

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes  
June 16, 2020  
Audio Conference

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

**Absent:** Chairperson Frank Wells

**Guests:** Teri O'Connor, County Administrator, Christopher Marion, Deputy County Administrator, Meghan Bennett, Special County Counsel and Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant.

**The meeting convened at 11:05 am.**

Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Director Judi Tolchin opened the meeting of Tuesday, June 16, 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**

Vice-Chairperson Nancy Grbelja gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from May 12, 2020. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

**A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of May 12, 2020 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.**

**Library Liaison Report**

Freeholder Lillian Burry stated the canopy for the Eastern Branch was discussed at the Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting and the County will be seeking an architect to provide designs and then will go out for bid.

Freeholder Burry was on site for the installation of the sculpture at the Eastern Branch. She would like to recognize Helen Fiore, Monmouth County Director of Purchasing for her involvement in the project. Freeholder Burry recommends a ribbon cutting ceremony be held near the end of July or beginning of August. The landscaping around the sculpture, as well as the plaque, still need to be completed.

Freeholder Burry wanted to recognize Library Administration and staff for having done a wonderful job during these unprecedented times. Vice Chairperson Nancy Grbelja seconded that sentiment and reiterated that staff and Administration have been doing a tremendous job.

Director Tolchin extended a thank you to Freeholder Burry for the editorial she wrote in the Monmouth Journal, as well as thanked her for her assistance in the acquisition process of the vans.

### **New Jersey State Public Library Construction Bond Act**

#### **Application Submission**

Director Judi Tolchin stated the NJ State Library grant application was submitted by the due date. The application was submitted for \$1,950,000.00 with equal matching funds. The grant is competitive but Director Tolchin is hopeful. Final determination regarding the application is anticipated by September or October. Once a response is received, the library can resume project plans. Director Tolchin extended a thank you to Grant Writer Donna Mansfield, Mike Aravich and Kristen Wishart from Monmouth County Engineering, Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion, and County Administrator Teri O'Connor.

Marlboro Township and Wall Township submitted grant applications for their individual Township library buildings. Director Tolchin is hopeful these Township applications will be successful.

### **Eastern Branch ADA Renovations**

#### **Project Status – ADA Ramp, Sculpture, and Canopy**

Director Judi Tolchin stated the ramp has been completed and payment is in the process of being released. Director Tolchin stated the ramp looks wonderful. Much of the project costs were covered under an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) grant received by the County and indirect charges may be lower than anticipated for that project and include only the sculpture site improvements.

Regarding the canopy, the County has capital funding allocated for designing the new entrance canopy at the Eastern Branch Library. The preparation of documents needed to retain a design professional, following the two-step consultant selection process to prepare the construction documents has begun. We anticipate advertising the Request for Qualifications, the first step in the two-part consultant selection process, by the end of the month; with a likely award of the design contract in October.

The sculpture installation has been completed and looks wonderful. A dedication plaque will be needed. The following will be included on the plaque: sculpture title (*Endless Possibilities Through Reading*), Artist's name, date and acknowledging Freeholder Burry, Director Judi Tolchin, and present Commissioners and previous Commissioners involved in the sculpture from conception through completion, including Mrs. Renee Swartz, Mrs. Grace Abramov, Mr. Don Burden, and Mr. Peter Doyle. Charles Raffetto will also be acknowledged as the sculpture was made possible through his bequest. Director Tolchin will provide Chairperson Wells, Vice Chairperson Grbelja, and Freeholder Burry with a proof of the plaque for review. An additional plaque was completed to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eastern Branch.

A suggestion was made to establish a dedication event date. As the plaque will take a minimum of six weeks, the month of August was suggested. The Commission then agreed upon a projected date of Friday, August 14, 2020 for the dedication event.

## **Financial Report**

### **May Financials - Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets**

Director Judi Tolchin submitted the May 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 \$4,127,957.98 posted to the actual budget of \$17,485,000.00. This total includes encumbered amounts. The 2019 reserve budget reflects \$601,089.28 in remaining unencumbered funds. The remaining capital account for the renovation is \$60,486.02 unencumbered from the first capital appropriation of \$977,000.00 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 May 31, 2020. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby, including lobby furniture and will be used for the grant match if we are a selected recipient. 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 May 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.**

The Estate of Charles Raffetto Grant Detail Budget Account status reflects \$19,270.71 in remaining unencumbered funds. These funds are reserved for the preliminary estimate of the sculpture area site improvements in the amount of \$25,229.25. If the estimate is accurate, approximately \$6,000.00 will be necessary from the operating budget. Director Tolchin requested Commission approval in an amount not to exceed \$27,000.00, excluding the plaque for which it's purchase will be coordinated by the Library.

**Motion to approve sculpture site amenities in an amount not to exceed \$27,000.00 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.**

Additional expenses will likely be forthcoming through indirect charges from the County of Monmouth.

## **Re-opening**

### **Phased Plan, Door-side/Curbside Service Protocol, Employee Procedures, Branch Municipalities, Member Support, Suspension of AARP Tax Preparation, Migrant Education Program, Contactless Services**

County Administrator Teri O'Connor and Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion were conferenced into the meeting to participate in the re-opening discussion.

County Administrator Teri O'Connor stated the County of Monmouth had employees return to buildings effective Monday, June 15, 2020 with safety protocols and social distancing in place. New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy stated on Friday, June 13, 2020 that libraries may open for curbside service effective Monday, June 15, 2020. Due to the short timeframe this announcement allowed for, the County required additional time before establishing curbside pick-up at Monmouth County Library locations. County Administration has been in contact with Library

Director Tolchin about how to safely begin providing this service. A question was posed if this would include all locations, as many locations are within municipally owned buildings. Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici have visited two branch locations for assessment as it is a concern if branch locations have been sufficiently cleaned and sanitized. Social distancing, personal protective equipment and cleaning protocols will be established for staff. Municipal involvement will be needed for the continued cleaning of the branch location buildings. County Administrator Teri O'Connor stated what she found helpful was having Safety Coordinator Kathy West, Bob Compton, and a Health and Safety Consultant meet with groups of staff to address concerns. Regarding face coverings, she stated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of New Jersey do not require face coverings so they will not be required but they will be provided to employees. The County is following the CDC and the New Jersey Department of Health. At the time of the meeting, guidance has not been received regarding members of the public and the use of face coverings. Director Tolchin was provided a copy of Executive Order 153 by the New Jersey State Library. This Executive Order states:

“...workers are required to wear cloth face coverings and gloves when interacting with other workers or patrons and require workers to wear gloves when in contact with patron goods. The facilities must provide, at their expense, such face coverings and gloves for their employees. Nothing in this statement should prevent workers from wearing a surgical grade mask or other more protective face covering if the individual is already in possession of such equipment or if the facility is otherwise required to provide such worker with more protective equipment due to the nature of the work involved.”

At the time of the meeting, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy only permitted curbside service for libraries. Director Tolchin asked for the target date curbside service could begin and stated she has drafted a letter to the branch municipalities along with a survey regarding if the municipality is capable of meeting the daily sanitizing recommended by CDC guidelines for public facilities. County Administrator Teri O'Connor asked Director Tolchin to provide her with a copy of the draft for review. A health and safety meeting will be scheduled with Safety Coordinator Kathy West, Union Representatives, and Library Management. After the meeting, a date to begin curbside service can be established. Director Tolchin extended a thank you to County Administrator Teri O'Connor for her support and assistance during this process.

A phased plan draft has been established. During Phase One, the library will remain closed to the public and the library is nearing completion of this phase. During Phase Two the library will prepare to resume services and in Phase Three the library will offer limited services, mainly curbside pick-up. Phase Four will be opening libraries to the public with limited capacity and limitations on services. Phase Five will see the library open and operating with new procedures. The Library is looking forward to beginning curbside pick-up. A curbside protocol has been submitted to the Commission. Curbside service will continue until such a time as libraries are permitted to open under reduced capacity restrictions. Member library locations are in need of additional support and the library is working to get materials to those locations. At this time, the library has limited staff reporting to the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations to assist in this process. Social distancing will be in effect in all library locations and marking designation of six foot distances will be placed. Additionally, the library has purchased shields, gloves, and sanitizing supplies. At this time, book drops remain closed and the library's webpage has information regarding the current closure. The library will resume regular deliveries within the next few days.

AARP has suspended tax preparation assistance for the remainder of season. They do not have the capability to operate remotely.

The library has not committed to the migrant education program as we are not able to operate with members of the public in the building.

Director Tolchin stated in the future, if the Commission considers contactless services that this may be a costly endeavor. Services such as self-checkout, pick up windows, and taking Paypal credit card payments or moving to a fine free model can be considered in the future.

### **FEMA Grant Opportunity**

The library has been made aware of a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) grant through the New Jersey State Library. Grant Writer Donna Mansfield has been asked to attend the corresponding webinars. This grant covers things, such as, personal protective equipment, masks, gloves, cleaning and disinfecting facilities and supplies, and possibly acrylic shields. This is a relief program made available during times of public health emergencies. Director Tolchin is seeking Commission approval to apply for this grant. The cost for obtaining supplies for branch and member locations is an estimated \$20,000.00 to \$30,000.00. This grant could cover up to 75% of costs and will need to be coordinated through the Monmouth County Finance Department.

**Motion to approve an application is submitted for the FEMA grant was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.**

### **Programming Plan – Virtual Online Streaming**

Director Tolchin stated the library has been providing virtual online streaming and holding children's story times on our Facebook page and other social media sites. The online Summer Reading Program has begun and the library is working on providing virtual book clubs. The upcoming virtual book club discussing *The Hamilton Affair* will also have the author present. The library has had to change the way programs are offered but we remain committed to maintaining services.

### **Director's Report**

Director Judi Tolchin stated the library has a new electronic resource titled Access Video on Demand. This subscription service will cost approximately \$14,000.00 to \$15,000.00 annually for the system. This allows the library a secondary streaming source and could potentially take the place of the Kanopy streaming service in the future.

Director Tolchin has looked over the proposed plans for the Howell Township Library in their new municipal complex. There may be different configuration options offered to the library. Director Tolchin will keep the Commission apprised as information is received.

The library is considering adjusting the hours of operation at the West Long Branch location due to a lower volume in the evening time. The library is considering reducing to one night per week as services begin to resume. This can be revisited in the future.

The due date for library materials has been made through July 6, 2020.

There remain two vacancies on the Monmouth County Library Commission.

### **Assistant Director's Update**

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the van is scheduled to be delivered on July 13, 2020. The paperwork has also been processed for the second van purchase. Assistant Director Amici extended a thank you to Freeholder Burry for her help in this process.

The library received a patron inquiry regarding outdoor wireless internet access. While this is currently not possible at the branch locations, this could be a potential service at the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations. Outdoor wireless service is not as easy to establish as indoor wireless and may require a Network Engineer. This service would require outdoor equipment and the access points will need to be connected to a hardwired network. Things to consider would be interference from power lines and trees, does outdoor seating need to be provided, how to monitor network activity, and the liability of having patrons on property while the library is closed. If the Commission would like for Assistant Director Amici to pursue this service, she can contact Monmouth County ITS to begin a scope of work and feasibility study. She will have additional information on this potential service for the next scheduled Commission meeting.

### **Publicity Consultant Report**

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated she did not have any additional updates to provide to the Commission.

Director Tolchin thanked Muriel Smith for the recent articles that appeared in the Atlantic Highlands Herald and other sources.

### **Closed Executive Session**

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

### **Public Comments**

**A Motion to open the meeting to public comment was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. 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 Brian Boms and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.**

### **Next Meeting – Summer 2020 Special Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 11:00 am. An emergency meeting may be held in the summer, if necessary.

### **Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting**

**A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.**

**Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Barbara McMorrow commended Director Tolchin, Assistant Director Amici, and all staff for their incredible work and continually moving forward during these unprecedented times.

**Adjournment**

**A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.**

The meeting concluded at 12:30 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover