

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes April 17, 2015 Eastern Branch

Present: Commissioners Don Burden, Peter Doyle, James Gray, Frank Wells, Chairperson Renee Swartz, Freeholder Lillian Burry, Acting Director Judi Tolchin

Absent: Grace Abramov, Nancy Grbelja

Guests: Rick Brancadora

The meeting convened at 11:27 a.m.

Renee Swartz opened the meeting of April 17, 2015 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:

A motion to accept the March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 meeting minutes was made by Don Burden and seconded by Frank Wells, unanimously approved.

A motion to accept the March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 closed executive meeting minutes was made by Frank Wells and seconded by James Gray unanimously approved.

County Counsel recommended the following amendment to the Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> Executive Session minutes stating that the minutes include Department head presentations since they were open to the public with a notation that Department Head presentations were not recorded.

Motion was made to accept the amended February 10, 2015 minutes offered by Commissioner James Gray, seconded by Frank Well, unanimously approved.

Renee discussed the visitors from Marlboro who attended the last commission meeting stating it would be a good opportunity to drop them a note or give them a call about any comments they may have about the library.

Renee thanked Rick Brancadora for attending the meeting and taking the photos of the commissioners for the Food for Fines/National Library Week celebration along with the Freeholder proclamation to be included in a video and the website.

Renee discussed the addendum to the budget that the library has added to highlight the positive things the library has done in the past year, conveying that under duress and criticism of the library by the Ivy

Group further stating the library has had to make do with less money. The library has implemented electronic magazines and door counters and with a budget of \$118,000 for programming there were 115,000 who attended the library programs in 2014. Renee stated the library has the free tax service that services the whole county. Judi stated there were about 2,500 people this year that used the free tax service located at Headquarters, Eastern Branch and Wall libraries. Renee further stated that she would like to have the statement; "The Library Commission has put forth a 2015 budget that remains level with 2014 spending increasing expenditures only for negotiated and other staff increases consistent with Monmouth County's budget plan and acknowledges the county's commitment to cost savings" to be kept as part of the document that will be accompanied with the budget to the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Frank Wells stated to include the statement "The library's dedicated county library tax rate of .176 per \$1000 equalized value in 2014 is significantly lower than that of any other county in New Jersey whose tax rates generally approach .333, the 1/3 mill rate required statutorily by municipal libraries. Monmouth County Library's rate is slightly more than 1/2 of the taxation received by municipal libraries and most other county libraries. Additionally, the library receives less state aid per capita in comparison to other county and municipal libraries due to its low tax rate."

Freeholder Burry asked about the Ivy Group Report and Judi stated the library listened to the Ivy Group's recommendations and took their advice and responded to them. Jim Gray stated to submit a narrative that will highlight the accomplishments and innovations of the past year 2014. He further stated to add the purposes for Flipster, the Mobile App and the door counters. Renee stated that the library was criticized for having too many programs, stating the latest American Library Association Journal has an article about a two year study from the Institute of Museum and Library Services about library programming and the increase it has on library attendance and its prominence. She further stated that there is a national interest to use programming as a vehicle to validate the importance of the library and for the little money the library spent on programming of \$118,000 there were 115,000 in attendance who also walked into the library. Freeholder Burry stated to look for a sponsor for the programs. She used the parks as an example for fund raising stating the library is presently investigating a professional to assist in fund raising of programs and other possibilities.

Chairperson Renee Swartz thanked Freeholder Lillian Burry on behalf of the commission for her support of the library, her efforts and accomplishment's for being an advocate of the library.

#### Freeholder Report

Freeholder Burry stated the library should be more positive, Monmouth County does have the best library. Freeholder Burry spoke about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Allentown Public Library stating there wasn't any mention in the local papers about the event; only one article from Western Monmouth County. Freeholder Burry discussed the replacement of Coleen Berry the former Public Participation Specialist with Muriel Smith a retired newspaper person from Earl Naval Weapons Station and who formerly worked for the Two River Times. Stating she will be working part time, attending meetings, and that she loves the library. Muriel Smith sent a letter to each of the branches introducing herself and she will be starting in 2-3 weeks. Her first story will be about the food for fines and the Library proclamation. Renee stated her responsibility will be for the library to have continued exposure in the

press. Freeholder Burry stated that the county administrator approved it at a rate of \$15,000. Don Burden suggested the Comcast newsmakers as a chance to promote the library. Renee suggested Muriel do an article on the commissioners showing they come from all areas of the county. She further stated she could go to the different branches and interview patrons on why they love the library.

Freeholder Burry stated that Craig Marshall's primary intent is to take the library completely off the fund balance leaving 0 fund balance and to become totally independent. Peter Doyle stated that is the objective over the next few years. He also stated that the library is implementing the suggestions from the Ivy Group stating it takes time to reap the benefits of them. Renee stated the library and the commission has been trying. Don Burden inquired if the commission should position themselves with giving the Freeholders a quarterly updates of the libraries activities. Freeholder Burry stated if a report is prepared she will present it to the Freeholders. Renee stated the library has taken the suggestion of the Ivy Group of Trustee Education with commission members attending the last 2 years. Don Burden had suggested including numbers in the document and Jim Gray agreed by stating numbers along with savings. Renee stated the document will be given to each commissioner with a chance to critique it and add any comments to it before submitting it with the budget to the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Peter Doyle stated with the programs of 115,000 attending he asked if the library could request to ask attendees to bring a can of food for the food bank as an option. Renee stated that \$118,000 with 115,000 in attendance for the programs is \$1.00 a person for a whole year. Freeholder Burry stated that she attended a movie at the Eastern Branch Library; Peter Doyle stated that the programs are open to all citizens. Rick Brancadora stated the in kind contribution with statistics of 115,000 as a benchmark with the value of a ticket, Judi clarified stating the value associated with the price of a ticket is a value to the taxpayer.

Jim Gray stated the commission will submit with the budget a narrative to highlight the accomplishments and innovations the library has done in the past year 2014 in turn to be presented to the Board of Chosen Freeholders by Freeholder Lillian Burry the liaison to the library.

Motion was made by Don Burden, seconded by Frank Wells to have Acting Director Judi Tolchin prepare a document to be submitted with the budget to highlight the library's accomplishments and innovations of 2014, and be presented to the Board of Chosen Freeholder's by the libraries liaison Freeholder Lillian Burry, unanimously approved.

A proclamation was presented to the Monmouth County Library by Freeholder Lillian Burry on behalf of the Board of Chosen Freeholders in celebration of National Library Week and the library's contribution and significance to members of the community.

The commission was photographed in connection with the Food for Fines campaign that is offered each year to patrons during National Library Week.

Chairperson Report

Chairperson Renee Swartz stated that she received two letters thanking her for attending the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Allentown Public Library. One was from the Allentown Public Library Association and the other one was from someone who attended the celebration where she thanked Mrs. Swartz and Freeholder Burry for attending.

Mrs. Swartz also stated she received a thank you note from the Rumson Oceanic Free Library in regards to the cookie tower that was sent to each of the member libraries as a thank you from the commission.

#### Financial Report

The March expenses in the Detailed Budget account status reflect \$452,478 expended in Salary and wages in March with a year to date total of \$1,558,153. Other expenses totaled \$187,334 with a year to date total of \$513,508. The combined year to date total is \$2,071,662 applied to the 2015 budget. The March Reserve Budget reflects \$1,030,204 spent year to date with only \$352,295 remaining after commission approved fringe benefits. Starting this month the Edmunds report does not break out the 246 line for library materials. This information is now being provided separately. The document provides cumulative totals for expenses including books, eBooks, CDs & DVDs, and periodicals.

Motion to accept the March financial report was made by James Gray and seconded by Peter Doyle, unanimously approved.

The Budget was revised in March after the commission meeting. The changes were due to a \$200,000 reduction in the library's fringe benefit rate from an estimated rate that was given originally to Judi. The 2015 rate for the library is 51.527% on all salaries and wages on full time, part time, seasonal and overtime. The 2015 budget was reduced to \$16,985,000. It includes wages totaling \$6,285,000; fringe benefits totaling \$3,239,128, indirect costs totaling \$3,767,128; books \$1,979,000 other library materials totaling \$970,000 and all other expenses totaling \$753,771 (technology, programming, computer services, supplies and everything else.)

The revenue budget includes State aid in the amount of \$60,000; added and omitted taxes in the amount of \$72,016; fine and photocopy in the amount of \$295,000; receivables from MCCI in the amount of \$35,000. The revenue budget also reflects a proposed 4.9% increase to the tax levy for 2015 reducing the use of fund balance to \$2,272,983.

Judi stated that she was asked to do the revenue side with a 4.9% increase to the tax levy with the dedicated tax for 2015 as \$14,250,000 as opposed to \$13,585,000 from the previous year which will use less of fund balance this year than last year. It is anticipated that at rate with the 4.9% increase to the tax levy the library will use \$2,272,983.88 of the fund balance. She stated that if the tax rate doesn't increase or the indirect costs don't change the library will have a shortfall in 2017. Judi stated it was recommended to put in the 4.9% tax increase.

Judi stated the actual spending has decreased including wages and salaries, library materials, programming and other expenses without consideration to indirect costs which have greatly increased

from 2009 to present. She further stated the state library statistics also show that Monmouth County has the lowest tax rate based on equalized value of any county library in the state of New Jersey.

Motion to approve the library's budget in the amount of \$16,985,000 to include \$6,285,000 in salary and wages and \$10,700,000 in other expenses was offered by Frank Wells and seconded by Don Burden, unanimously approved.

Renee Swartz thanked Acting Director Judi Tolchin for putting together the wording for the motions, being prepared and enhancing the whole process.

Judi provided the commission with the tax percent increase for each supporting municipality; the commission requested Acting Director Judi Tolchin to provide the dollar amount the tax increase would have on each of the supporting municipalities.

Motion to approve the library commission's recommendation to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for a 4.9% increase to the tax levy rising in taxation \$14, 250,000 Frank Wells, seconded by Peter Doyle, unanimously approved.

#### Branch Report

Judi stated the commission had previously voted on the \$210 that Colts Neck received in state aid to go for library services. Colts Neck has decided to spend the money themselves for their library.

A Motion to approve refunding to the township of Colts Neck state aid in the amount of \$210 to be used for library services in Colts Neck moved by Peter Doyle, unanimously approved.

#### Staffing Report

Judi stated the library is still at a shortfall when it comes to staffing. Renee inquired about how long does it take to get someone replaced, Judi stated it takes 2 months. Judi stated the library is as lean as it can be with staffing and with the staff shortages we have not been in a position for implementing greater innovations.

#### Technology Report

Judi stated the library is looking into wireless printing. She added that she is moving forward with self-serve printing at Eastern Branch as well. The pilot program of the door counters had some problems in the beginning; they have been adjusted showing more accurate counts with the average of 600 people entering Eastern Branch and 1100 people entering Headquarters each day. Headquarters counts do not include programs due to the different entrances located at the branch. When asked about hourly counters Judi stated the circulation statistics would show an hourly count. Renee stated that the reason for having the door counters is to assist with state aid and grants. Renee recommended that every month these statistics be included and adding door counters in some of the other branches.

## Facilities Report

Judi stated the library wants to make Room 8 at Headquarters available for a high tech teleconferencing center. Renee stated the library could possibly charge for this service.

## Programming Report

Renee stated that it is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alice in Wonderland and would like to see a big library program in the fall with a major speaker to celebrate the event including an event for children and along with the tea parties the library has scheduled.

Judi stated in regards to the Friends of the Library that there has been some response for interested members; she stated they need some new leadership with someone to acknowledge new members. Freeholder Burry stated they need a charter with a statement of purpose. Judi stated she will be meeting in May about the friends group and Renee and commission said they would like to join the meeting. Judi will get them the date.

Judi requested approval of the abbreviated minutes to be sent to Craig Marshall, Freeholder Burry stated to send a letter as per Freeholder Burry stating the commission has passed the library budget resolution. Renee stated the minutes have to be approved by the commission before they can be sent.

Chairperson Swartz offered the following resolution: Be it resolved that the commission will order a closed executive session of the commission for the purpose of discussing personnel matters and other business as provided by the Open Public Meeting Act NJSA 10:4:12(8).

Closed for executive session 1:49 pm

Closed session ended at 3:07.

Motion to adjourn was made by Don Burden and seconded by James Gray, unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07.

The next meeting will be on May 12<sup>th</sup> 12:00 pm the Ocean Township Library.

Submitted by Susan Domas