human Resources conducts all background checks prior to employment.

Holmdel Township has a large volume of televisions screens in their vision of how they would like to represent their library. The architect has eight television screens planned throughout the library. This may be difficult for the Monmouth County Library to maintain. If the library could produce something on a flash drive that relates to the history of Bell Labs and have another for library programs they could reduce maintenance.

Assistant Director's Update

The Sea Bright Library meeting has been postponed until after the completion of the grant application.

The van purchase is still in process. In addition, the paperwork process for the 2020 van purchase has begun. There has been a vendor concern. If the vendor is changed, a different requisition will be needed. Assistant Director Amici will maintain contact with Fleet Services.

Inquiries into the database only card that is under development have increased. A pilot program is anticipated to begin in September at the Monmouth County Library Allentown Branch. Freehold Regional schools have contacted the library inquiring about database access cards for approximately 10,000 students. They also inquired about having a Young Adult Librarian visit schools and provide programs. The library will continue to develop the pilot program for Allentown and then begin slowly with Freehold Regional. Assistant Director Amici will keep the Commission apprised of the development process.

A Member library meeting was held on March 6th to discuss services offered. The meeting was a success.

Publicity Consultant Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated she has been in contact with Kim Avagliano, Eastern Branch Manager regarding the construction occurring at the branch and is providing information on the project to the newspapers.

Commissioner Comments

Freeholder Burry inquired about the Freehold Borough Library. Previously, Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici held a meeting and presentation with the Freehold Borough Library discussing services offered by the Monmouth County Library System. The determination made at the conclusion of that meeting was a recommendation, if they chose to become part of the system, they be brought on as a member library, not a branch. The condition of the building and accessibility issues are of concern.

Freeholder Burry inquired about the County project of the awning at the Eastern Branch. At this time, the status of this project is unknown. A request was made if Meghan Bennett, Special Counsel could inquire about this project.

Closed Executive Session

At 12:56 pm the Commission stated a resolution to enter a closed executive session for discussion on personnel and deliberative documents to last approximately ten minutes. No action will be taken after the completion of the executive session.

A Motion to adjourn to closed executive session to discuss the Library's personnel issues and other deliberative documents as permitted by the Open Public Meetings Act was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Barbara McMorro. Unanimously approved.

The Commission resumed the public meeting session at 1:14 pm.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters at 11:00 am.

Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting

A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

Public Comments

A Motion to open the meeting to public comment was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Let it be known for the record that no members of the public were present for comment.

A Motion to close the meeting to public comment was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Adjournment

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

The meeting concluded at 1:15 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover