

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes  
January 8, 2019  
Eastern Branch Library

**Present:** Chairperson Renee Swartz, Commissioners Grace Abramov, Brian Boms, Nancy Grbelja, Mary Ann Musich, and Frank Wells; also present: Freeholder Lillian Burry, Director Judi Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici

**Absent:** Commissioner Christina Requa

**Guests:** Christopher Marion, Deputy County Administrator; Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant

**The meeting convened at 11:43 am.**

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of Tuesday, January 8, 2019 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**

Chairperson Renee Swartz gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from December 11, 2018. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

**A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of December 11, 2018, was made by Grace Abramov and seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Brian Boms and Mary Ann Musich abstained. Approved.**

**A Motion to approve the closed executive session minutes of December 11, 2018, was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Brian Boms and Mary Ann Musich abstained. Approved.**

**Commission Reorganization**

New Commissioners Brian Boms and Mary Ann Musich were sworn in together by Freeholder Lillian Burry with the following oath:

“I, Brian Boms and Mary Ann Musich do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the Governments established in the United States and in this State, under the authority of the people; and that I will faithfully, impartially, and justly perform all the duties of the office of Commissioner of the Monmouth County Library Commission, according to the best of my ability, so help me God.”

Chairperson Renee Swartz and Freeholder Lillian Burry welcomed the new Commissioners and congratulated them on their new positions. They stated it is an exciting time to be part of this Commission, citing the Headquarters Branch renovation and Eastern Branch anniversary and sculpture as highlights; providing background information on how the projects came to be. Each member in attendance of the meeting went around the room and introduced themselves.

Nominations for the offices of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary were made.

**Frank Wells nominated Renee Swartz for the office of Chairperson. The nomination was seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Unanimously approved and Renee Swartz accepted.**

**Grace Abramov nominated Frank Wells for the office of Vice-Chairperson. The nomination was seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Unanimously approved and Frank Wells accepted.**

**Grace Abramov nominated Nancy Grbelja for the office of Treasurer. The nomination was seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved and Nancy Grbelja accepted.**

**Frank Wells nominated Grace Abramov for the office of Secretary. The nomination was seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Unanimously approved and Grace Abramov accepted.**

### **Library Liaison Report**

Freeholder Lillian Burry stated she was appointed as library liaison once again by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Lillian stated Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion was present at the meeting to present on the topic of the Headquarters Branch renovation.

On February 7, 2019, The Board of Chosen Freeholders will be introducing the budget at Brookdale Community College. Several weeks after this presentation a public hearing will be held. This budget introduction is separate from the library.

### **Headquarters Renovation Update**

#### **Project Status**

Deputy County Administrator, Christopher Marion presented on the Headquarters Branch renovation project. He began by providing a brief history of the Headquarters Branch building. The approximately 117,000 square foot building was constructed in the year 1987 and saw its last expansion and upgrades completed in the year 2000. Some of the furnishings, flooring, and lighting still in use today dates back to 1987 and 2000. The inception of the renovation began in the year 2014 with a report commissioned by the County. In 2015, it was indicated that a “refreshing” of the library was needed to bring it up to date. In 2016 and 2017, project proposal presentations were made by various architectural groups. In 2017, with a focus on furniture, flooring, minor electrical work, and minor lighting upgrades, the Commission contracted a company called Library Interiors, Inc. and received funding from the 2017 Monmouth County

Capital Budget. Library Interiors, Inc. is a library design and consulting firm that was awarded the project through the competitive process. Their contract provided that the library procure items under the state contract. At the end of 2017, the project encountered its first roadblock in regards to the conceptual layout plans that had been proposed. At that time, it was determined that there were electrical issues that needed to be addressed, which added the need for additional core drilling and a potential increase in the projected cost. In February 2018, concerns were introduced regarding the ceiling, lighting, and walls within the building not meeting the standards now set by the furniture, flooring, and electrical updates. At that time, a subcommittee met with representatives from Library Interiors, Inc. to redevelop a plan that would address the concerns raised and concluded that additional funding of approximately \$375,000 to \$400,000 was needed. Library Interiors, Inc. was requested to submit a project change of scope to update the documents on file. This was then presented to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the sanction of the necessary additional capital funding and was approved. With input from the County Public Works and Engineering Department, it was determined that the services of an electrical engineering company were necessary to establish plans and specifications. In April 2018, a contract was awarded to an electrical engineer. The glass partition walls proposed in the renovation plans, to ensure full code compliance, required an architectural review and services. During this time, in September 2018, the flooring portion of the project moved forward with installation and furniture selections were made. Safety issues arose during installation, so as a result safety and project status meetings were established to address concerns. It had been expressed that the project had become larger than initially anticipated and final plans had not yet been received. In October 2018, through the established meetings, it was decided to place a hold on and reexamine the status of the project. Additional meetings were held to review the project budget and how to proceed. It was determined that architectural services were necessary and it was most desirable to go out to public bid. The County has a five year capital planning process to meet the needs of the County, the library, and the renovation. To finish the adult side and lobby, contractors were requested to submit estimates, broken down into sections of the library. A breakdown was received from the present parties and it is estimated at a cost of \$1.3 to \$1.6 million to fully complete the adult side and partial lobby areas of the library. This estimate did not include the children's side, meeting rooms, staff areas, or the extension areas. The County consulted with Library Interiors, Inc. and based upon the existing budget they expressed a desire to move forward with the adult section and the lobby areas. It was indicated that state contracts will not be used for those services and that architectural services are needed to complete the plans and specifications to go out to public bid for the general construction work. In regards to the architectural services, Stonewater Architecture was brought on in July 2018, and based on their familiarity with the project, they were asked to submit a proposal to prepare public documents for bid and construction management services. Library Interiors, Inc. will still be involved with the project to complete the adult side and lobby, however outside architectural services are recommended and necessary. A proposal was received from Stonewater Architecture in December 2018 and the cost was double the estimated amount. The County could not in good conscience recommend awarding a contract on a non-fair and open basis through the state contract. At this time, architectural services are still needed and the project will focus on the adult side and lobby areas. The bathroom project is a separate capital project. The County desires to offer a contract through the two-part engineering quality procurement process for architectural services. Public Works and Engineering is preparing documents to obtain qualifications from architects, evaluate those qualifications, request proposals, and award a contract. The architect

awarded the contract will complete the remainder of the plans and specifications and then the county will go out to bid for the general construction services. The full electrical plans have not been received. Once plans are received and contracts are awarded the project can move forward in a better way with project management. A question was raised about the children's side of the library. It was answered that the children's side of the library would fall under the second phase of the project. These additional phases of the project could potentially qualify for library grant funding. The present capital appropriations will allow for the completion of the adult side and the lobby. By taking some time to step back and procure these services, it will be a better plan going forward. Lillian suggested ensuring that the lower level does not get overlooked in the later phase as it is so open and widely used by the public. Renee stated, regarding the mention of a five year plan, it was not initially expected for this to be on a five year plan. Christopher Marion stated that it does not necessarily need to be a five year plan that it was referring to the county-wide five year plan. Nancy stated the library has always been a focus and reviewed for funding and spending. The Commission was advised to go out for capital bond to obtain project funding. They were then advised to use a furniture vendor and selected Library Interiors, Inc. Library Interiors had the requirement that the library use the state contract for procurement. After the Commission approved plans and conducted a walk through review, they concluded they could not install brand new furniture and tables against old and outdated ceilings and walls. The Commission did not receive any information or recommendations regarding these aspects and how to complete them properly. It was stated that the patrons deserve to be provided with a nice library for their children and community. The Commission requested guidance on what the right position is to successfully complete the renovation, as the project has experienced obstacles during each point. The Commission desires to finish the adult area and requests guidance by the County with a timeline and help regarding what information is needed, when to obtain funding, and how to generate the plans appropriately. The Commission appreciates the County and the Board of Chosen Freeholders for helping them move in a better direction.

Renee asked if there was anything that could be done to expedite the timeline. Christopher Marion stated, they have done their due diligence and are moving well and have a good foundation. The budget and processes are now in place to be able to complete the adult side of the library. The timeline is longer than initially anticipated, but the project is on the right track. The County will work alongside the Commission to move this project forward successfully. The County and Commission can now be proactive about applying for the grant funding for later phases of the project. Judi stated there has been \$125,000,000 passed by the voters of the State of New Jersey which will provide grant funding for libraries, but applications are not yet available. There will be competition in applying to receive a portion of these grant funds, but it is believed that the Monmouth County Library could be a good candidate. Judi will continue to check when applications for these funds will begin being accepted.

Grace asked what the original funding amount was. Christopher Marion stated the original capital amount was \$1.9 million, inclusive of furniture, flooring, shelving, and minor electrical. The electrical aspects have significantly changed with the need for power being more extensive than initially anticipated. Judi stated, with funding additions, the total is currently up to \$2.9 million. That includes \$2,400,000 capital funding and \$500,000 from the operating budget. Mary Ann asked about the need for core drilling. It was explained that the additional electrical will need to go under the floor, not just under the rugs, to provide the power necessary to the new

furniture and is more extensive than what was initially proposed. The electrical panel will also need to be extended to handle the amount of electrical being added. It was stated that the lighting upgrades were also not included in the initial plan and added additional expense.

The Commission is concerned that the Board of Freeholders feel too much is being spent on this project and asked for recommendations on how to proceed while showing that these expenditures are necessary. It was stated the potential criticism is in regards to the method being used, not with how much is being spent. Christopher Marion stated that issue has been resolved and cited that they have never worked with contracts like this before. Renee asked for Christopher Marion's recommendation as to the best way to move forward in a timely manner. He suggested the Commission go forward, as planned, with the adult side and lobby sections of the project, obtain what grant funding may be available for additional phases, and once an architect is engaged for the current project aspects, have them prepare plans for the additional phases. He stated the goal has always been to minimize patron disruption. However, certain things will have to be done to ensure this is done correctly and closures may be necessary at certain points. A true plan is needed with a general construction kick-off meeting with a general contractor to get this project successfully completed safely and properly using what exists currently.

Renee suggested contacting the New Jersey State Library regarding the grant funds and release dates. Lillian and Judi stated it behooves the Commission to be ready, in advance, through having the architectural plans in place. Judi stated, at this time, the grant is not available to submit an application.

Christopher Marion stated the recommendation to the Commission is to procure a professional architectural services contract, including pre-design, programming schematic design, documentation, design development, construction documents, construction bid administration, construction contract administration, post-construction administration, do the two part quality process through Engineering, and a public bid for general contractor services for the sections of the library completed using the available funding included in the 2017 and 2018 capital budgets. The Commission will be provided a timeline after a meeting is held on Thursday, January 10, 2019.

#### Concord Partial Payment Request

Concord has requested partial payment for components of the glass walls already constructed that will be installed during the Headquarters renovation project. Originally, the walls were slated to be installed soon but the estimated time of installation is now unknown. Concern was raised regarding pre-paying for materials that are not set to be installed until a later phase of the project and potential issues that could arise in the interim. The general practice of the County is to provide payment upon delivery. A desire to consult with Library Interiors, Inc. was expressed regarding what was constructed, why it was constructed, and to what plan specifics it was constructed. This request for partial payment will be brought forward again at the next Commission meeting with further discussion to occur at that time.

#### Financial Report – December 2018 Financials

Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Grant Budgets, Capital Accounts

Judi submitted the December 2018 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Grant Budgets, and Capital Accounts wherein the budget charged year to date is \$15,817,286.98, including encumbered funds. \$1,167,713.02 remains as the balance unused, though \$2,652,158.39 is shown as unexpended; this total includes encumbered funds. December salaries are reflected in the total and third quarter fringe benefits still remain, but are encumbered. Additional 2018 expenses will be reflected in the Reserve Budget presented at the next meeting held in February. The remaining 2018 Reserve Budget shows an unexpended amount of \$2,257,932.31, which will be returned to the fund balance. The Capital Accounts charged year to date are \$889,512.91 of the \$977,000 for phase one of the Headquarters renovation project. \$1,497,000 remains in the second Capital Account. A total of \$1,584,487.09 remains unexpended. A small discrepancy does exist in the Capital Account in the amount of \$2,391.16 for an internal salary charge. This discrepancy is under investigation in conjunction with County Finance. The Grant Budgets are for the Career Connections grant where reimbursement is received for salaries and fringe benefits, with \$50,000 for the Headquarters Branch and \$50,000 for the Eastern Branch for an annual combined total of \$100,000. These grant funds have been received consecutively for the previous three years.

**A Motion to accept and approve the December 2018 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Grant Budgets, and Capital Accounts was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Grace Abramov with the exception of the \$2,391.16 discrepancy. Unanimously approved.**

#### Voucher Approval-Fourth Quarter Fringe Benefits

A voucher in the amount of \$765,588.06 for the fourth quarter fringe benefits charged by the County was submitted for the Commission's approval.

**A Motion to accept and approve the voucher for fourth quarter fringe benefits was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.**

#### Voucher Approval-SIRSI

An invoice in the amount of \$147,755 for SirsiDynix was submitted for approval. The five year purchase of SirsiDynix was already previously approved. This amount is for the annual contract for the Library's shared catalog.

**A Motion to accept and approve the voucher for SirsiDynix was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Grace Abramov. Unanimously approved.**

#### Microfilm Reader Printers

A request for four Microfilm Reader Printers was submitted; two to be located at the Eastern Branch and two to be located at the Headquarters Branch. The proposed readers/printers would offer more features, including the capability to search the text of the microfilm. The cost is approximately \$10,000 per machine. The current price quote for all four machines is \$36,975 with an additional fee of \$400 for delivery and setup. It was noted that genealogy is a popular research topic of County library patrons and these machines would allow the library to remain a viable reference and research center.

**A Motion to accept and approve the purchase of four Microfilm Reader Printers at the quoted price of \$36,975 with an additional fee of \$400 for delivery and setup was made by Grace Abramov and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.**

### Budget Draft

The draft budget was re-submitted to the Commission. The draft budget is remaining level with last year's budget at \$16,985,000, with the wage and salary line, fringe benefits, and indirect charges remaining level. The only significant change made was to restore the annual book budget to the full \$3,000,000. This book budget is used to support all library branches and member libraries. The draft budget is still under review by County Finance Director, Craig Marshall and a vote has not been requested, at this time. A 1.5% increase to the tax levy has been submitted and is subject to approval by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. This proposed increased tax levy and some of the fund balance are necessary to meet the proposed budget. The increased tax levy is part of the County's 10-year sustainable plan. It was stated that all of the financial decisions made by the Library Commission are reviewed by the County Government and County Finance Director, Craig Marshall. The Commission's goal is to be the best stewards of the funding provided to the library and they appreciate the recommendations given to ensure this goal is met. It was submitted to the record that the Monmouth County library tax rate is the lowest in the State of New Jersey at .000182, which is approximately one-half of one-third of a mill required by law to maintain a municipal library. Renee stated an update will be created to present to the Board of Chosen Freeholders with last year's annual report regarding financial decisions.

### Director's Report

Employment vacancies number nineteen openings at this time, with two pending changes that will decrease the number of openings to seventeen by the end of January. The effects of the hiring freeze (2009 – 2014) are still being felt in regards to employment and efforts are being made to make up these deficits.

Heidi is working on an updated webpage design to increase the usability and functionality of the library website. Four staff members were given the opportunity to attend a course on WordPress to help in the webpage redesign.

The LEAP (Library Equal Access Program) project will be going forward at the Headquarters branch. This project is through the New Jersey State Library and will help add services to patrons with visual impairments. The equipment will be provided by the State Library and the library is excited to move forward with this project and associated programs.

A goal for 2019 is to increase library card registrations. The Programming Department will be working to develop community outreach opportunities to reach more members of the public.

A meeting was held with the Freehold Borough Library. A great discussion was held and all of the services offered by the Monmouth County Library were presented. The conclusion achieved by the end of the meeting was that the Borough could alter their operating structure to function at a reduced cost and utilize the Monmouth County Library member provided resources. The recommendation was made, if they come onboard, that they be brought on as a member library,

not a branch. The Director reported that the cost for Freehold Borough to function as a branch would create a budget deficit of approximately \$3,000,000 in ten years.

Sea Girt Library has sent their withdrawal letter and a letter confirming receipt was sent in reply. Services to the Sea Girt library from the Monmouth County Library will cease as of December 31, 2020 followed by a notice that services will cease to Sea Girt residents on January 1, 2021.

For the third year in a row, a \$2,500 donation was received from the Curtis W. McGraw Foundation to be allocated to the Headquarters branch. It was suggested to add the funds to the grant fund and allocate them towards lobby furnishings or renovation assistance. The Commission was in agreement to allocate the funds as suggested.

### **Assistant Director's Update**

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the Headquarters branch will soon be receiving the LEAP (Library Equal Access Program) equipment. She is also currently working with County Information Technology Services to update the current bandwidth provided at the Headquarters and Eastern branches.

An 18-month contract was signed with Verizon for Internet services in 2017. Also, Optimum is currently offering new and different Internet packages so research is being conducted into possible cost savings that could be obtained after the completion of the current contract. The library requires dedicated, not shared, internet service.

The recycling dumpster for excess shelving is arriving next Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.

Temporary walls to be used to section off storage and work areas during the Headquarters branch renovation project have been ordered. These walls will replace the plastic sheeting currently being used to section off areas.

Vans will need to be purchased this year. The current vans being utilized for deliveries have high mileage and have been sent for mechanical maintenance several times. Heidi has obtained the proper form and timeline to submit this request. One van has been allocated into the 2019 budget.

### **Publicity Report**

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated stories on the library department's accomplishments have been sent to local papers.

Muriel stated Chairperson Renee Swartz will be reading to the children during a program being held at the Eastern Branch Library on Saturday, January 19, 2019. The whole afternoon will be filled with activities and the reading will last approximately fifteen minutes with a live animal demonstration and refreshments to follow.

It was stated that the Two River Times has promised to increase their publicity of the Monmouth County Library.

### **Commissioner Comments**

The canopy project at the Eastern Branch was brought up during the Headquarters renovation discussion. It was stated that the canopy is a separate capital project.

Grace suggested sending a card and Renee suggested creating a citation to recognize all the staff that recently retired and those who are soon to retire. This would be a small token of appreciation for their years of service.

A question was asked about the cost per individual circulation and if a report was available. Judi stated that information could be calculated but was not certain if comparison information would be available in the State report.

Renee presented a photograph of the library's original book mobile.

Lillian suggested establishing a sub-committee to meet with all of the branch and member communities to present on all the wonderful services provided by the library system. It was suggested this could be done by attending town meetings.

Grace stated the Howell Library is outgrowing its space and not able to provide more current technology. Residents of the area utilize the Ocean County reciprocal borrowing and frequent the Jackson Library for its extended resources. Additionally, Ocean County residents do utilize the Howell library. It was stated that there is a desire to upgrade the Howell branch with technology additions, but there is limited space and electrical safety concerns.

### **Next Meeting and 2019 Meeting Dates**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at the Headquarters Library at 11:00 am.

### **Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting**

**A Motion to schedule a closed executive session at the meeting on February 12, 2019, was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.**

### **Adjournment**

**A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.**

The meeting concluded at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Conover