

**Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes**  
**January 12, 2016**  
**Eastern Branch Library**

---

Present: Chairperson Renee Swartz; Commissioners Grace Abramov, Don Burden, Peter Doyle, James Gray, Nancy Grbelja, and; Freeholder Lillian Burry, Liaison; Director Judith Tolchin

Absent: Commissioner Frank Wells

Guest: Muriel Smith

---

The meeting convened at 12:21 p.m.

Chairperson Renee Swartz welcomed all in attendance, and stated it was a new year and a new start.

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of January 12, 2016 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 we page the date, time, and place of the meeting.”

Everyone in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:**

Mrs. Swartz noted a few spelling corrections to the minutes of the December 8, 2015 meeting. On page one of the minutes, under “Guests” Betsy Watley should be spelled “Betsy Wattley”. Additionally, Della Watley should be changed to “Della Benevides.”

**A motion to accept the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes with the corrections was made by James Gray, and seconded by Peter Doyle; unanimously approved.**

Mrs. Swartz noted the Commission secretary, Don Burden, has been taking wonderful executive session minutes.

**A motion to accept the closed executive minutes from the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting was made by Don Burden and seconded by Jim Gray; unanimously approved.**

**2016 Meeting Schedule**

Mrs. Swartz stated the meeting schedule was approved at the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting; however, there is one proposed change. The October 2016 meeting has been moved from October 11<sup>th</sup> to October 18<sup>th</sup>, as the week before is a holiday.

Regarding the summer meetings, Mrs. Swartz expressed that while meetings were discussed, there may be changes if something imperative arises. This year we look forward to renovations internally and externally, and to ensure this we may continue with the meetings in the summer. Changes will be made at the discretion of the board.

**The motion to accept the change to the 2016 Commission schedule was made by Jim Gray, and it was seconded by Don Burden; unanimously approved.**

### Reorganization of Commission

Mrs. Swartz opened the floor for nominations for the positions available in the year of 2016. Grace Abramov nominated everyone to remain in their positions that they currently hold. Don Burden expressed with Peter Doyle's schedule constraints, perhaps he can share the treasurer responsibilities with Nancy Grbelja. Nancy stated she did not have a problem with this responsibility and would gladly work with Peter. Mrs. Swartz stated that Nancy Grbelja and Peter Doyle could be co-treasurers, as the division of duties will make it easier for everyone.

**Renee Swartz – Chairperson**

**Frank Wells – Vice Chairperson**

**Don Burden – Secretary**

**The Commission unanimously agreed that Peter Doyle and Nancy Grbelja should share the treasurer responsibilities.**

**A motion to maintain the Commission's current positions was made by Grace Abramov, and it was seconded by Nancy Grbelja; unanimously approved.**

### Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Swartz welcomed everyone to their positions. She expressed that the Commission did a splendid job last year, and how we conducted the year will be included the annual report.

**Mrs. Swartz complimented Muriel Smith on a splendid article, which summarized last year's accomplishments, new stewardship of the Headquarters Library, changes in staff responsibilities, and moving the system forward as a whole.** The article was originally in *The Two River Times*, but was reprinted as a lead story in a new local publication, *The Journal*. Mrs. Swartz noted this was a tremendous step, and she thanked Muriel for doing such a wonderful job in her position.

She noted that due to the change in leadership positions, it was decided to combine the 2014 and 2015 accomplishments as a collaborative effort to acknowledge that a new team is in place. Judi affirmed that traditionally the 2015 annual report would come out at the end of the first quarter of 2016, as per industry standard. She assured she will work with Donna to finish the last pieces of the annual report. Jim Gray articulated that the report should be submitted by the end of the first quarter. Don Burden proposed Muriel Smith assist in the completion of the report; Muriel agreed with this proposal. Chairperson Swartz stated that Muriel can help expedite the process.

Chairperson Swartz referenced an advertisement in *The Current* for the Monmouth County Parks System's winter activities. Renee inquired with the board whether such paid advertising was worthwhile. After discussing the associated cost, Freeholder Burry stated the advertising was a lot of money, and she expressed it would be better to make contacts with different weekly newspapers. Jim Gray stated the editor of *The News Transcript* has been very supportive, and Freeholder Burry affirmed that Greater Media (parent company and publisher of *The News Transcript*) is very good.

Nancy Grbelja suggested advertising in an online paper, *The Source*. This is a publication that comes out twice a week, and there is an advertising section the Library can utilize. This is a sole proprietor, and perhaps a deal could be worked out for the remainder of the year. She stated the cost may be low or even free, and she will look into this prospect. Mrs. Swartz expressed that this would be very nice.

Renee Swartz stressed that there should be outreach to people who do not frequent the library, and we should constantly reach out to people who possibly could become good library users; this should be thought about. Mrs. Swartz spoke of her recent trip to a store, where she noted that people left business cards on the charge-out desk. This avenue should be explored, and we should perhaps circulate fliers to businesses. Renee requested that Judi confer with the Art Department to create a flier or bookmark advertising the library and its services for the next meeting.

### **Bylaws**

Renee asked Judi and the Commission if there were any questions or comments regarding the bylaws. Judi noted article three, section one which discussed officers. She stated there was now a co-treasurer position, as Nancy Grbelja was now co-treasurer with Peter Doyle. Renee stated that the creation of a co-treasurer was a matter of convenience, and Peter Doyle and James Grey concurred that it does not need to be amended.

### **Freeholder Burry Report**

Freeholder Burry noted that there will be challenges for the library, and it is important to stay on the forefront. The capital budget has good ideas, but we must keep this up-front to ensure the library's needs are addressed. We have started this; however, we need to push this further along. Freeholder Burry congratulated Jim Gray for his reappointment for another five-year term on the Library Commission.

Mrs. Swartz stated she found the Eastern Branch Library is in need of a pep-up. We should encourage more art and programming, which will create a ripple effect within the system. Mrs. Swartz noted the *Alice and Wonderland* programs, where there was a visual presence of literature come to life. Don Burden agreed there should be something dramatic for every month. Mrs. Swartz concurred this is missing in the dynamic of the library; this must quickly be rectified. Muriel Smith noted each branch's efforts to excite the patrons, such as Atlantic Highland's display of children's projects displayed at the library.

Don Burden inquired with Freeholder Burry about the capital changes. Lillian Burry stated she spoke with Craig Marshall, and he informed her that Judi should list what she wants done from the capital changes. Once this list is made they will seek approval. There are a few issues on the Freeholder's schedule, such as the sidewalks at Headquarters, restrooms at Headquarters, and canopy at Eastern Branch. Judi stated the Freeholders need to approve the capital budget because it does not come from our library's budget. Mrs. Burry stated there must be research to substantiate our requests, including cost estimates would assist in the approval process.

### **Eastern Branch Staff**

Renee Swartz welcomed Kim Avagliano and many in her staff: Bridget Brambilla, reference; Val Aumack, circulation; Maggie Osuluski, seasonal circulation; Stephanie Acosta, reference; Bill Hersch, reference; Dawn Burke, reference; Joslyn Weiss, reference; Erin Baird, circulation; and Leslie Allen, circulation.

Mrs. Swartz thanked the staff for the great job that they do and what they represent. The Commission introduced themselves to the Eastern Branch staff members. Mrs. Burry assured the staff that she is their biggest supporter, to which the staff thanked her and the Commission.

### **Indirect Charges and Capital Changes**

Jim Gray inquired whether Craig Marshall could come meet with the Commission once every quarter, and Lillian Burry stated that he has been very busy and cannot accommodate this request. Renee invited Judi to speak of her conversation with Craig Marshall. As Judi informed the Commission, Craig said the indirect charges are calculated through a consultant, and it is the decision of the Freeholders to take the indirect charges from the library. While Craig cannot come to the meeting, he would be happy to address specific questions.

Peter Doyle readdressed the capital changes issue, specifically the restrooms at Headquarters. He said that Mrs. Burry confirmed this is in the works, and Judi should confirm what has been approved. Judi expressed she did speak with our Buildings and Grounds representative, as the project will go through that department with department head Robert Compton. They put forth the requests we have placed, and from what she understands they have approved the restrooms. Judi stressed this is a long process, engineers must come in to assess the work and bids must be made. Once this is complete it must then go to the Freeholders, who approve all capital projects and associated appropriations. She can only recommend the project, and then take these recommendations to her Buildings and Grounds people.

Peter Doyle clarified that while the bathrooms were approved, they were not really approved. Freeholder Burry confirmed that on paper they were approved. Don Burden queried how we can get this moving. Mrs. Swartz inquired with Mrs. Burry how to make this an active project, perhaps Judi should draft a priority list. Freeholder Burry assured that in the next couple of weeks, Judi should come to Freehold to meet with Lillian. Together they will discuss with Craig what should be done with the capital improvements.

### **Tutoring**

The Commission discussed the upstairs space of the Eastern Branch Library. Don Burden suggested that the unused space upstairs should be used at cost as a tutoring space. Renee Swartz requested a poll be done for which libraries charge private tutors for use of their facilities. The poll should reflect ten New Jersey libraries that are comparable to our system, and should be complete by next month's meeting.

Freeholder Burry inquired if we are considering the idea of charging for meeting rooms or if as a free and public library we cannot charge for space. Renee confirmed that we can, as Princeton Library does this and there are quite a few others. Judi noted that the NJ State Library has turned does not support charging for meeting rooms. Renee expressed that they are behind the times, as the national feeling is not that way. Judi added that we cannot ask people [tutors] what they are doing in the library; that is an invasion of their privacy. Mrs. Swartz stated that along with the poll, research should be done with how libraries that do charge for tutoring get around the fact that they are a free and public library.

### **Financial Report**

Judi presented a voucher for SIRSI. This reflects a contractual agreement for the annual charges for the SIRSI catalog, which is in effect through December 31, 2017. The voucher is in the amount of \$132,121.21.

**Motion was made to approve the SIRSI voucher by Peter Doyle, seconded by Nancy Grbelja, unanimously approved.**

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

- \$463,536.75 was spent in as salary and wages with a year-to-date total of \$5,780163.34

- Other expenses- \$4,351,270.89 dollars were expended in December with a year-to-date- total of \$9,160,702.89 including encumbered expenses
- The combined year-to-date spending totals \$14,940,866.23 dollars applied to the adopted budget including encumbered expenses
- One large expense anticipated for fringe benefits – final quarter of 2015
- As of 12/31/15 \$330,812.03 remains in the Reserve Budget which should go into the fund balance in 2016.
- Revenue Account Status for 2015 shows \$63,039.59 unanticipated revenues with total revenues of \$14,744,901.83. Additional \$22,000 is expected for December fines not yet posted.

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

### **Finding a Planner for Capital Improvements**

Mrs. Swartz expressed that if we will be doing the capital improvements this year, we should think of someone to come in who will give estimates on cost. Lillian Burry concurred that this is an intelligent decision, as it is far more palatable to approve a project that can be adequately described. Mrs. Swartz requested we find an independent person who has the expertise to give an overview of the project. Judi confirmed that she will look into this, and confer with the Purchasing Department regarding costs.

Freeholder Burry suggested we find a volunteer who can provide us with a plan. Don Burden advised the library find an architect, and Renee queried whether they should be an architect or an interior designer. Judi stated she can inquire at the State Library, but Renee stated the talent should be found within Monmouth County. Judi proposed we look into the same people who did the work at the Holmdel Library; she will reach out to this space designer to see what he envisions. Mrs. Swartz suggested a report be created with the professional's suggestions for an upgrade to Headquarters. Furthermore, Mrs. Swartz suggested conferring with the American Library Association for potential talent.

Freeholder Burry informed the Commission that she heads an architectural review committee in Colts Neck, which includes an architect, space designer, among others. These people can perhaps come by out of interest for the project. Mrs. Swartz declared this to be a good idea, and we should move it forward this month. Mrs. Burry suggested an article be written about the improvements, and Renee concurred this would garner enthusiasm in the public eye that we are trying to make the Headquarters space more agreeable and more comfortable. By the next meeting we should have more information about the plans so we may move the project forward into reality.

### **Swearing in of James Gray**

Lillian Burry swore in James Gray for a five-year term on the Commission of the Monmouth County Library.

### **Director's Report**

Mrs. Swartz read a letter of thanks from Little Silver Library for the member library cookie trays, and confirmed we continue to receive gratitude from the member libraries for this gesture of good-will. Lillian Burry confirmed this was a very nice gesture.

## **Branch and Member Report**

The branches will have training on mental health issues and handling patrons in January. This will be mandatory training for all staff members.

Instead of the Member Store, we will support members with a book budget or additional programming support. The members are agreeable with this, and Judi expressed we will try this approach for one year to see if we do not need to maintain the Extension Member Store.

## **Staffing Report**

We will focus on finding a Howell Branch Manager, Public Relations Librarian, and Technology Librarian. These are our three top staffing priorities. Judi assured some of these positions will be filled internally; however, some may be from the outside.

## **Compliments on Monmouth County Library Services**

We continue to receive compliments on our inter-library loan program, and we have received letters of thanks for this service. We have received donations from the Manalapan Senior Citizens Club and the SCORE group for our wonderful programming efforts. Judi assured the donation from the Manalapan Senior Citizens Club has been earmarked for programs at the Headquarters branch.

## **Technology**

We have added Zinio to the library's online magazine subscriptions. This gives us an additional seventy-one magazines. Due to a price increase we have cut back on our EBSCO subscriptions. We have increased the total cost, but we are now getting so much more. The total cost for our magazine subscriptions is just under \$25,000 annually, and the average circulation of our online magazines is approximately 1,800 per month.

We also now have IndieFlix, a service that streams independent movies online. This is our first entry providing free digital videos to our patrons. Renee expressed this needs to be presented to the public, and regular patrons must be apprised. Judi confirmed this has been announced at programs.

The Launchpads are ready for dissemination. The program will be at Headquarters first, and once all of the bugs have been worked out they will be given to the remainder of the branches. They have been cataloged, and we will be able to monitor their usage. The Launchpads will be for in-library use at the present time, but it may be extended for home use as well. Renee Swartz added that libraries are starting to loan computers and assorted equipment; these are the libraries of the future.

Renee stated the Launchpads should be given to Eastern Branch immediately, and Judi ensured they will not only be given to Eastern, but also all of our branches. Renee suggested they be given to them now, as Eastern Branch needs to get out of its slumber. This project will be great to debut at Eastern Branch, and they should be revving up with publicity. Judi assured there has been a soft launch to see how the project works out, the equipment holds up, and the best way to make the project work seamlessly. Freeholder Burry requested to see the Launchpads, and Renee stated a demonstration should be given at the February meeting.

## **Facilities**

Headquarters is still up for capital improvements on the bathrooms and walkways. Joe Attanasio has requested the Headquarters front door handicap access be repaired, as these have trouble locking and frequently break. This has yet to be approved for a capital improvement, but will be our next request.

The Eastern Branch sign has been repaired.

The door counter statistics are available as raw data, and there is a figure that reflects the average patron per hour. These packets are available for Commissioners to take home, and at Renee's request a report will be given at the February meeting.

### **Programs**

Mrs. Swartz stated the Antiques Roadshow themed program in April does not seem feasible. Instead, it is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death in April, and Renee proposed to the Commission that we can put forth a great effort to celebrate this. There can be a week of events such as drama groups, professors can give discussions, and prominent authors can give talks. Jim Gray concurred this is a great idea. Lillian Burry suggested we work a co-operative program with the Count Basie Theatre. Renee stated it is imperative that we get on this project immediately if the Commission thinks this is a worthwhile endeavor, and we must secure resources early on. Judi assured that Donna Mansfield is working on the project, at Mrs. Swartz request.

### **Grant Application Approval**

Renee stated we have been trying to get grants for years, but Judi has activated a program to get funding. Judi informed the Commission about a wonderful workforce grant that has come available. We would have a good chance of getting one or possibly two \$50,000 grants. We would be required to provide a staff member to staff a desk for at least twenty-five hours a week to help with the Labor and Workforce Development's online portal. We would need to have dedicated staff undergo training, and they must do this every week for a one-year period of time. Judi suggested this be done at Headquarters and Eastern Branch, and pending the Commission's approval Donna Mansfield will work with Kim Avagliano to pull the project together.

Jim Gray expressed his staffing concerns, and questioned if this grant would cause an added strain to the library. Judi stated she would increase our seasonal staffing. The grant is targeted specifically at libraries to find additional support to the Department of Labor. Each grant covers the cost of a librarian and their benefits. Renee decided we should try to obtain the grant, to which the Commission agreed. Judi inquired if we should seek the grant for one location or two. Jim Gray stated we should seek two locations, Eastern and Headquarters, and Renee Swartz confirmed this decision.

**A motion was made to approve the two workforce grant applications by James Gray, seconded by Nancy Grbelja, and unanimously approved.**

### **Network Migration**

Judi stated we will be off the County's system in April. This is not a direct expense, but this comes back around in our indirect charges. The Library has done everything we have needed to do to upgrade our lines. The County has decided for security purposes we must be off the network. Renee Swartz expressed this is a good move, as there are a number of restrictions on the County network.

**Motion was made to go into executive session by James Gray for the purpose of labor and personnel issues, seconded by Peter Doyle, and unanimously approved.**

Closed executive session began at 2:16 p.m.

Closed executive session ended at 2:38 p.m.

**The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Grace Abramov; seconded by Peter Doyle; unanimously approved.**

**Meeting adjourned at 2:39 pm.**

The next meeting will be at Headquarters Library on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by Christina Roma