

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
April 14, 2020
Audio Conference

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: Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant

The meeting convened at 11:02 am.

Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Director Judi Tolchin opened the meeting of Tuesday, April 14, 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. Additionally, instructions for the virtual meeting were posted on the Library’s webpage.”

Minutes

Director Judi Tolchin gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from March 10, 2020. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of March 10, 2020 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.

A Motion to approve the closed executive session minutes of March 10, 2020 was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Unanimously Approved.

Library Liaison Report

Freeholder Lillian Burry stated she had a series of questions for Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici. Freeholder Burry began by inquiring about the progress of the van purchase. Assistant Director Amici stated additional information is not available at this time. She has made inquiries regarding the 2019 and 2020 van purchases and Fleet Services is continuing to work through the process. The Sheriff’s Department, which is in process for the 2019 van purchase along with the library’s van purchase through Fleet Services, may switch vehicle vendors if issues continue to arise. The library would consider switching vendors along with the Sheriff’s Department. Freeholder Burry inquired if Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion has been consulted regarding this issue. Director Tolchin stated she will contact Mr. Marion.

Freeholder Burry inquired about the status of the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act grant application. Director Tolchin stated the deadline for submitting applications has been

extended until June 5, 2020. The library anticipates completing and submitting their application by the middle of May 2020. Director Tolchin is continuing to work with Donna Mansfield to complete the community analysis portion of the application. Once this portion is completed, it will need to be reviewed by the architect. Freeholder Burry inquired about the individual branch applications. Director Tolchin has not received any information from the individual townships as to how and when they will file applications. The resolutions approved by the Commission have been sent to the townships. The Monmouth County Library Headquarters and the individual township applications are separate applications for submission to the State of New Jersey. The Monmouth County Library is required to submit a priority order of projects.

Freeholder Burry inquired if a breakdown of the indirect costs was available. \$4,000,00.00 is estimated in indirect costs for the year 2020 and a breakdown of indirect costs for the year 2019 is available and has been submitted to the Commission. Director Tolchin will resend the breakdown. As this is a substantial component to the budget, Freeholder Burry would like to review the breakdown. Indirect costs do cover services from the County, including but not limited to: maintenance and maintenance workers, improvements to the Headquarters and Eastern Branch, County Engineering services, County Administration services, County Purchasing services, County Accounting services, and all other departments deemed services to the Monmouth County Library.

Freeholder Burry asked about the Eastern Branch 50th Anniversary recognition event that has been scheduled for May 17, 2020 and if the event is still occurring. Director Tolchin anticipates this event will be canceled. Currently, all library events and meetings have been canceled through April 30, 2020. Under Executive Order 107, libraries are closed and prohibited at this time from holding public events. Library events and meetings cannot resume until the Executive Order has been rescinded.

Freeholder Burry asked for an update of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) devices. Director Tolchin stated the devices have been installed at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and Eastern Branch. Additionally, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) have been notified of the installation.

Freeholder Burry sought confirmation that approval of the tax levy would be requested at the next scheduled Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting. Director Tolchin stated, if the Commission approves the budget at today's meeting, approval of the supporting tax levy would be brought before the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Additionally, if the budget is approved by the Commission, Director Tolchin will take the proper steps to notify Craig Marshall, Director of County Finance.

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson Frank Wells extended a heartfelt thank you to all and encouraged everyone to stay safe.

Monmouth County Library Budget – 2020

A budget of \$17,485,000.00 is presented to the Monmouth County Library Commission for approval. The budget includes: \$6,385,000.00 for salary and wages, \$4,000,000.00 for indirect charges which are charged by the County of Monmouth, \$3,212,500.00 for fringe benefits,

\$3,000,000.00 for library materials, \$887,500.00 for all other expenses, including but not limited to: technology equipment, computer services, programs at all branch and member locations, library supplies, vehicles, furniture, and other purchases. The indirect charges reflect an increase of \$500,000.00 from the previous budget year. A revision has been made to overtime and seasonal wages and associated fringe benefits due to COVID-19. Changes in the budget reflect a 2.94% increase compared to the 2019 budget due to additional indirect charges. The revenue recommendation to fund the budget is: \$15,850,000.00 in the dedicated tax, added and omitted taxes are calculated by County Finance at \$97,635.36, the library will take from the Fund Balance \$1,272,364.64, fines and photocopies are estimated at \$195,000.00, and New Jersey State Aid in the amount of \$70,000.00 for a total of \$17,485,000.00.

Craig Marshall, Director of County Finance and Director Tolchin are in regular contact, ensuring the Library remains sustainable. Currently, Mr. Marshall has developed a sustainability plan through 2029. Working with the use of fund balance and the dedicated tax, Mr. Marshall anticipates an annual 1.6% increase to the budget and an annual 2.5% increase to the tax levy. The 2020 budget reflects an increase of \$500,000.00 in County indirect charges from the previous budget year.

Freeholder Burry inquired if there was a way to provide a breakdown of the tax increase by town. Director Tolchin stated a breakdown by town has been provided in the past and is produced through County Finance. She will contact Mr. Marshall about this information and ask if this can be produced by the Tax Department.

The Commission thanked Director Tolchin for her diligent work on the budget.

A Motion to approve the 2020 Library Budget in the amount of \$17,485,000.00 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

A Motion to request the Board of Chosen Freeholders raise the dedicated tax in the amount of \$15,850,000.00 to fund the Library and additional revenue using the Fund Balance in the amount of \$1,272,364.64, added and omitted taxes in the amount of \$97,635.36, fines and photocopies at an estimated \$195,000.00, and New Jersey State Aid in the amount of \$70,000.00 for a total of \$17,485,000.00 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.

New Jersey State Public Library Construction Bond Act – Application Update

Director Judi Tolchin provided an update on the extended application due date during the Library Liaison Report portion of the meeting. The new due date for application submissions is June 5, 2020. Cost estimates have been received from the Architect in the amount of \$3,900,000.00. The library has matching funds in the amount of \$1,950,000.00. There is potential for a slight increase to the overall cost. Adjustments will need to be made if an increase occurs as the library's maximum fund match is \$1,950,000.00.

A question was posed regarding the furnishings. Director Tolchin stated some of the furnishings were not previously purchased, including furnishings for the lobby and meeting rooms. The grant does provide for matching funds for furniture. The library is looking to obtain new chairs and tables for the meeting rooms and equipment for meeting room eight.

Questions were raised regarding the upper bathroom project and the associated cost. The Commission is concerned that the cost is high in comparison to the square footage of the space. Director Tolchin stated this portion of the project is managed by County Engineering. The Commission made and approved decisions regarding the color scheme and fixtures. Director Tolchin stated renovating restrooms in public buildings has a higher cost per square foot.

Director Tolchin stated the moveable walls in the lower gallery will need to be replaced and will be included in the grant application. The doors are currently thirty-two years old and replacement parts are no longer available. If the grant is not approved, the meeting room portion of the project will not move forward and the doors should be considered for a capital improvement project.

Headquarters Renovation – Project Status

Director Judi Tolchin stated we are waiting to move forward with the renovation project until the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act grant application is submitted and a determination is received.

Eastern Branch ADA Ramp & Sculpture – Project Status

Director Judi Tolchin requested a report from County Engineering. The report received stated work was suspended over the Winter and resumed on March 2, 2020. The monument base was completed in the Fall; leaving the balance of the project to be completed. All of the work has been completed over the month of March and the first week of April, except for the railings, milling, paving, striping, and signage. Throughout March and the first week of April demolition, grading, drainage, and a base course of paving were completed as well as the landing, ramp, and stairs were reconstructed. The sidewalks and curbs were also poured. The objectives for the month of April include the installation of the railings, milling, paving, striping, signage, inspection of the work, generation of a punch list, and completion of close-out documents. This project was an ADA grant funded project.

The sculpture installation is still moving forward. Director Tolchin will be seeking an update from the County regarding which stage of the process they are currently in. The anticipated installation time-frame is May 2020.

Financial Report

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

Director Judi Tolchin submitted the March 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 \$3,946,905.51 posted to the temporary budget of \$6,038,562.00. This total includes encumbered amounts. The 2019 reserve budget includes \$1,330,225.31 remaining unencumbered. Fringe Benefits still need to be accounted for in the approximate amount of \$850,000.00 with an anticipated \$500,000.00 remaining in the reserve budget. 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 March 31, 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 March 2020 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Brain Boms. Unanimously approved.

Essex County Regional Services Commission – Migrant Education Program

The Essex Regional Education Services Commission Agreement was submitted to the commission for continuation of the Migrant Education Program with meeting room space in Summer 2020 at the Monmouth County Library. This program is coordinated by the Essex Regional Education Services Commission and they provide this service to Monmouth County residents. To provide meeting space, the Monmouth County Library system would need to be open to the public and able to offer group meeting room space.

A Motion to approve the Essex Regional Education Services Commission be provided with meeting room space for the Migrant Education Program was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorro. Unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Director Judi Tolchin has remained in contact with Chairperson Frank Wells as the library faces challenges during the ongoing closure due to COVID-19.

The Commission Bylaws have been updated on the Monmouth County Library website.

The Commission previously requested a list of goals for the library for 2020 and 2021. The presentation of goals will be postponed until the end of the closure due to COVID-19 and the library has reopened.

Financial Disclosure Statements from the members of the Commission are due by April 30, 2020. Director Tolchin is available for assistance should any Commissioner require additional information.

The museum pass program has been established and is ready to launch. The library will not be purchasing subscriptions until museums are reopened.

The New Jersey per capita State Aid Report was submitted prior to the due date of March 15, 2020.

The Commission still continues to operate with two vacancies.

During the library's closure due to COVID-19, we have been operating phone, email, and chat reference services. To date, 1,210 patrons have been assisted through these services. The library continues to receive between forty and ninety calls per day. Eleven phones and 68 laptop computers have been distributed to librarians and circulation staff to provide services. Three chat services lines have been established. A thank-you acknowledgement was extended to the Friends of the Monmouth County Library for funding some technology services. Holds on physical

library items have been suspended at this time; story times are being provided virtually through Facebook; the e-newsletter has been promoting online services, and a frequently asked questions summary has been provided on the library's website. The library is maintaining service Mondays through Saturdays with 88 of 133 staff working from home. Monitors are currently on hiatus, assignments are being sought for other permanent employees, and reassignment is being sought for temporary employees. All library branches remain closed to the public by Executive Order 107 ; library book drops are closed. During the library's closure, the County may use the Headquarters location for additional purposes. Mail deliveries have been suspended, but drivers are checking on them approximately once per week. Due dates have been extended for library materials and library card expiration dates have been extended through July 1, 2020. Library cards are being issued via email with the attachment of proper identification. The budget for the purchase of physical library materials has been reduced by forty percent and reallocated to the purchase of electronic materials. Usage of the e-collection has been growing by 2,000 circulations per week. Assistant Director Amici conducted a survey of member libraries regarding deliveries, global catalog changes, due dates, card expirations, and other ways support could be provided. A virtual meeting will be held with Sea Bright Township on April 16, 2020. The administrative functions of payroll, purchasing, and accounts payable are continuing. Assistant Director Amici continues to work with the County on logistical issues, as needed. An essential team was established, including: Judi Tolchin, Director; Heidi Amici, Assistant Director; Kate Hardy, Senior Management Assistant; Robyn Miller, Headquarters Branch Manager; Kim Avagliano, Eastern Branch Manager; Pat Findra, Children's Coordinator; Rachael Scalise, Branch Services Manager; and Laura Migliore, Programming Coordinator. A thank you was extended to the team for their hard work. Director Tolchin is grateful to the staff working to do their best during these difficult times.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici extended a thank you to the County ITS for their assistance with phone setup, VPNs (Virtual Private Network), and establishing payroll and purchasing staff with access.

Assistant Director Amici invited Commissioner Boms to attend the virtual meeting scheduled with Sea Bright Township. Commissioner Boms would like to attend and requested further information on how to connect to the virtual conference.

E-book circulation is up 60% while e-audiobooks circulation is slightly lower compared to this same week in 2019. The book budget has been adjusted accordingly to provide e-materials during the library's closure.

Publicity Consultant Report

Director Judi Tolchin sent a link to the Commission of a new article featuring the Monmouth County Library and highlighting our online services.

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith extended a congratulations to all staff during this time. She asked if additional information relating to the Eastern Branch sculpture could be sent to her so an update to the public can be written. Freeholder Burry inquired if Director Tolchin has been in contact with Franco Minervini, Sculpture Artist. Director Tolchin will be contacting Mr. Minervini.

Additionally, Muriel Smith requested if she could contact Chairperson Frank Wells to conduct an interview about the library and the services being provided during the current closure. Chairperson Wells would gladly speak with her.

Commissioner Comments

Freeholder Burry commended the Children's Department on all the programs they bring forward. It has been helpful and engaging to the community.

The Commission extended a thank you to all staff. The staff's hard work is greatly appreciated.

Freeholder Lillian Burry asked Director Judi Tolchin if she could be present in some capacity at the next scheduled Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting. Director Tolchin will coordinate a way to participate.

Closed Executive Session

A closed executive session was not held during the course of the meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at the Monmouth County Library Eastern Branch 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, May 12, 2020 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.

Public Comments

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

Let it be known for the record that the members of the public present did not wish to provide comment.

A Motion to close the meeting to public comment was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously Approved.

Adjournment

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Brain Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

The meeting concluded at 12:00 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover