

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
November 15, 2016
Eastern Branch, Shrewsbury

Present: Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners Don Burden, Peter Doyle, James Gray, Frank Wells, Nancy Grbelja; also present: Freeholder Lillian Burry, Liaison, Library Director Judith Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici.

Absent: Commissioner Grace Abramov

Guests: Robert Compton, Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds; Muriel Smith, Consultant; Barbara Stanhope, Library Employee representing AFSME 2514.

The meeting convened at 11:15 AM

Chairperson Renee Swartz welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting 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 webpage the date, time and place of the meeting.”

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes:

A motion to accept the minutes from the October 18, 2016 meeting was made by Don Burden and seconded by Peter Doyle; approved without changes with James Gray abstaining.

A motion to accept the closed executive minutes from the October 18, 2016 meeting was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Peter Doyle; approved without changes with James Gray abstaining.

A motion was made to schedule a closed executive session on December 13, 2016 was made by Don Burden and seconded by James Gray, unanimously approved.

Chairperson’s Report:

Chairperson Swartz complimented the library and Muriel Smith for the publicity coverage of the Olympics program held in Manalapan on October 23, 2016. Mrs. Swartz noted the wonderful cooperation and coverage from the Two River Times and suggested reaching out to local smaller publications such as CM Community Magazine for publicity. Muriel Smith reported that the Journal has agreed to publish more articles covering library events.

Mrs. Swartz discussed the program that the NJ Center for the Book is coordinating with all of the state centers for the book on the East Coast. All along Highway U.S. One was the theme. Each state center for the book contributed a mystery book title. The program is called “Route One Reads.”

James Gray inquired regarding advertising our programs with bookmarks. Judi Tolchin noted that the library uses paper bookmarks to publicize programs. There was some further discussion of bookmarks and perhaps looking into more glossy options.

Mrs. Swartz gave great praise for the Olympics program. She noted that the staff and everyone involved did a great job. James Gray also commented that it was great to be a part of the event. Don Burden noted how polished and well-spoken the participants were. Judith Tolchin stated that there were several local mayors in attendance and that the participants were amazing. Renee Swartz remarked that it was a tremendous project that fostered community spirit. She went on to state that 2 programs per year should be held that are important to either provide historical significance or develop community spirit.

Freeholder's Report:

Freeholder Burry complimented the library staff on their work on the Olympics program and stated that she had heard wonderful things about the event. She also noted that having Tim McLoone and the Shirleys there draws large numbers of people as well.

Freeholder Burry discussed her conversation with Teri O'Connor regarding the interior design plan for the Headquarters Library renovations. There was some discussion regarding the most cost-effective way to proceed. Robert Compton discussed Creative Library Concepts, a company based out of Colts Neck that did work on the Eastern Branch renovations. They are a state contract vendor with 2 architects on staff who will come in at no cost to show their plan. Mrs. Swartz inquired if the company can come next week. Robert Compton stated that there is no risk in meeting with them. Mrs. Swartz asked that Judith Tolchin get in touch with the company to set up an appointment.

Freeholder Burry reported that labor contract discussions are continuing. She went on to state that discussions are going well and the next meeting is December 5th at 10:30am. Freeholder Burry stated that they were getting close to a conclusion and it has not been contentious.

Freeholder Burry announced that Andrea Bazer, County Counsel has been named as a Superior Court Judge. She added that she regrets seeing Andrea go and is convinced that she will be a great judge. Mrs. Swartz stated that the commission should send a nice letter. She went on to say that Ms. Bazer has been most helpful to the library and has resolved some difficult situations. Freeholder Burry stated that the Freeholders will select a replacement who will be sworn in Thursday January 5th. Judith Tolchin said that Andrea Bazer has been responsive and helpful to the library and was an excellent resource. Renee Swartz also noted that Andrea was very accessible and quick to respond to library requests.

Financial Report:

October Financial - Summary

Ms. Tolchin stated that the October expenses in the Detail Budget Account status reflect \$465,940.47 expended in salary and wages in October with a year to date total of \$4,672,579.95. Other expenses totaled \$2,490,650.17 expended in October with an additional \$78,359.58 encumbered. This results in a total of \$4,572,194.93 charged year to date. Combined year to date total spending is \$9,244,774.88 applied to the adopted budget including encumbered expenses. As of the end of October there are \$12,509.41 in charges that are encumbered for 2015 and \$1,012,060.94 remains in the reserve budget for the 2015 expenses. Those that are unspent will go into the fund balance. Included in the financial report is the Career Connections grant information with funds allocated to staff and related grant expenses. These

expenses are offset by the grant amount of up to \$50,000 at each location including Headquarters and Eastern Branch. Ms. Tolchin noted that the Career Connections program got off to a late start so the spending of the grant amount might not be currently reflected in the budget.

Financial reports were submitted into the public meeting.

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

There was some discussion regarding why the Career Connections grant was delayed and Judith Tolchin noted that the delay was on the part of the state rather than the library. She added that a great amount of staff time has been spent on administering the Career Connections grant program but that it is very worthwhile.

Ms. Tolchin noted that there is also an indirect voucher for the County of Monmouth in the amount of \$3,520,572.00 which is lower than the budgeted amount. Offsetting expenses for that are included in the report. Judith Tolchin added that Craig Marshall requested that the Commission approve the indirect voucher at the meeting. There was some discussion regarding how much money the county will be returning to the library budget. James Gray asked for clarification regarding the indirect voucher. Freeholder Burry suggested contacting Craig Marshall for an explanation. Don Burden inquired regarding assessments specific to Eastern Branch rather than Headquarters. Ms. Tolchin clarified that Eastern Branch has separate charges while Headquarters splits the cost with Archives. Mrs. Swartz noted that the financial report should be more clear so that the Commission can easily make sense of it. Ms. Tolchin stated that she will follow up with Craig Marshall to clarify the indirect voucher numbers. Mrs. Swartz requested that a meeting be set up with Craig Marshall as well. Ms. Tolchin noted that she has questioned some indirect charges in the budget and had them clarified or resolved. Frank Wells asked about building depreciation charges and why it is billed to the library budget. Freeholder Burry responded that she has addressed this many times and was told by Craig Marshall that only the entire Freeholder board can change that.

A motion to accept the financial report excluding the indirect voucher was made by James Gray and seconded by Peter Doyle, unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Ms. Tolchin announced the passing of Jennifer King, who has been a reference librarian for the county for over 28 years. She went on to state that her loss will be felt by the staff and library patrons. There are 8 full time vacancies currently which is down from 20. There are currently 11 vacant part time positions. Mrs. Swartz inquired regarding the vacant technology position. Heidi Amici responded that the interview process continues, adding that it is such an important position and has to be the right candidate. James Gray inquired regarding the hiring process and noted that it has been going on for six months. There was some discussion of the 90 day working test period.

There was some discussion of the parking lot renovations at the Headquarters Library. Ms. Tolchin stated that county buildings and grounds and engineering staff were a tremendous support as well as safety officer Kathy West. She suggested that the Commission acknowledge the renovation at the next Freeholder meeting and how much it will help our patrons. Mrs. Swartz noted that it is one of the busiest buildings in the county. Robert Compton added that the job was overseen by buildings and grounds and engineering and that the departments advocated for the library and made sure that the communication was good.

Judith Tolchin discussed the electronic sign and the purchasing process to pay for repairs. Robert Compton clarified that once the warranty ran out there was some question of who would take over the maintenance/trouble shooting. The current problem is the power supply. Once the repairs have been made, Buildings & Grounds will be taking over the responsibility of the electronic signs. Mr. Compton also addressed building staffing issues. There was some discussion of the garbage cans in front of the Eastern Branch building. Granger had the garbage cans, they were purchased and are now in place. Carpet tiles will be cleaned at the Eastern Branch, and if the problem is not resolved the county will replace the soiled tiles. There is a problem with drainage in front of the Eastern Branch. Brockwell & Carrington is correcting the drain issue. If they do not correct the problem the county will work on fixing the issue. He also discussed a roof leak problem above administration at the Headquarters Library. This will be addressed. Freeholder Burry inquired about the canopy. Mr. Compton noted that capital requests go to engineering so he was not aware of the request. Freeholder Burry noted that it was in the original plans for the building. It is treacherous in bad weather. Don Burden inquired regarding a library capital budget. Judith Tolchin responded that the library does not have a capital budget, capital improvements are referred to the county. Don Burden inquired about the electronic sign and if it is good money after bad. Mr. Compton responded that he will look into the power supply problem and what is causing it. The elevator problem was quickly resolved and it is working properly with no issues.

Mrs. Swartz thanked Mr. Compton and noted that good communication has been established. Mr. Compton stated that future work orders will also have Stan copied in. If there is not an immediate response, Judith Tolchin will send a note to Mr. Compton. Don Burden inquired about where the canopy issue was left. Mr. Compton stated that he is checking with engineering on it. He also noted that the handicapped door at Headquarters will be replaced next year.

Branch Report:

Oceanport is possibly relocating to Fort Monmouth. Judith Tolchin noted that it is in close proximity to the Eastern Branch. Sea Girt library sent a note to thank the Library Commission for supporting their annual fundraiser with programming funds. Little Silver thanked the Commission as well for the patron privacy program which they found very valuable. Judith Tolchin discussed an issue of a patron filming at various branches of the library. She went on to note that it is within their right to film as there is no guarantee of privacy in a public building. The Senior Library Assistant promotional exam was posted; the Senior Librarian exam was requested. Member baskets will be sent out. Mrs. Swartz stated that this is to be sent out every year at the holidays. There was a discussion regarding whether or not to close on Sunday Dec. 24 in 2017.

A motion to close on Sunday December 24, 2017 was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Don Burden, unanimously approved.

Upon speaking with Craig Marshall during the lunch break, Ms. Tolchin clarified that the library would be receiving a credit for \$342,104.00 from the county. The budget plan for 2016 was \$3,862,676.00 and actual charges were \$3,425,024.00. Mrs. Swartz noted that it is important to pay attention to the financials before automatically approving them and that this was a valid discussion.

A motion to approve the financial report with the inclusion of the voucher was made by James Gray and seconded by Peter Doyle, unanimously approved.

Technology Report:

Ms. Amici noted the passing of Jennifer King who was a key staff member in the ordering process. Another long-time employee who did order processing resigned. In their absence Virginia Lyon and Stephenie Acosta have stepped up to assist in the process. The Robocaller is in the last phase of testing. This will allow patrons to place holds on items currently on the shelf. A staff member will pull the hold and the computer will automatically call the patron to tell them it is available. We have received part of the order for the touch screen computers that will be used for the online catalog at all branches and members.

Renee Swartz noted that Heidi had a nice table outside of the Tim McLoone concert to promote library technology. Heidi said that an information booth or kiosk might be a good idea to set up when a program is going on. Mrs. Swartz also suggested that the Friends should be a presence at the larger programs.

Publicity:

Muriel Smith noted that the staff members who helped patrons at the technology table outside of the Tim McLoone concert were very friendly and knowledgeable. She noted that there was good publicity on the Olympics program. The draw of the program was that it had a wide interest to the community. Ms. Smith has an agreement with the Journal to get an article in each month if she submits the information before the 13th of the month. She went on to add that the letters to the editor that Mrs. Swartz wrote were very helpful for publicity. There was some discussion regarding the anniversary of the Federalist papers in the spring. Mrs. Swartz suggested music along with a program. Don Burden noted that there were 100th anniversaries of Joe Dimaggio and JFK's birthday. Judith Tolchin stated that including music in with a Hamilton type program would be successful. Scott Joplin, Andrew Wyeth and Ella Fitzgerald were also mentioned as possible program ideas to celebrate anniversaries.

Mrs. Swartz stated that these are several ideas that can be researched for Spring programs. Judith Tolchin noted that the library does very well with publicity through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Mrs. Swartz reported that Judith Tolchin will be discussing the library in a Monmouth in Focus feature.

A motion was made to go into executive session by James Gray and seconded by Frank Wells, unanimously approved. Executive session began at 1:09 pm. The purpose of executive session was to discuss labor negotiations and personnel.

The regular session resumed at 1:39pm. There was some discussion of the December Commission meeting. Renee Swartz noted that the meeting will begin at 10:00 am and requested that library staff limit the length of their presentations.

James Gray motioned for adjournment at 1:45 pm, seconded by Peter Doyle, unanimously approved.

The next regular meeting of the Commission will be held December 13, 2016 at 10:00am at the Headquarters Library.