

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
April 12, 2022
Headquarters Library

Present: Chairperson Brian Boms and Library Commissioners Barbara Lovell, Barbara McMorrow, Marcy McMullen, Mary Ann Musich, and Frank Wells; also present County Commissioner Lillian Burry, Director Judith Tolchin, and Assistant Director Heidi Amici

Guests: Special Counsel Faye Szcgal

The meeting convened at 11:10 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Brian Boms opened the meeting of Tuesday, April 12, 2022 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.”

Minutes

Chairperson Brian Boms gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from March 8, 2022. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of March 8, 2022 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

A Motion to approve the Closed Executive Session minutes of March 8, 2022 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Commission Remarks

Chairperson Brian Boms stated, in honor of Earth Day and Arbor day, the members of the Library Commission will no longer receive packets in print. It was suggested to continue to reduce paper and the Commission agreed.

A Proclamation in honor of National Library Week was presented by the Monmouth County Commissioners to the Library Commission. This truly goes out to all staff.

The Library Commission had discussed visiting branches during National Library Week. It was wonderful seeing each location and speaking with staff. The visits helped the Commission learn more about the differences between each branch, all of the ongoing programs throughout the library system, and daily challenges that staff encounter. Thank you to the staff for all their hard work and dedication. It was suggested that the Commission visit branches twice a year.

Discussion was had regarding programming at the Holmdel Branch. It was suggested to increase programming options to aid in increasing patron traffic. The Library Commission and Library Administration will continue to keep an open dialogue with Holmdel Township.

Library Liaison Report

County Commissioner Lillian Burry asked if more accessible options would be added to the Bell Works building where the Holmdel Branch is located. The building currently has accessible ramps at all entrances and elevators inside the building. It was suggested that the signage be increased to better designate the closest entrance for the library as the parking lots are large. \$1,966,982.66 posted to the Temporary Budget of \$4,694,812.00; this total includes encumbered amounts. The 2021 Reserve Budget reflects \$3,867,580.96 remaining in unencumbered funds. The remaining Capital Account for the renovation is \$81,252.16 unencumbered from the first capital appropriation of \$977,000.00 and \$1,497,000.00 unencumbered from the second capital appropriation of \$1,497,000.00 for a total of \$1,578,252.16 remaining unencumbered as of March 31, 2022. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby, including lobby furniture. There is an additional \$216,385.20 available from the toilet renovation that has been allocated as matching funds as a recipient of the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act Grant. These funds have now been encumbered for architectural design fees.

A Motion to approve the March 2022 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Headquarters Renovation Report

Director Tolchin stated a Grant Extension Authorization is needed regarding the renovation project. The project is currently estimated to be under funded in the amount of \$805,000.00 due to delays and pandemic supply cost increases. The underfunded amount includes the base project and one add-on item of the lower gallery restrooms. It does not include the DVD room, lighting in the rear of the adult reading room, or enhancements to meeting room eight. Monmouth County Engineering has advised that they are looking for cost saving opportunities within the project. The project is anticipated to extend past the one-year timeline and the Library will have to submit an extension request to the New Jersey State Library. It is advisable to wait until bids are received and submit the extension based on architectural advisement with the contractor to provide a more accurate timeline. Director Tolchin will coordinate with the New Jersey State Library to ensure this is acceptable under the terms of the grant.

The Commission expressed dissatisfaction with the light fixtures selected for the adult library. They inquired if it could reduce cost to select a different type of lighting. Director Tolchin stated she will request a copy of the current rendering for review, but any changes could delay the project. If changes are made to the current plans, the plans will have to be updated and resubmitted. It was suggested to inquire if the architect could attend the next scheduled meeting. If the architect is unable, it was suggested to have Monmouth County Engineering attend the next meeting on their behalf. Monmouth County Engineering has been the main point of contact with the architect.

As a stipulation of the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act Grant, if the project is to exceed twelve months past the anticipated completion date a revised completion schedule

must be submitted. Director Tolchin will contact the New Jersey State Library regarding the delays and current plans.

A Motion for the Library Commission to request an extension for the New Jersey State Library Construction Bond Act Grant for the Headquarters renovation project as to such a time as guidance is provided by County Engineering as to the more accurate date of the completion to support the request, should this information be necessary for the Library Director be authorized to work with the Commission, share the draft, and submit the request so that the funding will not be at risk was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

2022 Library Budget & Recommended Tax Levy

Director Tolchin summarized the 2022 budget in the amount of \$17,885,000.00. This amount is level with the amount request in the previous year, which also included the funds allocated as fund match for the renovation project. Within the budget includes, \$6,200,000.00 allocated for salary and wages, \$3,068,600.00 allocated for fringe benefits, \$4,000,000.00 allocated for indirect costs, \$3,300,000.00 allocated for library materials, and \$1,316,400.00 allocated for all other expenditures of which \$400,000.00 is allocated for matching grant funds. \$916,400.00 remains to fund technology, programming, supplies, vehicle purchase, and all other expenses. The largest increases within the budget are for County indirect costs and fringe benefits.

A Motion to approve was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Mary Ann Musich Unanimously approved.

Director Tolchin stated, if more appropriations are needed for the renovation project, a request could be submitted to the County to use a portion of the [library] fund balance. The Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners would have to approve the request.

The tax levy is set by the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners and the Monmouth County Library Commission may only provide recommendation. The recommended tax levy to support the budget is level with the previous year at \$15,850,000.00. Added to this amount is omitted taxes in the amount of \$106,610.40, fund balance use in the amount of \$1,728,389.53, fines and photocopies estimated in the amount of \$110,000.00, and New Jersey State Aid estimated in the amount of \$90,000.00.

A Motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners a tax levy in the amount of \$15,850,000.00 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Covid-19 Library Operations Update

Director Tolchin stated the Library is working to re-establish in person programs. The Library is looking into supplying branches with tables and chairs to make meeting room setup and breakdown easier. The Library does not typically supply this type of equipment to branches, however we do not have the staff available to dedicate the time to providing meeting room setup.

In person movie programs will resume in late April or early May at the Headquarters and the Eastern Branch libraries.

Updates have been made to the County Sick Leave Policy. As County employees, the Library complies with the policy requirements. The Covid-19 language is still incorporated for anyone who has tested positive or been exposed and daily health screenings are still part of the protocol.

Collection Development and Management Policy

Director Tolchin stated some minor edits have been made to the updated draft of the Collection Development and Management Policy. This policy allows the Library to defend collection materials and support a wide range of topics. Staff utilize booklists, journals, reviews, and patron requests when selecting materials. If a material challenge is received, the Library will use this policy along with staff review and advisement on how to proceed. Each challenge is addressed individually.

A Motion to approve the Collection Development and Management Policy, effective April 12, 2022 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

State of American Libraries

Director Tolchin stated the American Library Association has issued a report. Highlights of the report include: the impact of the pandemic on libraries, increasing book challenges and bans, continuing to put forward diversity, equity, and inclusion within libraries, fighting disinformation in the news, need for outdoor Wi-Fi access, Federal funding and advocacy, increasing percentage of readers using electronic materials, and challenges with publisher limitations and costs for libraries purchasing electronic materials.

Electronic books prices are higher than print book prices, as well as there are limitations on the number of checkouts per electronic book. Once an electronic book has reached its maximum number of checkouts, the electronic book must be fully repurchased each time for continued access within a library's collection. The Library continually works to balance the combination of print and electronic materials.

Branch and Member Report

Chairperson Boms stated the Borough of Atlantic Highlands has requested a letter of support from the Monmouth County Library for their grant application to Congressman Frank Pallone for fiscal year appropriations. This letter would demonstrate community support as the grant will be used of dinking water, sanitation, sewer, road construction and paving, and parking. An example of a letter was provided by the Borough Administrator as they are seeking the support of all community entities that utilize the Borough's infrastructure. For the Library to provide a letter of support, the Library Commission would need to endorse and advisement will be needed from County Counsel. Special Counsel Faye Szcal or Meghan Bennett will coordinate with County Counsel. Chairperson Boms will recuse himself and Vice-Chairperson Barbara McMorrow will provide signature on the letter.

Director Tolchin stated the Colts Neck branch cleaning schedule has been changed from daily cleaning to 3 days per week. This is less than the recommended daily cleaning. Director Tolchin wrote to encourage the Township to maintain daily cleaning as it is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

All Library branches have resumed pre-pandemic hours of operation.

It was suggested to invite branch managers or a branch representative to meet with the Commission. The branch managers are invited to attend the year-end meeting where the department presentations are held. This could be a great way to continue conversations with branches and their needs.

Director's Report

Director Tolchin stated school start times may be changed by the State Legislature. This may have an effect on library usage.

The Monmouth County Board of Elections has been notified that meeting room use will not be available after September 2022 due to the projected Headquarters renovation project timeline.

The Library currently has 36 vacancies, as of April 18, 2022. The Library is evaluating how to best move forward in replacing the Management Assistant position and this may require a change in the Table of Organization.

In monthly statistics, the Library averages 200 door-side uses, 10,000 reference questions, and 500 chat and email questions.

Library Commissioners are required to submit disclosure statements by April 30, 2022.

The Trustee Institute offers valuable programs and trainings.

Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the Library is purchasing three Owl devices for hybrid meeting use. This equipment is setup in the middle of a room and has a microphone and the ability to move 360 degrees to face whomever is talking. The cost is approximately \$1,000.00 per device.

Assistant Director Amici has maintained contact with County Fleet Services regarding the Library's van purchase. There are minimum requirements that are needed as features of any van purchase for Library use. Fleet Services has offered alternative solutions and the purchase order remains open at this time.

Assistant Director Amici contains to negotiate the Sirsi contract for the Library's catalog services. She is hopeful that estimates and options can be provided by the scheduled June 2022 meeting.

Monmouth County ITS has implemented additional security measures when logging into the County intranet. Due to the nature of the Library, the majority of staff are not directly on the County network. For staff to login, a token that generates a one-time use code will be needed. All staff will need to be assigned a token to access incident report forms, worker's compensation forms, internal job posting applications, benefit forms, and more.

Programming Report

Director Tolchin stated the Library is working to provide branches with individual programming budgets. In person movies will resume shortly, co-sponsored programs are now permitted, and virtual book discussions will continue.

The virtual newsletter has increased subscribers and has helped increase virtual program registrations.

Commissioner Comments

Chairperson Boms encourages the Commissioners to promote and share library programs within their communities and Townships.

Public Comments

A Motion to open the meeting to public comment was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorro. Unanimously approved.

Let it be known for the record that no comments were made.

A Motion to close the meeting to public comment was made by Barbara McMorro and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters at 11:00 am.

Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting

A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.

Adjournment & Closed Executive Session

A Motion to adjourn the public meeting and enter into closed executive session to discuss the Library's Collective Bargaining Agreement and other personnel and legal issues as permitted by the Open Public Meetings Act was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.

No action will be taken after the completion of the executive session.

The meeting concluded at 12:57 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover