

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
November 12, 2019
Eastern Branch Library

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

Absent: Commissioner Mary Ann Musich

Guests: Meghan Bennett, Special Counsel; Christopher Marion, Deputy County Administrator; Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant

The meeting convened at 11:11 am.

Chairperson Renee Swartz opened the meeting of Tuesday, November 12, 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 October 15, 2019. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of October 15, 2019 was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Grace Abramov. Nancy Grbelja and Barbara McMorrow abstained. Approved.

A closed executive session was not held during the October 15, 2019 meeting.

State and National Report

Chairperson Renee Swartz stated the New Jersey Center for the Book, in partnership with The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) hosted a literary event on October 16th featuring Jacqueline Woodson, Young People’s Poet Laureate. As Ms. Woodson is a children’s author, school aged children were invited to participate in the event. This event was recorded and streamed at thirty-eight schools and eighty-six public libraries throughout New Jersey. The Monmouth County Library Headquarters streamed the event and held children’s programs relating to the work and art of Jacqueline Woodson.

Commissioner Appointment

Newly appointed Commissioner Barbara McMorrow was sworn in by Freeholder Lillian Burry to fill the unexpired term of Commissioner Christina Requa who resigned. Chairperson Renee Swartz and Freeholder Lillian Burry welcomed the new Commissioner and congratulated her.

Library Liaison Report

Freeholder Lillian Burry stated the Monmouth County Library was named the Best of the Best Public Library in Monmouth County by the Asbury Park Press. It was suggested to draft a press release about the library receiving this honor and to refer it to the Monmouth County Office of Public Information.

Lillian recently participated in “Monmouth in Focus” with Marion Zalinski and it is now airing on local public channels. She suggested using an outlet such as this to promote the library.

Building and Renovation Updates

Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion provided an update on the building renovation projects. Since his report at the previous Monmouth County Library Commission meeting, specifications were received for the bathrooms and they were submitted to Public Works on October 16th. They are still waiting on the cost estimate and revised schedule for the bathrooms. Regarding the flooring questions, Monmouth County Engineering completed a survey of a site currently using the proposed lobby flooring to inspect the wear it has received over a seven year period to estimate the floorings durability. From this survey, Settembrino Architects will provide the Commission with their professional recommendation regarding the lobby flooring. A follow-up was conducted with Buildings and Grounds regarding the chosen ceiling tiles and their maintenance and all parties are more comfortable with the chosen ceiling tiles. A revised cut-sheet for the proposed lighting will be provided to the Commission for their review. Additionally, the data and electric plan has been updated. A final timetable and cost estimates are due by the end of November. Efforts will be made to minimize disruptions to the library’s use within the timetable. Director Judi Tolchin stated Settembrino Architects are approximately 60% complete with their architectural plan. It is anticipated that work on the bathrooms will begin in approximately February or March of 2020.

Sculpture Update – Installation and Associated Expenses

Freeholder Lillian Burry stated the sculpture installation will not be able to occur in November as anticipated. Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion stated the base for the sculpture and the foundation work is included in the larger ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) project and there was a delay in the starting of said project. Monmouth County Engineering is working to provide a better timeline for the completion of the base and foundation. The assembly of the sculpture can occur once the base and foundation are completed. An on-site meeting is scheduled with Harry Gordon Studios, LLC run by Harry and Wendy Gordon to provide the company with additional information needed for them to submit a proposal. A cost estimate will not be possible until their proposal is received.

Financial Report

October Financials - Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budget

Director Judi Tolchin submitted the October 2019 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budget wherein the 2019 detail budget account charged year to date is \$14,083,875.55 posted to the approved budget of \$16,985,000; this total includes encumbered amounts and the budget is 83%

expended. The 2019 reserve budget includes \$1,016,519.23 unexpended in remaining funds; any remaining amount will go into the fund balance. The remaining capital account for the renovation is \$36,470.97 unencumbered from the first capital appropriation of \$977,000 and \$1,485,770.84 remains unencumbered from the second capital appropriation of \$1,497,000 for a total remaining of \$1,522,241.81 as of October 31, 2019. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby, including lobby furniture. The Capital Account for the Eastern Branch ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) ramp was included in the summary for informative purposes only, as the project is not managed by the library. The Grant Report reflects the amount used from the Ocean First Bank – Holmdel Donation.

A Motion to approve the October 2019 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budget was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Voucher Approval

A voucher in the amount of \$10,984.95 for Murray Paving and Concrete Architectural Services was submitted for approval. Confirmation has been received that all architectural services have been received and this will be the full and final payment to Murray Paving and Concrete for said services.

A Motion to accept and approve the voucher in the amount of \$10,984.95 for Murray Paving and Concrete Architectural Services was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

A voucher for the remaining 10% that was withheld at the time for Murray Paving and Concrete Electrical Engineering Services requires additional evaluation and will be held until the next scheduled meeting.

A meeting will be held with the flooring contractor to discuss their partial payment of an additional \$111,000.00. They want to ensure that the square footage matches the plans and receive a full explanation of charges. It will be recommended to the Commission, once final confirmation is received.

MacMillan eBook Embargo

Director Judi Tolchin provided the Commission with copies of articles relating to the MacMillan eBook embargo to aid in understanding. This embargo creates a hardship in purchasing e-materials and increases the length of time it takes to make e-material available to patrons. Libraries are restricted by this embargo to only being able to initially purchase one individual copy of an e-book, at a discounted rate, for their whole system and then after eight weeks can purchase additional copies at an increased price. The Monmouth County Library's e-book circulation is one of the highest circulations in the system after Headquarters.

Assistant Director Heidi Amici, as the purchaser of e-books for the library system, stated e-book costs are higher than the cost of physical books. Due to the high cost, the library must be strategic in its purchasing of e-books. Libraries are joining together to come up with a solution to these issues.

Chairperson Renee Swartz suggested the Commission should take a formal stance on this issue and draft a letter to the editor. Megan Bennett, Special Counsel stated she would draft a resolution and a statement of service obligation to public to provide desired formats to all. Megan asked Judi to provide her with input on what should be specifically included, and she would provide the Commission with a draft of the resolution at the next scheduled meeting.

Holiday Schedule 2020

The Monmouth County Library, consistent with the County of Monmouth, is scheduled to observe thirteen holidays. Also observed are three Sunday closures on April 12th, May 10th, and May 24th and standard Summertime Sunday closures, and one Saturday closure on July 4th in 2020.

A Motion to accept and approve the 2020 Holiday Schedule was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Brain Boms. Unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Director Judi Tolchin stated on November 4, 2019 the New Jersey State Library provided an update on the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act. The update stated:

“The public comments received between July 1 and August 30, 2019 and agency responses that indicate changes to the rules for the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act are printed in the New Jersey Register today (November 4, 2019).

Effective today, we cannot respond to individual questions regarding the Bond act. All potential applicants must be able to see all questions and answers so that each potential applicant has the same information at the same time. This is official State policy for all Bond Programs.

Information on a Q and A website where questions can be posted and answers received will be available soon. There will be a deadline for posting all questions, so please check here frequently for pertinent dates.

Information will also be posted soon on the availability of the grant solicitation package. Technical assistance for submitting grant application(s) will occur in early December.”

The complete revised rules can be found at:

<https://www.njstatelib.org/assets/NEWJERSEYLIBRARYCONSTRUCTIONBONDACTRULES-Nov4.pdf>

Regarding the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) devices, the library will need to establish a policy before the devices are implemented. The devices are ready to be delivered and can be installed at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and the Eastern Branch once a policy is set. A sample policy has been received from the AED vendor and Judi will work with Megan Bennett, Special Counsel to establish a policy. There will be no requirement for staff to be

trained, but training will be provided for staff who wish to volunteer. Staff will be covered under a County indemnification certification.

Online Trustee training is provided from the New Jersey State Library and is recommended for those that may be interested. There is a seven-hour training requirement for Commissioners to maintain the library's state aid.

The library department heads will present to the Commission at the scheduled December meeting.

Tim McLoone and the Shirleys with the Atlantic Coast Band will be performing at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters on Sunday, December 8th.

On November 10th, the Navesink Brass Quintet concert and the Veteran's day program held at the Eastern branch went well and was a wonderful celebration.

Currently, the Monmouth County Library has twenty-two staffing vacancies. The goal for 2020 is to reduce staffing vacancies to twelve to fifteen openings.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the van purchase is still in process and she will continue to work with fleet services to complete this process.

The Monmouth County Library Headquarters and Eastern branch are waiting on Verizon to install the new Ethernet Virtual Private Line (EVPL). Heidi hopes it will be installed by the end of this year. This installation will reduce the cost of providing internet services at the library.

The new Monmouth County Library website has launched.

The Book Club Festival held in October went well and was a wonderful program. Patrons enjoyed the one-on-one feel of the author talks. The library is looking to grow this event from year to year.

Publicity Consultant Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith is working on completing a story about the Monmouth County Library being named the Best of the Best in Public Libraries in Monmouth County by the Asbury Park Press.

Muriel attended the Veteran's Day program held at the Monmouth County Library Eastern branch. She stated a picture will be printed in the papers.

The Navesink Brass Quintet that performed during the Veteran's Day event will be performing again in December. Muriel will be writing a story about the band and their performances.

An article will be published about the Atlantic Highlands Branch's English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. ESL classes are held at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and Eastern branch, as well.

Closed Executive Session

The Commission stated a resolution to enter a closed executive session at 1:30 pm for discussion on a personnel issue that will last under ten minutes. No action will be taken after the completion of the executive session.

A Motion to adjourn to closed executive session to discuss the Library's Collective Bargaining Agreement and other personnel issues as permitted by the Open Public Meetings Act was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

The Commission resumed the public meeting session at 1:34 pm.

Commissioner Comments

A suggestion was made to hold a luncheon to celebrate the branches and recognize the employees.

A question was raised about the County's previous educational assistance program. This program was removed from the County's benefit offerings. The Friends of Monmouth County Library do offer an annual scholarship.

A question was asked regarding the Sea Girt Library and when their member status will officially end. As of January 1, 2021, they will no longer be a member library.

A question was asked regarding the status of the annual report. The report is in the proof-reading process; a few photos are needed and a final proof-read needs to be conducted. A suggestion was made to take a photo at the scheduled December meeting.

Judi posed a question to the Commission regarding the amount of advisory documents that they are provided for each meeting and if they would like the amount to be reduced. As these documents could possibly be requested based on the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), Meghan Bennett, Special Counsel stated requests should be reviewed by her prior to advisory documents being provided to the public. There is no answer at this time regarding a reduction in the amount of advisory documents.

The Friends of the Howell library are sponsoring a program about Jackie Kennedy and would like to extend an invitation to the Commission to attend.

A suggestion was made to invite the Friends of the Library group, the Master Gardeners, and the Branch Manager's to the scheduled December Monmouth County Library Commission meeting.

Public Comments

A Motion to open the meeting to public comment was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.

Let it be known for the record that no members of the public were present for comment.

A Motion to close the meeting to public comment was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Unanimously Approved.

Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at the Next Meeting

A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2019 was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.

Commission Meeting Schedule 2020

The Commission Meeting Schedule for 2020 was submitted for approval. The Commission will meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 11am and alternate locations between the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and the Eastern Branch. The meeting scheduled for June 2020 is an exception as it is scheduled for the third Tuesday of the month, not the second. No meetings will be held in July and August, unless an additional meeting is required.

A Motion to accept and approve the 2020 Commission Meeting Schedule was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Nancy Grbelja. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters at 11:00 am.

Adjournment

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

The meeting concluded at 1:46 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover