

**Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
Wall Township Library
November 10, 2015**

Present: Commission Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners: James A. Gray, Nancy Grbelja, and Frank Wells, Freeholder Lillian Burry, Director Judi Tolchin

Absent: Don Burden, Peter T. Doyle, and Grace Abramov

Guests: Muriel Smith and Mike Casey

The meeting convened at 12:30PM

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of November 10th, 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:

Renee Swartz requested a review the October 13, 2015 meeting minutes. The Commission noted there were no changes or amendments.

Motion was made by Frank Wells to accept the minutes from the October 13th, 2015 meeting, seconded by Renee Swartz, and approved, James Gray and Nancy Grbelja abstained; they were not in attendance at the last meeting.

Renee Swartz gave thanks to the Wall Township Library for hosting the November Commission meeting. Mrs. Swartz acknowledged Wall Branch Manager Sue Domas and Circulation Manager Carrie Kupselaitis, giving thanks on behalf of the Commission for their hospitality.

Mrs. Swartz welcomed Mike Casey of Wall, a citizen attending the meeting.

Library comments:

Renee Swartz praised the final *Alice in Wonderland* program, an interactive performance with a tea party held at the Headquarters Library. She thanked the Commission and Freeholders for having a large presence at program, especially Freeholder Lillian Burry in all that she does to help promote and represent the library. The event announced Judi Tolchin’s appointment as Library Director, and also acknowledged Heidi Amici’s appointment as Assistant Director. Frank Wells and Lillian Burry commented on how wonderful and interactive the program was. The patrons loved the performance as it was well planned, fun, and exciting for both the children and adults in attendance. They commended the choice of a round seating arrangement, a great option for the large turnout; over 250 patrons were present at the program.

It was noted that there should have been a follow-up article for the end of the *Alice in Wonderland* programs, as there had been one to announce the start of program series. James Gray agreed on how programs like these should be promoted more. Aware that the library has informative bookmarks on such programs, Mr. Gray suggested that every checkout should include one of the aforementioned bookmarks in hopes of raising awareness of library activities. Renee Swartz wanted to make sure that all of the branches help raise awareness of library activities with promotional information at every checkout. Judi Tolchin agreed to bring this issue up at the next branch meeting.

For future programs, Renee Swartz suggested having a George Washington reenactor come to the library for the week of George Washington's Birthday. This brought up the issue that the library should think ahead when planning programs, and it should also have more interactive and entertaining activities.

Monmouth County is very active in gardening, especially with the large number of related organizations such as the Master Gardeners and various local gardening clubs. Renee Swartz suggested on inviting authors who have written books on gardening and create gardening events. These events can be geared to both children and adults. The programs can involve other authors who have included gardening in their writing, like Beatrix Potter.

Former Director of the Monmouth County Library and Former State Librarian John "Jack" Livingstone had a successful, well-attended program on the history of jazz. The program was interactive with videos and commentary about jazz musicians who came to the library system throughout the years. Renee Swartz suggested that the Commission write a letter, thanking and congratulating Jack for his forty-plus years of service and his efforts to bring jazz to the library.

Public Relations

Renee Swartz discussed a recent edition of the *New Jersey Journal* about Rumson/Fair Haven, and how the library should think about having a journal piece as well. Lillian Burry mentioned that it all comes down buying advertisements to promote the library. Renee made the point that there was still funding left from the library advertising budget, and it is an idea to use the local paper media outlets to help promote the library. Muriel Smith said that she was currently talking with some news outlets. She has found that some of the local papers only want to cover specific towns instead of the library system as a whole, such as the *Two River Times*.

Board members discussed how media companies in their area also covered their branch libraries in the library sections. Renee asked if it was possible to have more promotions for the library through articles, not just library specific sections, to help the system be more visible.

Headquarters Branch Renovations

Judi Tolchin raised the issue of the much needed refreshing of the Headquarters. Ivy Group comments for Headquarters considered the Library to be drab; shelves are too tall and obstruct patrons' views of the library. Judi noted there are very few charging stations for patrons with portable technology. As the library is looking toward future renovations and methods for funding, Judi Tolchin felt that reinvigorating the library would help it become user friendly and more enjoyable to patrons.

Renee Swartz expressed the library can try to find ways to help make the branch feel brand new again. The way to fund these changes will be discussed in the executive session. A consultant would be needed to help give insight of these new changes and be part of the operating budget.

Freeholder Burry stressed the importance of working on the budget for next year. Judi Tolchin will have the budget ready for next meeting, a thorough preliminary presentation for the Commission to be able to discuss.

Chairperson Swartz mentioned that the budget needs to be available for review soon to allow Commissioners to be able to look at the plans and come to the next meeting with thoughts, in an effort to expedite the budget planning process. The next meeting will be at Headquarters on December 8th, and the department heads' presentations will be given to Commissioners. The department heads will be given to a few minutes to discuss their plans for the next year, and they will allow the Commissioners to ask questions and give feedback. It was suggested to have the meeting start earlier, around 10:30 AM, to ensure ample time to include what needs to be discussed in the next meeting, as well as to talk about the budget.

Freeholder Burry added that anything that needs to be done through the county (meetings, bills, etc.) has to be done early, by December 10th, because there will be no activities and processing done at the end of the month. Even though the library has been given extended time to have everything finished, it would be beneficial to have everything done earlier.

Frank Wells mentioned Union Beach Memorial Library and the grand reopening of their children's room. The room will be clad with jungle themed art, created by middle school students from both Monmouth and Middlesex counties.

Financial Report

Judi Tolchin moved on to the October expenses report applied to the adopted budget including encumbered expenses:

- \$444,925.08- Salary and Wage (YTD-\$4,881,302.33)
- \$2,342,145.39 -Other expenses- (YTD- \$4,495,945.01)
- \$9,377,247.34-Combined YTD totals
- \$3,767,128- indirect charges have not yet been charged.
- \$1,059,045.80- October Reserve Budget (YTD spent-\$330,812 remaining, with a possible few charges from 2014)

There are funds in the salary line that have not yet been expended due to position vacancies. This will affect benefits line as well. Remaining funds that go unspent will go into the fund balance.

Motion was made by James Gray to accept the financial report, seconded by Frank Wells, unanimously approved.

Branch and Member report:

Oceanport Library had a celebration for its 50th Anniversary; Renee Swartz, Don Burden and Peter Doyle were in attendance. A resolution was presented to the Oceanport Library Association in a highly successful event.

The Oceanport Library will also have restroom renovations, as it is still located in the community center. Discussion is on the table whether or not Oceanport library will remain at the community center or move to a different location; however, renovations should not affect the library as they are being made to be accessible to park users. It will be ongoing and the Commission will be updated. There should be no anticipated closings.

The library system had a "Snapshot Day", held in conjunction with the New Jersey Library Association. Snapshot Day was on October 21st and statistics were gathered. Branch Services is waiting to hear back from branches to compile the numbers and data from October 21st and the week that followed. The totals will be given by the next meeting.

It was decided that cookie trays will be given to member libraries in an effort to acknowledge their importance, show the County library system's appreciation for their support and participation in the system, and celebrate the holiday season.

There are plans for additional branch training, which will provide knowledge and methods to deal with difficult patrons. The training is scheduled for January 2016, and will be given by a selected expert with mental health expertise.

Renee Swartz suggested that there should be a workshop for circulation staff members to clarify which individuals can have a free or paid membership card. Certain towns are not part of the system, and they have caused confusion with the circulation staff. Additionally, the Commission proposed raising the library non-membership fee to \$150 [from \$100] for paid members, following what Princeton Library does with their membership fees.

Library Policy- Material Checkouts and Tutoring Policies

Renee Swartz also gave the suggestion of limiting the number of materials for check out. This would prevent large quantities of items being taken out of the library. Judi Tolchin made the point that limiting material checkouts will reduce circulation numbers. The circulation numbers directly correlate to the success and well-being of the library.

Other commission member expressed concern that if a patron takes out a large amount of items, such as DVDs, other people will be unable to check the same items out. Judi Tolchin relayed to the Commission that extra copies are available at other branches, and they can be requested and filled as quickly as one business day; the holds system is a fluid process and can quickly accommodate patron requests. For instance with two day movie rentals, patrons must bring them back if the DVD is on request, otherwise late fees will be incurred. Even if there are patrons who check out large amounts of materials, they are still responsible for items, and those who check out very large numbers of materials are very few in number.

Although there are an ever-increasing amount of items available digitally, there is still a need for physical material checkouts. The library wants and needs to give people a reason to come in and take out items. Judi Tolchin again stressed that if there are checkout restrictions, circulation numbers will be greatly affected as Monmouth County has the highest circulation numbers in the State.

Frank Wells suggested checking with other counties about their material checkout policy. Renee Swartz felt that this is a good idea, and the survey should consist of information from roughly ten libraries from other systems and municipalities to compare borrowing policies.

Freeholder Burry moved the conversation to people who use library to conduct business: tutors. There have been concerns raised about tutors and their potential to disturb other patrons because of noise issues, as well as making money because they do not pay to use the library for their services.

The Commission has discussed the issue of tutors for a long time, feeling that it should be part of a survey to investigate other library systems and municipalities about tutors, whether or not there are policies about them and/or if they are charged for using rooms at libraries.

Lillian Burry added that there have been individuals who had also used the libraries for hiring interviews. Mike Carey, member of the public audience agreed and commented on whether or not entrepreneurial endeavors are allowed in the libraries, thus affirming the function of the library as a place to do research, borrowing materials, and other related activities. He felt that tutors should teach students, children, and individuals at their own homes or other locations. The issue was raised of the library's liability for any accidents and so forth with the tutors. Mr. Carey questioned what can be done about the tutors.

Judi Tolchin agreed that the library should restrict the tutors from disturbing the quiet enjoyment of the library for other patrons; however, it is difficult to discern who is tutoring, conducting interviews, and other business related meetings versus those who are engaged in volunteer literacy efforts. Staff members are not able to tell if patrons are conducting business, and they should not be asking patrons the nature of their library use. There can be literacy volunteers who use the library to tutor for free. There are procedures to deter individuals from disturbing the quiet enjoyment of the library for others. Staff members also cannot go up to individuals and ask them what they are doing, especially every person that comes into the library.

Freeholder Burry pushed for a posting of policies where if business is being conducted (varying circumstances and types), the individuals must pay a fee for the use of the facilities and not disturb other individuals. Renee Swartz agreed and went on to say that the libraries have ample space to provide tutors an area for tutoring, make a reservation, and possibly charge a small fee.

Judi Tolchin noted that many tutors do not want to be in a room alone with their students. They want to be in a public space where there are people around them. Nancy Grbelja also added that tutors are not allowed to be alone with children in rooms, even in schools, classrooms, and the school library; they are suggested to go to public places. There also have been issues with tutors teaching students at their homes where parents have been absent, and this presents child safety issues. It should be the school that provides a public space, but if there are certain circumstances where the child is not in school it would pose a problem.

Freeholder Burry compared this situation with the Park System. If there is a certain area of the park that needs to be used, there is a charge for it. Nancy Grbelja said that she doesn't have a problem if a school makes an agreement with the library to provide space for them, a type of shared service agreement. However, she has a problem with private tutors, not affiliated with any school or organization, to use

the library to conduct tutoring and charging higher rates. It was then decided that this conversation be saved for another time, once adequate data has been gathered regarding this issue.

Staffing reports:

The meeting moved to staffing reports:

- Allentown Library Associate position is open,
- Upcoming staff retirements - Replacement of clerk drivers
- January staff training for mental health issues (as stated above)

James Gray brought up an upcoming event for an Antique Road Show to help bring the community together.

Freeholder Burry noted that it is a lot of work to gather people, staff, and other antique experts to come on board for this show. There is also the cost to host the show and any related fees, which is affected by the amount of people who come to this event; however, this can show the library in another light and hope for a large turn-out. The same goes for the program suggestion about gardening and having gardening related authors to come to the library; this will show that the library system is more than what some may perceive.

Technology report:

Judi Tolchin reported that all branch libraries have door counters; by Jan 2016 all branch libraries can provide patron numbers as part of system statistics. There are a few malfunctions with some of the counters, but all issues will be resolved before the end of the year.

Heidi Amici, Assistant Director, is currently testing out a handful of new touch-screen computers. She is evaluating the equipment to see their effectiveness and usefulness for the library and its patrons. In addition, she is working to see if there are compatibility issues with library software, hardware and other programs such as antivirus, library processing, word processors, keyboards printers, etc. For the best interest of the library, it is important to see if the systems are beneficial to the library system before committing to a large investment for these computers (160 computers planned for the future).

In addition to the computers, Heidi is looking into technology that would implement an automatic phone call system for patron holds and requests. In collaboration with Monmouth County ITS, they will look into the phone lines for this system and special equipment, after Heidi has compiled the cost for this system. This cost will be included in the budget proposal.

Eastern Branch has been having issues with their outdoor sign; malfunctions were present for the past few weeks. The branch was affected by a recent power outage (October 28th) that happened nearby, and the sign was further affected by the outage. Certain modules were damaged and an initial repair cost estimate was given, though another quote is required due to purchasing requirements.

Code of conduct (Updated and copy will be posted publicly)

The final draft for the Library Code of Conduct has been reviewed by Andrea Bazer and Steven Kleinman of County Counsel. The new Code of Conduct was presented to the Commission several months ago and last month it was reviewed by County Counsel. After Counsel's review, they made with one minor

change to the last paragraph regarding what action will be taken if violations of the Code of Conduct occurred.

Motion was made by James Gray to accept the updated Code of Conduct, seconded by Frank Wells, unanimously approved.

Ocean and Monmouth County Reciprocal Borrowing program

This program is an agreement between the two counties, where some people live in areas of the counties that live closer to the opposite county (e.g. Some Howell Residents live closer to Ocean County/ Brick Residents live closer to Monmouth County).

Judi Tolchin reported that three year renewal is coming up for January 2016. There is the Net Lender Agreement that is part of the borrowing program contract, which is a statistic based on circulation. It counts the number of Monmouth County items borrowed from the Ocean County Library system and vice versa. Each system would pay the opposite county a \$1 fee for every circulation in the user statistics. There was a previous fee cap at \$25,000, which might not be in the best interest of all parties based on the gathered data (statistical systems are different). A proposal was made before the Commission to reduce the cap to \$6,000, which the net lender agreement will not exceed that amount. In the future, the Commission might look into removing the Net Lender Agreement for the reciprocal program.

Motion was made by Frank Wells to accept the proposal of limiting the Net Lender Agreement to \$6,000, seconded by James Gray, unanimously approved.

Public guest, Mike Casey, exited the meeting. He thanked Wall Township, and commended the library for their award-winning services. Mrs. Swartz thanked Mr. Casey for coming to the meeting.

Motion was made to go into executive session by Nancy Grbelja to discuss issues of personnel, legal issues, and contracts; seconded by Frank Wells, and unanimously approved.

Closed executive session began at 1:50 pm.

Closed executive session ended at 3:00 pm.

Motion was made by Nancy Grbelja to close executive session, seconded by Frank Wells.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.