

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes

September 12, 2017

Eastern Branch Library

**Present:** Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners Don Burden, Peter Doyle, Frank Wells, Grace Abramov, Nancy Grbelja and James Gray, Freeholder Lillian Burry, Director Judi Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici.

**Absent:**

**Guests:** County Administrator Teri O'Connor and Muriel Smith

The meeting convened at 11:12 am.

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of September 12, 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.”

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of July 18, 2017 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Frank Wells. Approved unanimously.**

**A motion to move into executive session to discuss contracts, personnel and litigation was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Don Burden. Approved unanimously.**

Executive session commenced at 11:15 am.

The Commission resumed the regular session at 12:50 pm.

**A Motion to approve the closed executive session meeting minutes of July 18, 2017 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by James Gray. Approved unanimously.**

**A Motion to submit the certification in support of the award of a contract with Library Interiors to provide design services for the Monmouth County Library Headquarters interior design renovation, reimagined, re-envisioned, and focused on the future.**

**Authorization for the library Director Judi Tolchin to send the award letter to Helen P. Fiore, Acting Director of Purchasing was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Frank Wells. Approved unanimously.**

Renee Swartz thanked the sub-committee- made up of, Don Burden, Nancy Grbelja, herself and alternate Frank Wells- who met in groups of three and worked to select the renovation contractor. She stated that the sub-committee, as well as the entire commission, who have all worked tirelessly towards this goal, deserved recognition. Renee thanked Nancy for making sure that the timeframes were met and that things moved along smoothly. She was glad that we were able to move forward and thanked and congratulated everyone involved.

**A Motion to change a part-time 32-hour Library Associate position to a full-time Library Associate position, as well as a change of 2 part-time Page positions to 2 part-time Library Assistant positions was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Approved unanimously.**

Renee Swartz shared that she believed that the priority of the library at the current time should be hiring and filling positions. She requested that Muriel Smith put an article or even a paid advertisement in the paper stating that, especially as a result of the recent expansion of the Holmdel branch, that the library is looking for people to fill positions on the team. Renee Swartz suggested putting it in the Monmouth Journal, wherein one can submit an article for free. Judi Tolchin stated that she would call and bring this to the attention to the Association of School Librarians.

Renee Swartz asked how many positions were needed to be filled. Judi Tolchin answered that there were 22 positions in need of filling. Freeholder Director Lillian Burry warned of the

possibility that the personnel budget might be reduced if positions were not filled. Judi Tolchin stated that she anticipated a full employment roster with many open positions filled by January. She stated that over 45 positions had been filled over the past 2 years.

Renee Swartz stated that it has been difficult to fill these positions, but that it was imperative that they be filled, and that the system must move forward. She mentioned the 90 day review period and suggested that it be used to greater effect. She stated that applicants who may not seem perfect should still be given a chance, as they would still have that 90 day trial period to prove themselves, and that it would be better to have the position filled than open and not funded. Renee Swartz stated that, at this time of year, many places are hiring for the holiday season and that we at the library must be proactive in order to retain skilled individuals.

Renee Swartz asked if the new IT professional had been hired. Heidi Amici responded that a new IT professional had been hired. She stated that the library was working to find more IT professionals to hire, as librarians are not always skilled in the technical aspect of the job, and they would be a very valuable asset to have.

Renee Swartz thanked Muriel Smith for her recent articles highlighting the library and its programs, which were featured in the *Rumson/Fair Haven Journal*, the *Monmouth Journal*, and the *Two River Times*.

Grace Abramov suggested that more effort be made to spread the word of the library in the area of Manalapan, Freehold and Marlboro.

Renee Swartz stated that County Administrator Teri O'Connor asked for Freeholder Director Lillian Burry to be featured more prominently in library publicity and articles. Muriel Smith stated that a quote from Freeholder Director Burry was featured at least once in each of her articles, and that the article referenced by Teri O'Connor was not written by her, but by an independent reporter for the *Two River Times*. Renee stated that we must make sure that Freeholder Director Burry is mentioned in publicity.

### **Financial Report**

July & August Financials—Budget, Reserve Budget, Grant Budgets, Check Writing

\$578,465.02 in July and \$469,686.58 in August spent in Salary and wages;

\$240,587.63 in July and \$299,377.81 in August spent in other expenses.

For a monthly total of \$819,052.65 in July and \$769,064.39 in August

Year to date total expended \$5,553,520.47/ additional \$120,399.99 encumbered for a total of \$5,660,711.93 charged year to date.

\$1,528,477.48 remains unexpended in the reserve budget. That amount will be transferred to the fund balance unless there are additional unexpected 2016 expenses processed from now until December 31, 2017.

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

Director Tolchin submitted the financial reports into the meeting record to the commission for their approval.

**A Motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by James Gray. Approved unanimously.**

### **Director's Report**

Judi Tolchin submitted a voucher for indirect charges for the approval of the commission in the amount of \$2,705,662, which was the offset of what was previously charged and was the amount submitted by Craig Marshall to reconcile the account. Judi then submitted a request for approval of the voucher to reimburse West Long Branch for salary, wages and benefits for the first quarter of 2017 in the amount of \$15,618.79.

**A Motion to approve the vouchers was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Peter Doyle. Approved unanimously.**

Judi Tolchin submitted an Envisionware proposal for technology upgrades for current systems, pay services in branches, and consulting services to the amount of \$16,892.10.

**A Motion to approve the Envisionware proposal was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Peter Doyle. Approved unanimously.**

Judi Tolchin stated that Veteran Donald Klieger had requested that the Headquarters Library honor the Killed in Action (KIA) flag by displaying it at library. She stated that this flag is not a requirement for the library. She shared that this would be a wonderful opportunity to be first library in the state to display the flag. The display must be coordinated through the county. The cost of the flag is approximately \$40. James Gray suggested that the KIA flag could be displayed on same pole as the MIA flag.

**A Motion to approve the purchase and display of the KIA flag was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by James Gray. Approved unanimously.**

Judi Tolchin stated that book displays honoring Freeholder Theodore J. Narozanick were at all branches, and that library has the Theodore J. Narozanick room for New Jersey history at Headquarters.

Renee Swartz stated that she spoke to Freeholder Director Lillian Burry, and that the Board of Freeholders must approve a resolution authorizing the renovation contractor at the next meeting. It was noted that Freeholder Director Burry should receive recognition for her assistance. The Commission will issue a citation or plaque at the next meeting to recognize her contributions and support of the library. Renee suggested Muriel Smith write an article to announce the renovation of the Headquarters library, thanking the Freeholders and Freeholder Director Burry in particular. She also requested that Muriel Smith write another article to share the new job opportunities at the library.

Judi Tolchin shared that the Library Journal Directors Summit would be held in Philadelphia in November, and she requested approval to attend the out-of-state event.

**A Motion to approve Judi Tolchin's request to attend the Library Journal Directors Summit in Philadelphia in November was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by James Gray. Approved unanimously.**

### **Branch & Member Report**

Judi Tolchin stated that the Nick Caivano statue had sustained some damage. She shared that Buildings & Grounds staff were looking to see if the damage was repairable, and if it was, that a buffer zone would be needed to protect it.

Renee Swartz stated that it was vital for the commission to immediately move forward with library policies. She stated that Mike Fitzgerald was very tenacious in working out an agreement and that the commission was very appreciative but noted that the library will review the county council suggestions. Renee Swartz thanked Mike Fitzgerald for his time in coming out to help, and shared her hope that the problems would soon be resolved.

Judi Tolchin stated that the Holmdel Library move to the Bell Works Building was progressing well. She stated that Heidi Amici had consulted on the technology element of the move, and that they would be moving forward to identify additional staff for the library.

Judi Tolchin stated that the Howell Kindergarten-8th Grade schools had a project for Library Card Sign-Up Month, which would take place in September, and that their goal was to have all students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade receive their library cards in coordination with Howell school during the month of September.

Judi Tolchin stated that the West Long Branch library would be demolishing the building adjacent to them, and that a short closure would be necessary in order to make sure that the structure was safe to enter. She stated that sufficient notice be shared so that staff could be re-assigned.

Judi Tolchin stated that the Master Gardeners would be working on consulting for the garden areas at Headquarters and will be coming up with a plan for working with Buildings & Grounds. Renee Swartz suggested that something nice be done to show appreciation for the Master Gardeners, as they go above and beyond with their services. She stated that the Commission had originally approved a budget of \$500 each year for the Master Gardeners, who often make purchases for the libraries out of their own pockets. She suggested raising that budget to \$1000. Nancy Grbelja suggested that, at the end of the year, a recognition event be held for all

volunteers. Grace Abramov stated that the Master Gardeners should be given an option for a higher budget, and that if the money is not used it be taken back into the library budget. Judi Tolchin will include the change in the 2018 budget. Nancy Grbelja stated that when the budget is put together, some will be set aside for them.

Judi Tolchin informed the commission that the Tinton Falls library was temporarily closed for a facilities problem, for an extended period of time. She stated that the library was a member library, and not a branch library, but that we were helping to support them and to take in materials, as well as to help patrons get services at other branch libraries.

Judi Tolchin stated that the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act was progressing and would be up for voter approval in November, She noted that staff can only provide information about the legislation. It was recommended that commissioners refer to printed materials for advocacy efforts.

As requested by the Commission, Judi Tolchin stated that a congratulatory letter had been sent to the Friends of the Monmouth County Library in recognition of their recent 501 (c) 3 tax status that they fought long and hard for. The Friends were very appreciative of the recognition. They approved the director's request for a grant fund to be established for the West Long Branch library using the Helen Shultz fund.

Judi Tolchin requested a time estimate as to when she should be prepared to present the budget, keeping in mind that the labor budget, including all vacant positions, would come to \$6.5 million, having previously been \$6,150,000. Renee Swartz stated that the budget should be ready to be presented by the October commission meeting and that it could be finalized by November or December.

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

Heidi Amici shared that the new and improved Monmouth County Library app was launched and requested that everyone download it. Renee Swartz asked Muriel Smith to write an article about the new app. Posters and bookmarks sharing the news of the app were shared with patrons, especially in light of library card sign up month, and the app was also featured on the website.

Muriel Smith stated that the newspapers would be changing their formatting going forward- that newspapers were looking for larger feature stories, rather than many small articles. She agreed with Grace Abramov that it was difficult to be featured in Western Monmouth County papers. Renee Swartz asked which Western Monmouth papers were comparable to the *Monmouth Journal*. Muriel stated that there were two major papers in that area, but both featured advertisements more heavily than stories. Nancy Grbelja suggested an online paper, *The Source*, as well as Gunther Publishing's *Millstone Times*. Muriel shared that a new journal would begin printing in October in Middletown and that she would be in contact for a monthly story.

Renee Swartz stated that the meeting room policies were an important issue that had to be worked out, and that a committee may be necessary to discuss and decide. Nancy Grbelja stated that she would like to see the county policy. Grace Abramov stated that it would be important to see both policies and compare the two.

Judi Tolchin shared that Archives Day would be taking place on Saturday, October 14th. She also shared that the Bobby Rydell event was a huge success.

Renee Swartz shared that the October 10th commission meeting would move from Howell to Headquarters, in order to honor Freeholder Director Lillian Burry in the Theodore J. Narozanick New Jersey History Room

**A Motion to adjourn the meeting of September 12, 2017 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by James Gray. Approved unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 pm.