

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes

May 23, 2017

Colts Neck Library

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**Present:** Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners Don Burden, Peter Doyle, Frank Wells, Director Judi Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici.

**Absent:** Commissioners Grace Abramov, James Gray and Nancy Grbelja; also absent Freeholder Director Lillian Burry

**Guests:** County Administrator Teri O'Connor, Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith and Colts Neck Library Branch Manager Stephanie Laurino.

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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 May 23, 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.”

Mrs. Swartz introduced Colts Neck Library Branch Manager, Stephanie Laurino. Ms. Laurino explained that the Colts Neck Library was 17 years old and had recently gone through a few renovations. The meeting room was repainted and had new carpets installed that were paid for by the Friends of the Colts Neck Library.

Mrs. Swartz requested a few changes to the April 18 open meeting minutes. On page 3 of the minutes, “Mrs. Swartz stated that she wanted two or three large Sunday programs a year”, the first change was to mention that this was a decision of the entire Commission previously discussed and approved. Mrs. Swartz also wanted the name of Stewart Fife’s company, **Library Interiors Design and Furnishings** to be highlighted in bold.

**A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of April 18, 2017 as amended was made by Don Burden and seconded by Frank Wells; unanimously approved.**

**A Motion to approve the closed executive session meeting minutes of April 18, 2017 was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Peter Doyle; unanimously approved.**

**A Motion to hold an executive session at the June 20, 2017 meeting was made by Don Burden, seconded by Peter Doyle; unanimously approved.**

### **Network Technology Improvement Initiative**

Mrs. Swartz introduced County Administrator Teri O'Connor. Ms. O'Connor was asked to attend by Freeholder Director Lillian Burry to discuss the need for more bandwidth in the library as requested by Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici. She stated that County IT Director, John Zawadzki reviewed the Jersey Connect EVPL services offered to libraries from the New Jersey State Library, an option recommended by Director Tolchin. Assistant Director Heidi Amici explained that the county was very helpful with addressing bandwidth issues in both Headquarters and Eastern Branch libraries. Heidi stated this new option through JerseyConnect from the State Library increases bandwidth and will be able to provide improved services to patrons. Mrs. Swartz stated that this is very important and critical to the library's service mission to create a standard of excellence for patron technology needs.

Teri O'Connor explained that the County does not offer Wi-Fi services in other County facilities so the library's needs differ from the model elsewhere in the County. For IT security reasons, it was essential to have the library off the County network. She stated that the JerseyConnect option was the best resolution to meeting the library's needs and endorsed by all parties involved in the decision - County IT, County Administration and the Library.

### **Headquarters Renovation**

Mrs. Swartz also stated that she would like charging stations for patrons that are inside the furniture. Teri O'Connor stated that Craig Marshall would be speaking about the capital expenditure plan requests for the County in June and thought the \$1.9 million requested toward the Headquarters renovation may have to be phased in. Ms. O'Connor stated that the number of requests for capital improvements exceeded the available funding for those projects and the urgency of the projects was a primary consideration.

Mrs. Swartz stated that Headquarters has not been renovated since the 1980s and that it is definitely needed. Teri O'Connor suggested a capital expenditure budget should be done every year with a five year prioritized plan. Mrs. Swartz explained that the Commission has tried to meet with Craig Marshall every year. This was the first year the Commission was able to meet with Craig Marshall. Teri O'Connor stated

that the capital budget may exceed the available funds for completion in one year. Commissioner Frank Wells asked if the phasing would have to be two years instead of one year. Ms. O'Connor stated that there was no way to determine at this point and suggested considering a multi-year phase in. Mrs. Swartz said that the interior renovation was a reasonable request and should be priority for the county.

Teri O'Connor asked what the firm would be doing. Director Judi Tolchin explained that the design of the renovated library is free and the firm is a State Contractor so the pricing allows for the contractor to be compensated through the sale of the furniture. Teri O'Connor stated that she wanted a priority list of which projects are needed most and to create a three-five year plan for both Headquarters and Eastern Branch. Director Judi Tolchin explained that Buildings and Grounds are generally in charge of capital projects regarding building issues. Mrs. O'Connor stated that the library should put forward those projects that are not repair oriented – those that would change the interior use of space for Headquarters and Eastern Branch and think in terms of the next three to five years. Commissioner Peter Doyle stated that he was surprised projects are bonded three to five years. Teri O'Connor explained that projects should be broken down into phases and that the Freeholders have \$42,000,000 allocated for the capital budget with \$97,000,000 in proposed projects. She suggested that the renovation should be done in sections. Mrs. Swartz stated that it will be a challenge to determine priority with all areas in great need of improvement.

Ms. O'Connor suggested that the Commission ask the firm for a priority plan. Director Judi Tolchin explained that the children's and adult reading room renovations can be done in phases. She also explained that the carpeting and floors would be first priority. Assistant Director Heidi Amici explained that electricity and powering the library was essential. One way to handle this would be to put the electricity into/under the rugs/flooring.

Commissioner Don Burden stated that he visited Fort Monmouth and wanted to know what the requirement was for Oceanport Library. Director Judi Tolchin explained that we staff it and provide library materials. Don Burden wanted to know if Oceanport could be given extra furnishings if the capital budget is passed. Director Judi Tolchin explained that Oceanport was responsible for its own furnishings. Teri O'Connor asked when Oceanport Library would be completed and ready at the Fort Monmouth location. Director Judi Tolchin stated that it was estimated to be completed in 2018. She also explained that the new Oceanport location would be two miles from Eastern Branch Library. Mrs. Swartz explained that the initial plan, many years ago, would be to add part of Fort Monmouth to be used as a stage for Eastern Branch Library.

With consideration to capital improvements, Director Judi Tolchin explained that the periodicals area at Eastern Branch required more staffing because staff can't monitor the area without a physical presence. Glass walls would benefit visibility and could be added to Eastern Branch's improvement plan.

Don Burden asked if Oceanport Library should continue as a separate branch given its proximity to Eastern Branch. He also stated that Oceanport has been very cooperative with Shrewsbury. Mrs. Swartz explained that there was a possibility of looking into using space at Fort Monmouth and nominated Don Burden to look into it. Director Judi Tolchin explained that the proposed library in Oceanport is 2.4 miles away from Eastern Branch library. She also stated that Oceanport is very proud of their library; it was seen as a community center. Commissioner Frank Wells wanted a poll on how many Oceanport patrons use the library and what they like in their library. Mrs. Swartz stated that people want to use libraries that are nearby. She also stated programs and free movies are very important and if Oceanport had a stage they would be able to accommodate patrons who wanted this type of program.

Don Burden commented to Teri O'Connor that the Master Gardeners told him Buildings & Grounds put mulch on the garden islands. They were very thankful.

**A motion to hold a closed executive session was made by Frank Wells, and seconded by Peter Doyle; unanimously approved.**

Closed executive session began at 11:56 a.m.

Closed executive session ended at 12:42 a.m.

#### **State and National Report-Renee Swartz**

Renee Swartz acknowledged that the Commission missed Lillian Burry's presence at the meeting.

Mrs. Swartz stated that on May 17, 2017 the Library of Congress and New Jersey Center for the Book held an event to honor winners of their yearly essay contest. The essay contest was for grades 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12. The essay contest required that students write to an author that inspired them. They received 60,000 letters. In the past 15 years, New Jersey has had 3 national winners, and 6 second place winners. Muriel Smith asked if there were any winners from Monmouth County. Renee Swartz explained that there were no winners from Monmouth County, but New Jersey won second place in the 4-6 grade range this year.

Renee Swartz thanked Muriel Smith for her articles in the Two River Times. Mrs. Swartz spoke with the editor of the Two River Times and was told that any articles that are sent to them will be printed. She also spoke with the editor about the history of the Monmouth County Library. She suggested a feature article of the history of the library contrasting where the library started to present time. Commissioner Frank Wells stated that it would be a good idea to show where the library came from up until now. Renee also suggested that this article can be part of the annual report.

Don Burden stated that he attended a career center program. He thought it was a very focused event and was pleased to hear that grant will be extended. Director Judi Tolchin stated that she was asked to submit a grant budget to extend the program for another year. At the end of April, the Career Connections services helped 615 people at both Eastern Branch and Headquarters. Judi stated that she was working to see how to extend the services in the future when the grant ends.

Mrs. Swartz explained that the Tim McLoone concert and historical theatre event was a wonderful program. She also stated that between 600-700 people attended the exceptional event.

Director Judi Tolchin explained that the Jersey Four performed a concert at the library and it was a wonderful event. One of the original members of the Four Seasons, Joe Long, attended and performed onstage. Judi Tolchin also stated that she was thankful to the local history authors who also came and that Rick Gefkin added the history of the Four Seasons into his presentation.

Director Judi Tolchin stated that Don was able to arrange for her to appear on the Comcast Newsmaker segment where she was able to promote summer events. Renee Swartz thought Judi Tolchin was doing a wonderful job promoting the library.

Frank Wells asked where Oceanport will be located when they move into Fort Monmouth. Director Judi Tolchin stated that they will be located in Building 901. Mrs. Swartz asked if they could use this as a performing arts center. She thought this would be beneficial to the library system. Director Judi Tolchin explained that the library space is only about 4,000 square feet and designed for public library space. Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated that Oceanport has low circulation at the current location. Don Burden also stated that the current library was primarily used for children's programming and services. Mrs. Swartz asked if there will be a section for the children's meeting room in the new library. Director Judi Tolchin explained that the new library was small but there will likely be a small room.

Renee Swartz stated that there should be a new way to create the Commission meeting calendar. She thought the calendar should be created for the year but to make sure everyone can attend with a review every three months. Mrs. Swartz also suggested an electronic means of communication to attend if one cannot make the physical meeting. Mrs. Swartz noted a drop in attendance. After three consecutive meetings commissioners could receive a warning. In the future, the meeting would not be changed if a commissioner cannot attend a meeting that has already been reviewed in the three month period. Don Burden stated that 48 hour notice if a commissioner cannot attend the meeting is essential except when that is not possible due to an emergency.

Director Judi Tolchin explained the financial impact of the network technology improvement initiative. She stated the decision to pursue the JerseyConnect Option will significantly increase speed at Headquarters and Eastern Branch with a cost estimated at \$33,600 annually. The current cost is \$3,804; additional estimated annual cost is \$29,796. Assistant Director Heidi Amici distributed a handout of Verizon costs for the internet. Commissioner Frank Wells asked how this compares to the T1 line. Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated that it will be better at Eastern Branch but the same at Headquarters as when it had Verizon Fios. Mrs. Swartz asked if this would be listed as a top priority. Assistant Director Heidi stated this would be a big priority for improving library internet, especially with high use technology programs from the State Library and NJLA hosted by Monmouth County Library and increasing patron demand in a digital environment.

### **Assistant Director's Report**

Assistant Director Heidi also stated that Robocaller has been 98% successful. The new additional AWE – Early Literacy machines have been installed in the children's section of all branches. Touch screen computers with the catalog have also been installed at Headquarters and Eastern Branch. Heidi Amici also stated that she was negotiating a new contract with SIRSI.

Assistant Director Amici also commended Donna Mansfield for her great programs. Heidi Amici stated that Donna Mansfield works so hard especially working in two different positions. Mrs. Swartz stated that she would like to invite Donna Mansfield to the June Commission meeting to formally thank her for her hard work.

Mrs. Swartz also stated that Donna Mansfield has booked a Betsey Ross program on Saturday, June 10 with the same company that provided the Hamilton program. Mrs. Swartz explained that patrons enjoyed

these reenactment programs. She also asked for a list of the most successful programs and their years to make sure the library is aware of what patrons enjoy the most.

**A Motion to approve the voucher for non-library materials in excess of \$10,000 in the amount of \$16,218 for six AWE Early Literacy computers as previously approved by the Commission was made by Frank Wells, seconded by Don Burden; unanimously approved.**

### **Financial Report**

\$469,141.31 was spent in Salary and wages; \$237,376.75 in other expenses for a monthly total of \$706,518.06. Year to date total expended \$2,568,657.10, additional \$76,359.48 encumbered for a total of \$2,644,717.16 charged year to date.

\$1,541,686.81 remains unexpended in the reserve budget.

The financial report also included charges posted to the grant budgets.

**A motion to accept and approve the April 2017 financial report was made by Peter Doyle, and seconded by Frank Wells; unanimously approved.**

### **Director's Report**

Director Judi Tolchin explained the repair plan proposal from County Engineering for Eastern Branch. Also noted at the site inspection were the handicap ramp buckling concrete and the loose railings. Judi Tolchin stated that this area will be repaired and the scope of the project expanded to address the necessary improvements for ADA access and safety considerations. She also stated that she was very thankful to County Engineering and the County Shade Tree professionals who will plant more shrubs. Mrs. Swartz stated that it was time to write a thank you to Buildings and Grounds, county engineering, and county technology department. Judi Tolchin stated that Buildings and Grounds has been fabulous and Tracy Pitts, B&G supervisor for Headquarters and Eastern Branch was excellent and very responsive under the supervision of Stan Brzozowski – who has done an amazing job with the parking lot improvements at Headquarters.

Judi Tolchin also stated that \$5,854 was the total amount forgiven during April's Food for Fines campaign. The amount of fines collected in April was \$20,949 and total amount of food collected was 7,041 pounds.

Director Tolchin also shared that the Sea Bright Library, a member of the system will be hosting a fundraising event on June 24<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

Director Tolchin also addressed Freeholder DiMaso's letter to the Library regarding the John Cotton Public Relations campaign and award submission. Commissioner Burden read the letter to the Commission. Freeholder DiMaso wrote that she was so proud of Monmouth County Library's hard work in creating the campaign.

It was also discussed that on August 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a special book discussion and signing with famous singer/actor Bobby Rydell.

Mrs. Swartz thanked Muriel Smith for allowing the library to be more visible. Renee Swartz also stated that Donna Mansfield was doing a wonderful job finding programs and has a wealth of contacts.

**A motion to approve continuation of the NJDOL/NJSL Career Connections Grant was made by Don Burden, and seconded by Frank Wells; unanimously approved.**

**A motion to approve application of the NJDOL Literacy Grant provided the necessary criteria and subsequent grant application can be completed by May 30, 2017 was made by Peter Doyle, seconded by Don Burden; unanimously approved.**

Renee Swartz thanked everyone for attending the meeting and wished Freeholder Director Lillian Burry all the best.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Don Burden and seconded by Peter Doyle; unanimously approved.**

**The meeting adjourned at 1:53 pm.**

The next meeting will be on June 20 at Eastern Branch at 11:00 am.

Submitted by Marissa Chimento