

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
May 10, 2022
Headquarters Library

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

Absent: Library Commissioner Barbara Lovell and County Commissioner Lillian Burry

Guests: Special Counsel Meghan Bennett

The meeting convened at 11:11am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Brian Boms opened the meeting of Tuesday, May 10, 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 April 12, 2022. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of April 12, 2022 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

A Motion to approve the Closed Executive Session minutes of April 12, 2022 was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Commission Remarks

Chairperson Brian Boms thanked Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici for all their hard work promoting Library services and programs. He noted that the Library reaches so many throughout the community.

Financial Report

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

Director Tolchin submitted the April 2022 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets wherein the 2022 Detail Budget Account charged year to date is \$2,669,474.55 posted to the Approved Budget of \$17,885,000.00; this total includes encumbered amounts. The 2021 Reserve Budget reflects \$3,864,009.41 remaining in unencumbered funds. The remaining Capital Account for renovation matching funds is \$1,578,252.16 unencumbered as of April 30, 2022.

A Motion to approve the April 2022 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Headquarters Renovation Report

Director Tolchin stated it is important that the renovation process move forward. Director Tolchin has been in contact with Monmouth County Engineering and Settembrino Architects. The anticipated project start date is November 14, 2022. This will allow the Monmouth County Library Headquarters to remain a polling location in November 2022. Provided all bids have been received and finalized, the building will be turned over to the awarded contractor at that time. The project plans are being reviewed for cost saving opportunities. If any changes are recommended, Director Tolchin will bring those forward to the Library Commission for review.

An extension request will need to be submitted to the New Jersey State Library regarding the grant. The project is anticipated to begin on November 14, 2022 and take approximately eight months to complete. The anticipated completion timeframe is August 2023. Director Tolchin provided the Library Commission with a draft of the extension request for review.

A Motion to approve the extension request letter for submission to the New Jersey State Library was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.

Library Operations Update

Director Tolchin stated the Library is working to return to pre-pandemic operations. Employees may wear masks and desk shields will remain in place. The wearing of masks for patrons is recommended, but not required. The Library is working to plan in-person programs and some virtual programs will continue. Owl devices have been purchased so that hybrid (simultaneous in-person and virtual) programs may be offered. Branches have been encouraged to schedule special programs and to offer indoor and outdoor programs in the summer.

Branch and Member Report

Director Tolchin stated branches face challenges every day. Internet and phone outages were experienced at the Headquarters Library and Eastern Branch in April. Library services are limited without power access. A backup generator is located at the Headquarters Library; however, it only maintains emergency lights and services. Additionally, the Eastern Branch experienced a fire alarm issue and had to evacuate the building.

The Howell Library branch was recently painted and the building looks lovely. Additionally, the West Long Branch Library had new carpet installed and it looks great.

Based on recommendation from Monmouth County Counsel, the Atlantic Highlands Township letter of support should be provided by The Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners, not The Monmouth County Library Commission.

It has been recommended that the Holmdel Library branch have additional signage directing patrons to the Library's location. This suggestion will be kindly passed along to the Township.

The Brielle Library has welcomed a new Library Director, Maribeth Pelly.

The Keansburg Library experienced a theft of property and damage to property. Assistant Director Amici is working with the Keansburg Library to replace equipment. Director Tolchin inquired with County Counsel if restitution would be possible, but it is uncertain at this time. The information has also been submitted to the County insurance department.

It was inquired when the Atlantic Highlands Branch will expand children's programming. A meeting was recently held with children's librarians to encourage increased summer programs and increase budgets. Additionally, there is a local author in Atlantic Highlands that would like to volunteer to hold a reading.

Chairperson Boms encouraged the Commissioners to share the Library's events with the Townships and social media pages. Library Branches have been asked to find contacts within their Townships to send program promotion to.

Director's Report

Director Tolchin stated the Library received a book challenge. The updated Collection Development and Management Policy was used to support the Library's response to the challenge. The challenged book was not removed from the collection, nor was it relocated within the collection. The Collection Development and Management Policy can be found on the Library's website.

The Library currently has 39 staffing vacancies. Staff recruitment remains a top priority for the Library. If the Library does not have enough staff to maintain branch business hours, an adjustment to hours may need to be submitted to the Library Commission. It has been challenging working with such a staffing deficit. Library jobs can be found on Monmouth County's website and a link can also be found at the bottom of the Library's website.

It was inquired if the Library has an internship program. While some Monmouth County departments offer summer positions, the Library does not have summer employment or internship positions.

Assistant Director's Report

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated negotiations with the Sirsi contract are moving forward. At this time, the negotiations include a 0% increase for the first year and 1.9% for the remaining term. Additional features being negotiated are text notifications, apps for member libraries, and consulting credits. Sirsi is the software platform used for the Library's shared catalog.

Monmouth County ITS has provided all permanent Library staff tokens to access the Monmouth County Intranet. Thank you to ITS Director John Zawadzki and his team for making all this happen.

The Library's Zoom access via the New Jersey State Library is expiring in September 2022 and the Library will have to establish and maintain its own subscription. Assistant Director Amici is working on pricing options and how many subscriptions will be needed going forward.

The Owl devices have been received for use during hybrid programs. As the device turns towards the active speaker, there can only be one speaker at a time for the device to function properly. We look forward to testing and implementing these devices.

100th Anniversary and Programming Report

Director Tolchin stated the Headquarters Library hosted its first in person event, which was a movie showing. The Programming Department has selected movie titles for the next few months and branches may also choose to show these movies as well. Patrons are excited to see the return of in person movies.

The Library will host its first hybrid (in person and via Zoom) program beginning May 25, 2022. It will be a five-part series about aviation travel, geography, science, and more.

Plans for the Library's 100th Anniversary are underway, with emphasis on weekend programs at the Headquarters Library. Some scheduled programs include: design a birthday card, lecture on the classic film *Nosferatu*, several live music performances, movie showings, New Jersey Senior American Cameo Club variety show, and Chef Rob cooking series.

The Library is looking into having bags made to commemorate the 100th Anniversary. To circulate bags at every branch, we are looking to purchase 10,000 bags at an approximate cost of \$1.00 to \$1.20 per bag.

A Motion to approve the purchase of reusable bags in an amount not to exceed \$12,500.00 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Comments

Vice-Chairperson McMorrow shared an article discussing a pen pal program that a public library has implemented. It was suggested to consider starting a program such as this to write to service members and senior citizens. Director Tolchin will review and further discussion will be held at the next scheduled meeting.

Commissioners Mary Ann Musich and Marcy McMullen visited the Marlboro branch. They stated it was informative and opened great discussion. Concern was expressed regarding the Library's staff succession plan and the County's decision to no longer offer tuition reimbursement to County staff.

Public Comments

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

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 21, 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, June 21, 2022 was made by Barbara McMorrow 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 Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

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

The meeting concluded at 12:09pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover