

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
September 14, 2021
Headquarters Library & Virtual

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

Absent: Commissioner Frank Wells

Guests: Meghan Bennett, Special Counsel

The meeting convened at 11:04 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Nancy Grbelja opened the meeting of Tuesday, September 14, 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

Chairperson Nancy Grbelja gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from July 27, 2021. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of July 27, 2021 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

A Motion to approve the Closed Executive Session minutes of July 27, 2021 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Headquarters Renovation Update

Project Status & Public Address System

Director Tolchin stated Settembrino Architects is continuing the process of design development and the preparation of construction documents. There have been no changes to the project schedule at this time. They will need additional input from the Library going forward.

Kristen Wishart, Monmouth County Engineering continues to work Monmouth County ITS and will forward items for Library Administration review; including the public address system and product selections. Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici will be setting up a time to meet with Kristen Wishart to discuss the public announcement zones. The Library would like to have a system that can be used for general announcements, as well as emergency notifications.

Commission Remarks

Chairperson Nancy Grbelja stated she has received a lot of positive feedback about the Library and virtual programming. The Monmouth County Library Commission would like to convey how proud they are of all library staff and commend them for their hard work.

The Monmouth County 2021 Archives Day was held at Brookdale Community College. This event is typically held at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters. If next year's Archives Day is hosted elsewhere, it was suggested that archives related programs be offered at the Library additionally.

Financial Report

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

Director Tolchin submitted the August 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 \$5,256,745.41 posted to the Approved Budget of \$17,885,000.00; this total includes encumbered amounts. The 2020 Reserve Budget reflects \$2,935,193.98 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 \$1,535,274.56 remaining unencumbered as of August 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 August 31, 2021.

A Motion to approve the August 2021 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Covid-19 Library Operations

Director Tolchin stated the Colts Neck Library will be receiving increased cleaning services and will return to full service hours on October 4, 2021. At this time, all other Library operations in relation to Covid-19 remain the same.

Branch and Member Services

Holmdel Hours

Director Tolchin stated the Holmdel Library is planning to be expanded service hours. Currently, the branch has 44 service hours per week and plans to expand to 57 service hours per week. The increased service hours will begin on October 4, 2021. The Library will need to transition additional branch staff.

A Motion to approve an increase in the hours of service at the Holmdel Library Branch, offering 57 hours of service effective October 4, 2021 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

Member Programming

Director Tolchin stated Member Libraries would like additional programming opportunities and funding. After discussion, reimbursements were set to a maximum of \$3,500.00 per member library for those with a tax levy over \$250,000.00 and an increase to a maximum of \$1,500.00 per library for those with a tax levy under \$250,000.00. These changes will affect the Library budget going forward.

A Motion to approve an increase in programming support to Member Libraries was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

County Commissioner Lillian Burry entered the meeting at 11:22am.

Technology Equipment Purchase

Director Tolchin stated, at the previous meeting, the Monmouth County Library Commission authorized the purchase of monitors and other equipment. This authorization has been submitted to Monmouth County Purchasing.

A request was proposed to allocate up to \$50,000.00 for the purchase of ten to twelve AWE Learning Machines (Early Literacy Devices).

A Motion to approve the purchase of ten to twelve AWE Learning Machines (Early Literacy Devices) in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

MCCI Services 2021

Director Tolchin stated the Library provides services to the MCCI (Monmouth County Correctional Institution) in an advisory capacity. Additionally, the Library purchases database access. Reimbursement is given for direct expenses, but is not received for staff time. A letter has been sent to MCCI confirming the Library provided services in 2021 and will continue services in 2022.

Meeting Room Use for Individuals – Headquarters, Eastern Branch, and Holmdel

The Library has identified a patron need for individual, private room use for virtual-based calls, meetings, interviews, and classes. Currently, there are three locations that can provide this type of private meeting space: Headquarters, Eastern Branch, and Holmdel. Small/Individual room use guidelines have been developed and patrons will need to sign up through a reference staff member. Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis and can be used for one hour per person per day. The Library is not responsible for any personal belongings left unattended.

Staffing – Change in Table of Organization

Director Tolchin stated staffing has been difficult, but the Library continues its recruitment efforts. The fourth quarter of the year is the Library's most critical time and many staff will be using any remaining paid time off. Meeting all hours of operation will present a challenge. The Library will have to pool staffing resources to maintain services. Due to the ongoing labor shortage, the Director will keep the Monmouth County Library Commission apprised if a request is needed to temporally reduce service hours.

Internally, some position postings have been offered as promotional in a provisional capacity. The State of New Jersey does not have any civil service exams scheduled at this time. The process cannot be fully complete until a civil service exam is brought forth.

Currently, the Library has 120 permanent employees serving 13 branch libraries and 13 member libraries. The Library has 50 vacancies. Additionally, the Library has 15 Monitors and 17 temporary staff. There was a change in the Table of Organization requested by the Monmouth County Library Commission and was recognized by the County of Monmouth. This change

converted 78 ten hour per week Monitor positions into 18 part-time twenty-five hours per week Library Assistant positions. Director Tolchin extended a thank you to the Monmouth County Library Commission for supporting this change.

The Library has reinstated Sunday service hours at the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations. Hours are 1pm-5pm. Staffing levels were reduced to be able to reinstate service.

Per Capita State Library Aid 2021 Regulations & 2022 Report

Director Tolchin stated she attended the County Library Director meeting. As libraries are facing staffing issues and many libraries are acquiring self-checkout machines, the nature of business will change. The New Jersey State Library should reconsider the minimum required staffing levels needed to receive State Aid. Due to a Census change, the minimum requirement will most likely be waived in 2022. Director Tolchin anticipates that the Monmouth County Library will meet the requirement, but she will continue to advocate for a change in the requirement. Currently, the Library receives approximately \$72,000.00 in State Aid.

2022 Draft Budget Report

Director Tolchin stated the County of Monmouth requested budget drafts from all departments in September. As this is earlier than in previous years, Director Tolchin created a draft budget based on the previous year's budget. The County of Monmouth requested that all department budgets remain level. No approval is needed at this time as the budget is just a draft.

New Jersey's Daniel's Law Requirements

Director Tolchin submitted a copy of Daniel's Law requirements to Special Counsel Meghan Bennett for review. Meghan Bennett stated this law is associated with law enforcement and the dissemination of information in connection with judges, prosecutors, et. al. The New Jersey State Library recommended all libraries consult with County or Township counsel. Patron records are private. OPRA (Open Public Records Act) requests should be submitted to Monmouth County Counsel for processing.

Library Liaison Report

County Commissioner Lillian Burry stated she is working to complete the process of the \$1,000.00 bequest that was received by the Library. Signature from Monmouth County Counsel and notarization are required to finalize documentation. The Library typically establishes a grant fund when monies such as these are received. Once finalized, Director Tolchin will send a letter of recognition.

County of Monmouth Revised Covid-19 Policies

The County of Monmouth has revised their Covid-19 Policies. All staff are required to complete a daily self-assessment. If any staff are sick, they are expected to remain at home and notify a supervisor immediately. If a staff member reports to work sick, disciplinary action may be taken. If a staff member travels out of state for more than 24 hours, they must notify their supervisor and follow policy testing protocol while quarantining at work. This policy could impact staffing availability.

Director's Report

Director Tolchin stated the Library's Annual Report will be ready for publication soon. It is currently in the final proof-reading process. The report shows the Library rising to the challenge of a truly unusual year. Once finalized, copies will be provided to all Monmouth County Library Commissioners, Townships, Governing Bodies, Superintendents, and schools to highlight the Monmouth County Library's role in the education, information, and entertainment of residents.

An outdoor pop-up concert was held at the Monmouth County Library Eastern Branch. This was a grant funded program. It was an exciting and successful event.

The Library continues to offer virtual programming. Children's story times are being offered outdoors, with an additional socially distanced indoor story time. Masks are recommended in all indoor spaces.

Beginning in September, meeting rooms can be used by individuals and non-profit/not for profit groups.

The Library continues to work on establishing a volunteer agreement and meeting room set-up liability waiver.

Sunday service hours have resumed at the Headquarters and Eastern branch locations.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated she continues to move forward with Freehold Regional Schools on the student database access card. Sample records have been received and records for import should be ready soon.

The van purchase was delayed due to supply chain issues. Delivery is still scheduled for October 2021.

Assistant Director Amici met with Jessica Laddaga, Holmdel Branch Manager, Holmdel Township Administration, and Holmdel Township IT to discuss Township funded technology projects. They discussed allocation for technology programming, staffing, maintenance contracts, and long-term support. The Library is excited to offer these services.

A Member Library meeting will be held on Friday, September 17th. A virtual meeting was held earlier in the year. We will discuss programming, budgets, books, children's services, electronic services, and library cards. There will be technology discussions going forward, such as wireless printing options. Assistant Director Amici is also researching an app for Member Libraries. All Member Libraries are welcome to have Library Board Members/Trustees in attendance at the meeting.

Commissioner Mary Ann Musich exited the meeting at 12:00pm.

Publicity Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith was unable to attend the meeting and a report was not provided.

Closed Executive Session

At 12:02 pm the Commission stated a resolution to enter a closed 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 Brian Boms and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

The Commission resumed the public meeting session at 12:19 pm.

Commissioner Comments

Members of the Monmouth County Library Commission did not have additional comments.

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 Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held at 11:00 am on October 12, 2021 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters, with remote participation available.

Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting

A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Adjournment

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

The public meeting concluded at 12:22 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover