

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes

February 14, 2017

Headquarters

Present: Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners Don Burden, James Gray, Nancy Grbelja, and Grace Abramov; also present: Director Judi Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici.

Absent: Commissioners Peter Doyle, Frank Wells and Freeholder Director Lillian Burry, Liaison

Guests: Donna Mansfield, Muriel Smith, Walter Gawron-Buildings and Grounds, Charlie Cohen-Creative Library Concepts, and Barbara Stanhope

The meeting convened at 11:07am.

Chairperson Renee Swartz welcomed all in attendance. Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of February 14, 2017 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.”

A motion to accept the minutes from the January 10, 2017 meeting was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Don Burden; approved without changes.

A motion to accept the closed executive minutes from the January 10, 2017 meeting was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Don Burden; approved without changes.

A motion to schedule a closed executive session at the March 14, 2017 meeting was made by Don Burden and seconded by James Gray; motion unanimously approved.

Director Burry suggested to Renee that the March meeting be moved to an earlier time due to a previous engagement.

A motion to move the March 14, 2017 meeting to 10am was made by Don Burden, seconded by James Gray; motion unanimously approved.

A motion to move the March 14th meeting to Headquarters Library was made by Don Burden and seconded by James Gray. Motion unanimously approved.

State and National Report-Renee Swartz

Renee discussed partnering with Brookdale Community College. Brookdale has a program for High School students who are unsure of what career they want to work in.

Mrs. Swartz suggested speaking with Brookdale counselors to utilize as a resource for staffing needs. Don Burden thought this would raise appreciation for the library. It was also mentioned that Brookdale Community College will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary. Don Burden suggested the library attend this event and raise awareness of the library.

Mrs. Swartz thanked Muriel Smith for the wonderful programming articles. Mrs. Swartz suggested a subscription to the Two River Times.

Mrs. Swartz also stated that the Long Branch Library is always in the newspaper. They have been endorsed by the New Jersey State Library for creating a new program. The Long Branch Library placed books in local barber shops to act as a Little Free Library. This idea has been adopted by other libraries and Renee would like the branches to get involved in something like this. Muriel Smith suggested placing books at the beach or train stations. It was mentioned the Sea Girt Library already has a successful Little Free Library at the beach and their Children's Librarian, Anne Baker, conducted a summer story time series at the beach.

Renovation Presentation

Charlie Cohen, of Creative Library Concepts, went through the preliminary design and asked the Commissioners for feedback. Don Burden asked if the library can sell the current furniture in the library. Walter Gawron, from Buildings and Grounds, explained the furniture would go through public action because it was purchased with public funds. Typically, items sell for a low price so it was recommended to offer furnishings to other branches.

Mrs. Swartz thought the pictures Charlie Cohen provided were very dated. She asked him to come up with a packet of more modern library renovations. Charlie stated that he would have new packets made for the March 14th meeting.

Children's area

Mr. Cohen explained the preliminary design. He suggested that the children's area needed more colors to brighten the library. Cutouts on the end panels were also a suggestion. The reference desk would be relocated to the center of the room in order to have better visibility. The front of the children's room would be dedicated to the younger children and the back of the room would contain items for older children. It was also suggested that train tables, Lego stations, or a makerspace would be put in the children's area.

Mr. Cohen explained that the library needed more lounge areas in the Children's area. There would be upgraded desks, chairs, and lounge areas for mommy and me. There would also be more areas for children to sit with their friends and families. The wooden benches in the back of the Children's Area would be removed to allow more shelving.

It was suggested that the library should have deeper shelves to hold larger picture books. These shelves would be reduced to 42" in height. The computer stations would also be moved to the center of the children's room. It was also discussed that there needs to be more electric in the library.

Adult Reading Room & Lobby

Mr. Cohen explained that new flip top moveable tables would be beneficial to the lobby area of the library. The current chairs would not be replaced. Assistant Director Heidi Amici asked Mr. Cohen about the issue of electricity in the lobby.

Mrs. Swartz stated that the spatial design of the lobby is adequate. She wanted a modern look that would last for the next 20 years. For the March meeting, Mrs. Swartz asked Mr. Cohen to provide a slideshow, with pictures, of modern libraries. She also suggested that the Commissioners visit these modern libraries to see what is, and is not working, in those libraries.

Additional costs included carpeting for both the children's and main section of the library. It was also stated that break rooms, Extension, and the tech room are not in the proposed carpet budget. Mr. Cohen suggested adding white boards, new technology, new tables, including a meeting room table, and chairs would cost about \$75,000 for a tech meeting room.

Preliminary estimates of the project cost were approximately \$800,000 plus the cost of carpeting

estimated at \$350,000. Walt Gawron pointed out that carpeting in lower gallery meeting rooms would be additional. Also not included are expenses to remove wallpaper and paint walls.

Mrs. Swartz shared that she and Freeholder Director Lillian Burry felt the Headquarters renovation should not be completed in parts. They would like to see the renovations done at once and the Commissioners agreed. Mrs. Swartz asked the Commissioners to consider a 5 year master plan that could be proposed to the Freeholders. This master plan would be discussed at the next meeting. It was also suggested that the Commissioners come up with a wish list of ideas for what they would like to see in the library. Craig Marshall is scheduled to attend the March meeting to discuss the budget and it would be a good time to discuss this wish list.

Mrs. Swartz mentioned a few items to start off the wish list. She would like to move the teen section and add more points of interest that would attract teens, more wiring throughout the library, include a high tech meeting room, and upgrade furniture and carpeting. The goal of the renovation was to improve the look of the library. Commissioner Grace Abramov suggested creating a better space for patrons to come during an emergency. The library was used during Hurricane Sandy as a way for patrons to find heat, shelter, and charge their devices. Grace stressed that there is a real need for this and patrons must be made aware of this function of the library.

Director Judi Tolchin stated that Manalapan Township's emergency plan agreement in conjunction with the county provided for use of library for inoculations to the public. The library would act more as a community center because it would include health, shelter, and emergency usage for patrons.

Grace Abramov motioned to approve the agreement with Manalapan Township to use the library for mass inoculations, Nancy Grbelja seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

Director Report

Director Judi Tolchin asked for a discussion of the upcoming 2017 "Food for Fines" program. In previous years, the library has forgiven \$8,000 - \$12,000 in fines. She asked for the Commission's approval to support the County's food drive and offer fine forgiveness during National Library Week – April 9 – 15, 2017.

Grace Abramov motioned to hold Food for Fines during National Library Week - April 9 to April 15, 2017. Nancy Grbelja seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

Financial Report

In summary, the January financial report reflects the following expenditures:

- \$430,593.35 was spent in salary with the same year-to-date total.
- Other expenses totaled \$149,368.25 expended in January with an additional \$161,492.01 encumbered. This resulted in a total of \$310,860.26 charged year to date including encumbered expenses.
- Combined year to date total expenditures was \$741,453.61 including encumbered expenses applied to the temporary budget.
- As of the end of January \$2,361,539 remained in the reserve budget for the 2016 expenses. Unspent funds are returned to the fund balance. The fringe benefits voucher, would reduce this amount by \$786,631.86.
- The 2017 starting fund balance is \$4,444,975.47.
- Included in the financial report was the Career Connections grant information with funds allocated to staff and related grant expenses. The grant amount covered actual expenses up to \$50,000 at each location including Headquarters and Eastern Branch.

A motion was made by Grace Abramov to accept the financial report and to approve the fringe benefits voucher in the amount of \$786,631.86, Don Burden seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

Library Policy

Two veterans, who live in non-member municipalities, requested library cards. Mrs. Swartz suggested giving all veterans, who live in non-member municipalities, a one year library card that they will be able to renew. Assistant Director Heidi Amici reminded the Commissioners that these one year library cards do not allow their patrons to check out eBooks. James Gray asked how the library would classify a person as a veteran. He suggested asking for DD14 Discharge papers, or a valid card as verification. The Commissioners decided to table this discussion for the March meeting due to lack of information. It was discussed that there needs to be a clear definition of veteran in order to make this decision.

It was also discussed that Congressman Christ Smith attended a program at the Headquarters Library as a guest of the Alzheimer Association. There were many members of the public who attended this program in order to speak to Mr. Smith and were not attending the Alzheimer Association program. Mrs. Swartz suggested adding security to the library. Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated that if there was security at

the Headquarters Library it would have to be in place at all branches. Mrs. Swartz suggested a pilot project where security is implemented in both Headquarters and Eastern Branch. Muriel Smith stated that all staff, and patrons, should be protected. Grace Abramov asked how fast the police respond to the Headquarters Library in an emergency. Director Judi Tolchin stated it takes between 4-6 minutes for police to arrive at the library. The discussion was tabled for the March meeting.

NJLA Legislative Resolutions

Director Tolchin discussed NJLA supported advocacy efforts including letters to State Assembly and Senate representatives. These initiatives included funding for construction projects and support for school librarians.

Don Burden motioned to approve a letter to legislators in support of Assembly bill A222/S2171, to finance capital projects at public libraries, seconded by Grace Abramov; unanimously approved.

Nancy Grbelja motioned to approve a Commission issued letter/resolution to support school librarians as requested in NJLA advocacy efforts, seconded by Don Burden; unanimously approved.

Public Comments

Mrs. Swartz stated that the Olympic Program in October 2016 was wonderful. Headquarters Branch Manager Donna Mansfield spoke about the upcoming spring programs and events for 2017.

Donna approached the performers *Mid Town Men* who quoted her a price of \$30,000-\$35,000. She also contacted performers *Jersey 4*, who play Frankie Valli music and provide a multimedia presentation. They have quoted a price of \$2,500. Donna has also looked into inviting actor Joe Pesci or Giants player Joe Cleco, who are both New Jersey residents. Donna also approached the Women's Olympic Soccer Team for a special program for both children and adults.

Mrs. Swartz asked about famous baseball players to come to the program. Donna stated that Mobile Hall of Fame is no longer running. Mrs. Swartz suggested Jon Stewart and Grace Abramov suggested Wendy Williams as other famous contenders for the program.

Muriel Smith stated that Donna Mansfield and Judi Tolchin spent a long time submitting an application for the New Jersey Library Association's awards. She wanted to thank them for their time and effort.

Judi Tolchin also stated that the career connections grant ends in June. This will be addressed in a future meeting.

Motion was made to go into executive session for purposes of personnel and union negotiations by Don Burden seconded by Grace Abramov and unanimously approved.

Closed executive session began at 1:55 p.m.

Closed executive session ended at 2:18 p.m.

Motion was made to end executive session and resume the open public meeting by Nancy Grbelja, seconded by Grace Abramov and unanimously approved.

Nancy Grabelja motioned to change the status of 2 part-time Page to part-time Library Assistants, seconded by Don Burden and unanimously approved.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Grace Abramov; unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

The next meeting will be on March 14 at Headquarters at 10:00am.

Submitted by Marissa Chimento