

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
June 15, 2021
Headquarters Library & Virtual

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

Absent: Chairperson Nancy Grbelja

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

The meeting convened at 11:06 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chairperson Barbara McMorrow opened the meeting of Tuesday, June 15, 2021 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’s web page the date, time, and place of the meeting.”

Minutes

Vice-Chairperson Barbara McMorrow gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from May 11, 2021. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of May 11, 2021 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Commission Remarks

Vice-Chairperson Barbara McMorrow did not state additional remarks.

Headquarters Renovation Update

Director Tolchin stated new information has been received regarding the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act Grant and Headquarters renovation project. The Headquarters Library has been given three options regarding how to remain operational during the nine to eleven-month renovation schedule. The cost estimates vary from \$53,000.00 for Option 3, \$81,000.00 for Option 2, and \$108,000.00 for Option 1. All options are an additional cost. The project has a contingency budget of \$75,000.00; additional funding may be necessary. Please note, in all options the Headquarters’ adult collection will not be accessible for nine to eleven months and two emergency exits will be maintained. Option 1 would create a tunnel that will offer thru access for staff to the circulation and reference work areas, eliminating the need to relocate staff. This option will also allow access to the restrooms in the lower level and easier access to the Extension collection. Option 2 would allow limited access near the children’s area of the library, including the Administration office which would allow for the continuation of Administrative functions such as recruiting, access to personnel files, payroll, purchasing, and finance. Option 3 would allow library operations from the children’s area only. This option

would require relocating staff and the restrooms would be less accessible; requiring portable restrooms. There is also anticipated increased construction costs due to the pandemic and time elapsed since submission. Some aspects of the project can function as add-on items, but it is not recommended to do so as design fees have been expended for all aspects of the project. A suggestion was made to submit a proposal for approval to the Board of Chosen County Commissioners for the request of the use of Fund Balance to supplement additional costs. The American Rescue Plan can also be considered for some funding for touchless fixtures in the upper and lower gallery restrooms due to Covid-19. The Library is also looking to make permanent electrical improvements in the children's area of the Headquarters Library. These improvements will hopefully be completed by the County of Monmouth prior to the start of the renovation project. The estimated cost of the electrical improvements is \$35,000.00. As the design progresses and it is clearer where the electrical power is running, the cost estimate can be better refined. Additionally, the vendor the glass walls were purchased from is no longer in operation. New glass walls may need to be purchased, as well as incurring the cost of installation. [Installation was not previously paid.] The movement of unassembled furnishings and existing adult room furniture, outdoor handicap restrooms, and book drops are also not included in the cost estimates. The cost for outdoor handicap restrooms will be taken from design fee contingency funds in the project estimates. Some items may be beyond the design fee contingency funds and would be project add scope items that would increase the project estimate.

Assist Director Amici stated that additional questions need to be posed to Settembrino Architects. Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion stated they will be providing revised estimates. Updated cost estimates and timeframes can be provided soon. Mr. Marion stated the rise in market conditions will create an increase to construction costs. The project sequencing is very important to this project.

A Motion for Option 1 was made by Brian Boms.

Option 1 provides the greatest amount of access by allowing access to the children's area and staff only access the adult area of the library. Option 2 allows for access to the children's area and for staff only access to the Administration office. Option 3 provides the least amount of access by allowing access to the children's area only and restricts staff access to the lower-gallery restrooms. Selecting option 2 or 3 would also require temporarily reassigning staff to other branch locations and adding Headquarters to the delivery van schedule.

Mr. Marion suggested a meeting be held with Settembrino Architects to review the estimates and pose questions regarding the project timeline before selecting an option plan.

The Motion for Option 1 was withdrawn.

The Commission is in agreement that a meeting should be scheduled in July to make a determination. In the interim, other construction documents will continue to be advanced to bring the renovation project forward.

Financial Report

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

Director Tolchin submitted the May 2021 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets wherein the 2021 Detail Budget Account charged year to date is \$3,243,604.49 posted to the Temporary Budget of \$5,489,812.00; this total includes encumbered amounts. The 2020 Reserve Budget reflects \$2,922,987.18 remaining in unencumbered funds. The remaining Capital Account for the renovation is \$49,503.72 unencumbered from the first capital appropriation of \$977,000.00 and \$1,485,770.84 unencumbered from the second capital appropriation of \$1,497,000.00 for a total of \$1,535,274.33 remaining unencumbered as of May 31, 2021. 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. The Estate of Charles Raffetto Grant Detail Budget Account reflects \$2,975.80 remaining in unencumbered funds as of May 31, 2021.

The revenues for the month of April were \$7,357.49 paid by cash/check and \$1,220.08 paid by credit card for a total of \$8,577.57

The revenues for the month of May were \$6,598.73 paid by cash and \$1,511.71 paid by credit card for a total of \$8,110.44. The Library remains on target to receive approximately \$90,000.00 in fine and photocopy revenue.

A Motion to approve the May 2021 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.

Covid-19 Library Operations

Public Programming

Director Tolchin stated there are many factors to consider with the changes in Covid-19 restrictions. As the Library serves a large, various patron population we will continue to provide programming predominantly in virtual formats. Some branch and member locations will begin offering outdoor story time for children in the coming weeks. The Library has obtained amplification devices and will require registration to attend outdoor story times. Reconsideration for potential indoor programming will occur in the Fall season.

The New Jersey State Library has been funding the Zoom platform and funding will end on September 30, 2021. If funding is extended, the Library will not need to purchase Zoom account access.

Meeting Room Requests

Director Tolchin stated the Library has been receiving inquiries regarding meeting room use and she will be discussing options with the Programming Department. As each branch has a different level of support for setting up and breaking down meeting room space, the process needs to be reevaluated. The Library is considering the possibility of allowing those that book a meeting room to set up the room themselves with the tables and chairs provided by the Library. Special Counsel Meghan Bennett suggested additional discussion be held. As the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations are fully operated by the County of Monmouth, they have County Buildings and Grounds staff to provide support during certain business hours. Director Tolchin suggested speaking with Bob Compton, County Buildings and Grounds about the potential for

expanding the hours serviced at the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations by Buildings and Grounds staff. Branch locations do not have the support of Buildings and Grounds staff. The Library is unsure at this time when meeting room access can be restored.

Cleaning Protocols – Branches

Director Tolchin stated all branch locations are being provided with daily cleaning, except for Colts Neck and Oceanport. These two locations continue to operate in a reduced service hour schedule as daily cleaning is a necessary protocol for all branch locations. The Commission agrees that the cleaning protocols are necessary and required.

Library locations continue to provide door-side service for those that do not want to enter the building. Currently, the Library has approximately 1,600 door-side uses per month. This service will be reevaluated in the near future.

Sunday Operations – September through December at Headquarters and Eastern

Director Tolchin recommends, as the majority of library locations have returned to full service, that Sunday service hours should resume in September 2021. The Commission agrees that Sunday service hours should resume.

Library Liaison Report

County Commissioner Lillian Burry complimented all library staff for the exceptional work that made the Eastern Branch Sculpture Dedication event a success. The Raffetto family sent a beautiful thank you note.

The Monmouth County Fair will be held in July 2021. County Commissioner Burry would like the library to be represented. Director Tolchin stated, due to current staffing levels, the library may not be able to send representatives as the previous years.

Director's Report

County Commissioner Lillian Burry expressed concern regarding the Brielle Library. Director Tolchin stated the Brielle Library Board has suggested to their municipal government that they withdraw from the Monmouth County Library System. Director Tolchin has provided written information on the benefits of being a member of the Monmouth County Library System to County Administration. It was suggested the Monmouth County Library Commission and the County of Monmouth Administration meet with the Borough of Brielle and the Brielle Library Board prior to their scheduled June 28, 2021 meeting. The Monmouth County Library System supports the Brielle Library by providing technology infrastructure such as computer and catalog services, children's librarian services, library materials, electronic materials and resources, use of all thirteen branch locations, delivery services, art department service, inter-library loan services, and many others. Being a member of the Monmouth County Library System allows member libraries to operate with autonomy while having services and support provided by the Monmouth County Library System. It was suggested a summary of services and benefits chart be created to better visualize and explain the advantages of being a member library. Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici have also provided the Brielle Library Board with a services cost breakdown summary. The Monmouth County Library Commission will form a sub-committee that will conduct presentations for and provide regular contact with all member and branch municipalities. Commissioner Boms and Vice-Chairperson McMorro volunteered as committee members along with County Commissioner Lillian Burry. Assistant Director Amici

stated she has been working on creating a student database access card that could aid municipality schools in offsetting educational database expenses. She has been working with Freehold Regional schools to import students into the Library's system to provide access to all of the Library's databases. Currently, they are working through the process of what to do with Freehold Regional students that are Freehold Borough residents as Freehold Borough does not pay the County Library Tax and is not a member of the library system. As a member municipality, Brielle could use this service for their schools. Special Counsel Meghan Bennett will assist Director Tolchin in scheduling a presentation meeting.

The tax levy, with no increase for 2021, is \$15,850,000.00 and the budget is \$17,885,000.00, including \$400,000.00 from the Operating Budget to support the matching funds for the renovation and the toilet room renovation. The Fund Balance use for 2021 is projected at \$1,826,632.59 and other revenues are anticipated in the amount of \$208,367.41.

The Library would like to request the Monmouth County Library Commission convert 75 part-time 10 hour per week Monitor positions to 18 part-time 25 hour per week Library Assistant positions due to increases in the minimum wage and limitations of Monitor position responsibilities. This request would require endorsement from Monmouth County Administration. A request would also have to be made for reclassification of these positions within the Library's Table of Organization. Currently, the Library is operating in a reduced staffing capacity and it has created a hardship in Library operations.

A Motion to approve the request to Monmouth County Administration and Human Resources for reclassification of 75 Monitor positions to 18 part-time Library Assistant positions was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Director Tolchin requested a change to the Library's Table of Organization, pending Monmouth County approval, for a Part-time Library Assistant with benefits to be changed to a full-time Library Associate and a part-time 28 hour Librarian 2 to be changed to a full-time Librarian. These requests to the Table of Organization are requested to enable the Library to bring new talented candidates forward.

A Motion to approve a change in the Table of Organization to reclassify two positions, pending Monmouth County Administration approval, was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

We are asking for union negotiations to start at the tentatively scheduled meeting on June 25, 2021. County Counsel will send a meeting invitation once the date is confirmed.

The West Long Branch library has resumed full service hours as they have committed to providing daily cleaning protocols.

Marlboro Township has applied for the second round of the NJ Public Library Construction Bond Act grant.

The Trudy Cherico bequest paperwork was submitted to County Counsel. The \$1,000.00 bequest will be established as a grant.

Director Tolchin suggested the Inter-Library Loan policy and procedure be discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

It is recommended that the Security System Project description of services and estimated costs be developed further before submission to Monmouth County for Capital Funding. The security system would be for the Headquarters and Eastern branch locations. Outdoor Wi-Fi has been installed at both of these locations and outdoor activity is anticipated to increase.

Library Volunteers

Director Tolchin recommends, at this time, to resume volunteer opportunities for adults and resume teen and other young volunteers at a later date. Volunteer responsibilities should be limited to general tasks and should not include shelving other than DVDs or juvenile picture books. It is anticipated that volunteer opportunities for adults will resume in August 2021 and opportunities for teens and other young volunteers in September 2021. County Counsel Meghan Bennett stated a parental consent form will need to be drafted.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the third van was ordered during the first quarter of 2021. The build date is schedule for the first week of October 2021.

The tablet station installation project remains on-going, as well as the installation of the Windows 10 computers.

The outdoor Wi-Fi installation at the Headquarters and Eastern branches has been completed. This was a collaborative effort with County ITS, Buildings and Grounds, and County Electricians. Thank you to everyone for a great job.

The Programming Department has been doing an incredible job. Upcoming programming includes: suffragettes speak presentation, a family virtual cooking camp, a Discover Natural New Jersey presentation, three mini makeover programs to learn de-cluttering techniques, yoga, bereavement support group, book discussions, citizenship classes, ESL classes, and Master Gardeners programs. Two concerts will also be rebroadcast, as well as previously offered events for anyone who may have missed the initial program.

Publicity Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated there has been great opportunity for press releases with virtual programs. She has seen a good response from historical societies and assisted living facilities.

Commissioner Comments

A copy of the photo of the Monmouth County Library Commission from the sculpture dedication event was requested. Assistant Director Amici stated she will reach out to obtain a copy.

Public Comments

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

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held at 11:00 am on September 14, 2021 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters, with remote participation available. Additionally, it is recommended a meeting be held in July on either July 20, 2021 or July 27, 2021.

Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting

A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on a still to be determined date in July was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Adjournment

A Motion to adjourn the public meeting was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

The public meeting concluded at 12:53 pm.

Closed Executive Session

A Closed Executive Session was not held at the conclusion of the public meeting.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover