

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes

January 10, 2017

Headquarters

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**Present:** Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners Don Burden, James Gray, Nancy Grbelja and Frank Wells. Also present: Freeholder Director Lillian Burry, Liaison, Director Judi Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici.

**Absent:** Commissioners Grace Abramov and Peter Doyle

**Guests:** Donna Mansfield, Muriel Smith, and Barbara Stanhope

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The meeting convened at 11:10 AM.

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

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of January 10, 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.”

Chairperson Swartz invited Director Burry to start the meeting with her report.

**Freeholder’s Report**

Freeholder Burry announced that she is the Director of the Board of Chosen Freeholders this year. She announced that she sees a good year ahead for the library and the library is among her top priorities. Director Burry mentioned that the County Budget is in the planning stages for consideration by the Board of Freeholders. She will address the library’s indirect charges with the Freeholders.

Renee stated that the commission relies heavily on Lillian Burry and also stated that she is an asset to the library. Chairperson Swartz expressed the sincere appreciation of the Commission to Director Burry for all of the tremendous support and advocacy she provides for the library.

### **Review of Bylaws**

Chairperson Swartz stated that she felt it necessary to address the bylaws. A discussion regarding term limits for the chairperson was introduced. James Gray inquired about the bylaw draft. He wanted to know if the bylaws had been adjusted. Director Tolchin informed the Commission that on December 16, 2014, the bylaws were adopted with the Ivy Group and State Library recommended 3 year term limit for Chairperson. Freeholder Director Burry stated that many of the County Commissions function well without term limits. Commissioner Wells made a suggestion rescinding term limits for the Commission Chairperson. Commissioner Burden suggested the deletion of the last sentence in Article 3, section 2 removing the following: "The chairperson may not serve more than three consecutive years."

**Frank Wells motioned to rescind Article 3 Section 2 of the bylaws, only the last sentence which would remove the 3 year term limit. Don Burden seconded the motion; James Gray opposed, everyone else in favor; motion approved.**

Chairperson Swartz affirmed that the Commission works well together as a cohesive team and feels confident for a great future.

### **Commission Reorganization**

Chairperson Swartz suggested the slate for 2017 be put forward. Commissioner Gray and Wells suggested that the officers remain the same as follows:

Renee Swartz- Chair

Frank Wells- Vice Chair

Don Burden- Secretary

Nancy Grbelja and Peter Doyle- Co-Treasurers

**Frank Wells motioned to nominate everyone already on the commissioner list [as above]. Don Burden seconded the motion; unanimously approved.**

The Commission formally accepted with gratitude Freeholder Director Lillian Burry as Library Liaison noting appreciation for her wisdom and guidance.

Freeholder Director Burry administered the Oath of Office to Nancy Grbelja for a 5 year reappointment to the Library Commission.

### **Minutes Approval**

**A motion to accept the minutes from the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was made by Frank Wells and seconded by James Gray; approved without changes.**

**A motion to accept the closed executive minutes from the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was made by Frank Wells and seconded by James Gray; approved without changes.**

### **Chairperson's Report**

Mrs. Swartz received a wonderful thank you card from the Oceanic Rumson Library regarding the holiday cookies that were sent in December.

Mrs. Swartz asked Muriel Smith why the Oceanic Rumson Public Library's January events calendar was printed in the Journal. Muriel responded that Rumson sends her the calendar to print in the Journal. Mrs. Swartz suggested that other libraries may want to submit their events to local newspapers as more publicity.

Muriel also stated that she recently interviewed Renee Swartz for an upcoming article. Mrs. Swartz stated that the commission is very lucky to have Muriel and that she has really helped to improve the library's visibility to the people.

Mrs. Swartz stated that the Thomas Fortune House in Red Bank was purchased by a builder with the intention of knocking it down and making a housing complex. Citizens of Red Bank petitioned and won, causing the builder to restore the Thomas Fortune House instead of demolishing it. Mrs. Swartz received a thank you card from the T. Thomas Fortune House Foundation because the Eastern Branch Shrewsbury Library held a Thomas Fortune exhibit. This

card also thanked Branch Manager Kim Avagliano for providing a meeting space for the Thomas Fortune committee.

### **Financial Report**

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

- \$592,800.99 was spent in salary and wages with a year-to-date total of \$5,744,456.43.
- Other expenses totaled \$290,119.28 expended in December with an additional \$120,292.65 encumbered. This resulted in a total of \$8,598,502.25 charged year to date including encumbered expenses.
- Combined year to date total expenditures were \$14,342,817.76 including encumbered expenses applied to the adopted budget of \$16,985,000
- As of the end of December \$1,023,602.24 remained in the reserve budget for the 2015 expenses. Unspent funds are returned to the fund balance.
- Included in the financial report was the Career Connections grant information with funds allocated to staff and related grant expenses. The grant amount covers actual expenses up to \$50,000 at each location including Headquarters and Eastern Branch.

**A motion was made by James Gray to accept the financial report, and Frank Wells seconded the motion; unanimously approved.**

### **2017 Meeting Dates**

**Frank Wells motioned to revise the 2017 meeting dates, Don Burden seconded the motion; unanimously approved.**

Commissioner Don Burden stated that the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting would be held during Passover. The commission discussed the upcoming meeting dates.

Mrs. Swartz suggested moving the meetings to different branches. The commission created a new calendar and stated which branch they would be visiting. This calendar was created through June, the rest of the dates would be discussed at a later meeting.

The new calendar is as follows:

February 14 will be held at Headquarters

March 14 will be held at Eastern Branch

April 18<sup>th</sup> will be held in Colts Neck

May 9<sup>th</sup> will be held at Howell

June 20<sup>th</sup> will be held at Hazlet

**Don Burden motioned to accept the changes to the meeting schedule, seconded by Frank Wells; unanimously approved.**

### **Director's Report**

Director Judi Tolchin acknowledged the sudden passing of library staff member Carol Sokol. Grief counselors were provided for staff members who were affected by Carol's passing.

The top priority for 2017 is to hire more seasonal staff to replace those who have become permanent and to hire full time librarians for technology and public relations. Judi stated that local colleges will be contacted and the job postings will also go on electronic job sites such as careerbuilder.com and indeed.com. The local colleges that will be contacted include Drexel, Rutgers, and Clarion.

Mrs. Swartz suggested contacting a recruiter that would choose the most qualified applicants that library staff could then interview. Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated that there is a process through County personnel but would also consider looking into job recruiters.

Mrs. Swartz suggested adding an incentive to attract potential job seekers into the library. One suggestion Mrs. Swartz made was to bring back tuition reimbursement. Lillian Burry and Don Burden also suggested a scholarship program to attract potential employees interested in becoming librarians but may not be able to afford graduate school.

Mrs. Swartz stated that these options should be explored before the next meeting and brought to the commissioners for further review. She also asked for more information that would attract more employees. She suggested that the Friends of the Library should have a table at major programs and act as a presence to promote jobs at the library.

Judi also stated that in December, both Ocean Township and West Long Branch libraries were closed due to heating complications. She stated that this has since been resolved and both libraries are up and running. On Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, the library closed two hours early due to inclement weather.

The Curtis McGraw Foundation gave a \$2,500 donation to be used as a grant fund. Judi said that they give donations for educational purposes. Mrs. Swartz asked for more information regarding why the library received this donation to be presented at the next meeting.

Renovations at the Headquarters Library are still in the early stages. Judi will be getting an estimate in the coming weeks and the architect will be present at the February meeting.

### **Assistant Director Report**

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated that the children's department will be increasing the number of AWE machines in each library. These educational touch screen computers have been very popular and there is demand for more of these machines. Laptop computers are being considered for children's librarians who travel from various libraries and do not have access to a computer. Heidi was also looking into expanding mobile printing to more branches of the library system.

Large televisions are also in consideration to promote the library's programs and services. Heidi noticed that the Moorestown Mall had library kiosks and is currently looking into this further. Both the Freehold and Monmouth Mall are in consideration for these kiosks.

Heidi stated that the automated caller will be ready in two weeks. The new catalogue and App will also be ready soon.

## **Publicity Report**

Headquarters Branch Manager Donna Mansfield spoke about the upcoming programs and events for 2017. As part of the Career Connections Grant, the Library and Young Adult services partnered with Workforce Development providing teen job search services. This will be the first time the event is being held and it is being considered again for the future. It will help teens find community service and career opportunities. Judi also stated that County Workforce Development is delighted to work with the library and help to promote this event.

Mrs. Swartz stated that this was a wonderful idea that would bring more teens into the library.

Donna stated that there was a Hamilton vs. Burr lecture held on Wednesday, January 11 at 7:00pm. It had a great turnout with approximately 125 in attendance.

On April 23, there will be a Hamilton vs. Jefferson Debate held by the American Historical Theatre. This event is still in discussion, Mrs. Swartz asked for a musical accompaniment to make the program more successful. Donna suggested the Old Barrack's Fife and Drum presentation, which would be historically accurate with Hamilton's time period.

Donna also suggested a program where teens would create their own interpretation of Hamilton through raps, poetry, skits etc. These performances could be placed on YouTube. The top three winners would receive a cash prize and a chance to perform their musical talent at the April 23 program. Mrs. Swartz stated that she thought there still needed to be more to the program. She suggested musician Tim McCloone. Donna also suggested that another popular musician, Bob Burger, may be able to tailor a performance to the theme of Hamilton and his time period. Lillian Burry suggested adding food to the program as a way to further attract patrons.

There was a discussion of other event ideas. Muriel suggested an addition to the Made in Monmouth exhibit. This would support local businesses and bring more awareness to the larger event held at Monmouth University. James Gray suggested an Antique Roadshow program. Donna Mansfield thought this was a great idea and will look into it before the February meeting.

**Motion was made to go into executive session by Frank Wells seconded by James Gray and unanimously approved.**

Closed executive session began at 1:29 p.m.

Closed executive session ended at 1:53 p.m.

**James Gray motioned to authorize Director Judi Tolchin to sign the publicity consultant contract on behalf of the Commission, Frank Wells seconded the motion; unanimously approved.**

**James Gray motioned to approve extended carryover vacation time for librarian Judith Wolt as an exception, Frank Wells seconded the motion; unanimously approved.**

**James Gray motioned to approve the voucher for West Long Branch Library in the amount \$62, 574.36 effective until July 1<sup>st</sup>, Frank Wells seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Frank Wells; unanimously approved.**

**The meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.**

The next meeting will be on February 14 at Headquarters at 11:00am.

Submitted by Marissa Chimento