

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes  
October 13, 2020  
Headquarters Library

**Present:** Chairperson Frank Wells and Commissioners Brian Boms, Nancy Grbelja, Barbara McMorrow, and Mary Ann Musich; also present Director Judi Tolchin and Assistant Director Heidi Amici

**Absent:** Freeholder Lillian Burry

**Guests:** Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant and Fay Szakal, Special Counsel

**The meeting convened at 11:09 am.**

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Frank Wells opened the meeting of Tuesday, October 13, 2020 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 Frank Wells gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from September 8, 2020. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

**A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of September 8, 2020 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.**

**CARES Act Projects**

Director Tolchin spoke with County Administrator Teri O’Connor and Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion regarding the use of CARES Act funding for library projects to expand contact-less service to benefit patrons. Projects that were mentioned include: self-checkout machines, outdoor wireless, lockers at the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations that offer self-checkout, and a drive-up window at the Headquarters location. CARES Act funds have to be spent by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Monmouth County Engineering and Monmouth County Traffic and Safety Departments are evaluating and developing corresponding feasible plans. Director Tolchin extended a thank you to everyone who has been involved in this process and the Commission for their support.

**A Motion to endorse and support projects including: self-checkout, outdoor wireless, self-serve lockers, and drive-up window for CARES Act funding, if determined feasible and in coordination with approvals by County Administration was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.**

## **Capital Projects**

Director Tolchin stated Deputy County Administrator Christopher Marion requested her input on potential capital projects relating to the library. Director Tolchin developed a list of items, including: Eastern Branch canopy, HVAC systems at the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations, back-up generator at the Headquarters location, ID card access in certain library areas, a security system for monitoring the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations, and rear parking lot improvements at the Headquarters location. Monmouth County Buildings and Grounds may have additional suggestions. Director Tolchin additionally stated the elevator at the Headquarters location could also be considered. If the Commission has any additional capital project ideas or suggestions, please contact Director Tolchin.

**A Motion to recommend projects including Eastern Branch canopy, HVAC at Headquarters and Eastern Branch, generator, card access at Headquarters, security system at Headquarters and Eastern Branch, and parking lot for capital improvements to the Monmouth County Library in coordination with the Monmouth County Administrator, Monmouth County Engineering, and Monmouth County Buildings and Grounds was made by Nancy Grbelja and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.**

## **Eastern Branch Sculpture Installation and Dedication**

Director Judi Tolchin stated the sculpture dedication event will be delayed. The project is nearing completion. The Commission agrees that they will wait to schedule the event until such a time that Freeholder Lillian Burry can be in attendance and the site is completed.

## **Draft Preliminary Budget 2021**

Director Tolchin stated highlights of the preliminary draft budget for 2021. The draft includes a slight reduction in the wage and salary line due to Monitors not being recalled at this time. A request may be made to reclassify Monitor positions into Library Assistant positions. The book budget line has been increased to assist in maintaining and developing the e-book collection. Director Tolchin is hopeful that the budget can remain flat, as requested by the County of Monmouth, so long as indirect charges and fringe benefit rates do not change. Director Tolchin reiterated this is a draft and will continue to work in conjunction with the County.

Heidi Amici stated the 2019 van is in possession of Fleet Services and will be delivered shortly. At this time, the 2020 van is in production and moving forward.

## **New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act & Headquarters Renovation Update**

Director Tolchin stated the New Jersey State Library is in the final phase of the decision process. As soon as a decision is received, she will notify the Commission. The library attended a virtual meeting held with Settembrino Architects and Monmouth County Engineering. Once a decision is received regarding grant funding, the renovation project plans are ready to begin.

## **Financial Report**

**September Financials - Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets**

Director Tolchin submitted the September 2020 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets wherein the 2020 detail budget account charged year to date is \$6,786,220.41 posted to the actual budget of \$17,485,000.00. The current remaining balance is \$10,698,779.59 and this total includes encumbered amounts. The 2019 reserve budget reflects \$612,007.91 remaining unencumbered. Any remaining unused amounts will transfer to the fund balance on January 1, 2021. The remaining capital account for the renovation is \$60,486.02 unencumbered from the first capital appropriation of \$977,000 and \$1,485,770.84 unencumbered from the second capital appropriation of \$1,497,000.00 for a total of \$1,546,256.86 remaining unencumbered as of September 30, 2020. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby including lobby furniture. These funds will be used as matching funds should the library be a recipient of the Construction Bond Act grant.

The Estate of Charles Raffetto Grant detailed account status reflects \$4,864.75 remaining in unencumbered funds. These funds were used for the sculpture and site amenities. The plaque has been completed and will be charged to the operating budget.

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 financial reports are submitted into the meeting record for Commission approval.

**A Motion to approve the September 2020 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets was made by Barbara McMorro and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.**

#### **Staffing – Permanent Positions & Temporary Positions**

Director Tolchin stated the library has resumed the recruitment of staff. Currently, the library has eleven full-time vacancies, two part-time with benefits vacancies that should be converted to full-time, and fourteen part-time vacancies. In the near future, a decision regarding the remaining monitor positions will need to be made.

#### **New Jersey Minimum Wage – 1/1/2021**

New Jersey State minimum wage will increase to \$12.00 per hour beginning on January 1, 2021. As the library is exempt from requiring to meet this increase, the request for increase is submitted to the Commission for review and approval.

**A Motion to increase the Library's minimum wage to \$12.00 per hour beginning on January 1, 2021 was made by Barbara McMorro and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.**

#### **Revenue – Amnesty/Fine Free vs. Collection of Fines**

Director Tolchin stated annual revenue for fines and photocopies is approximately \$220,000.00. Due to Covid-19 and the library's closure, a fine amnesty period was offered and ended on September 15, 2020. Current fine rates are \$0.10 per day for adult materials, \$0.05 per day for

juvenile materials, and \$1.00 per day for DVD materials with a maximum fine of \$4.00 per adult item, \$2.00 per juvenile item, and \$10.00 per DVD item. At this time, the Commission recommends maintaining the current fine structure.

### **Eastern Branch Caivano Sculpture & Art Donation**

The Caivano sculpture location at the Eastern Branch is in need of improvements. Kim Avagliano, Eastern Branch Manager will work to find cost information and if there is a donor available to aid in fundraising. Director Tolchin stated she will have more information on this topic at the next scheduled meeting.

Former Commissioner Don Burden and the Shrewsbury Historical Commission would like to donate tapestries to the Eastern Branch. The Commission will convene the Art Committee to review this donation.

### **Holiday Schedule 2021**

The library follows the Monmouth County holiday schedule for library closures. In addition to the County's schedule, the library has Commission approved early 5 PM weekday and weekend closures.

**A Motion to approve the Holiday Schedule for 2021 was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.**

### **Assistant Director's Update**

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the proposal for outdoor wireless was presented to the Commission at the previous meeting. The library has suggested to the County this project be considered under the CARES Act projects. If the project is not approved through the CARES Act, the project proposal includes a cost of \$24,706.84 for equipment and five years of service. Installation and maintenance of this service would be through the County.

**A Motion to authorize the outdoor wireless project in an amount not to exceed \$26,000.00, should the project not be covered by the CARES Act, was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously Approved.**

A DVD shelving unit fell at the Headquarters library. There was no damage to the general area or the DVDs. The area was blocked from access and the shelving unit has been remounted and reinforced.

Branch libraries have had challenges with patrons not wearing masks while in the library. The library will continue to support staff and does provide additional disposable masks at locations for use in this instance.

Assistant Director Amici commended the Programming Department on the wonderful work they are doing to bring different types of virtual programs system-wide. Virtual book discussions and the virtual knitting program are popular.

The library is reviewing the hours at library locations and any potential modifications.

Assistant Director Amici and the Member Services Department have been working with Sea Girt to export data during the transition.

### **Director's Report**

Director Tolchin stated statistics show library locations having a combined total of 3,000 door-side visits per month and 3,000-5,000 reference questions per month. The web-based chat service continues to be provided. Director Tolchin is proud the library and staff have continued to provide services during these difficult times.

The library continues to offer a hybrid service model with door-side pick up service during morning hours and locations open for afternoon and evening hours. The library will continue this service model and will revisit this topic at the next scheduled meeting.

Library materials are quarantined for at least 72 hours prior to processing. When handling materials, employees are instructed to wear masks, gloves, and remain behind plexiglass shields when serving patrons. Meeting room use and in-person programs remain on hold, however government use of the meeting rooms can be permitted. For the time being, children's programs and all other programming will be held virtually.

Director Tolchin provided the Commission with an updated annual report. After a final proof, the report will be distributed fully.

The library received a second place stipend for a Resilient Communities application in the amount of \$500.00 from the American Libraries Association. A virtual program relating to this stipend will be scheduled and Director Tolchin will inform the Commission when it will take place.

A quarterly meeting was held with Labor Management where staff concerns were reviewed and addressed.

Director Tolchin reminded the Commission that the Virtual Trustee Institute is being held on October 17, 2020. Commissioners Brain Boms, Barbara McMorrow, and Mary Ann Musich will be attending.

At this time, two vacancies remain on the Commission. The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders can choose to appointment two Commissioners or reorganize the Commission as a five member board. Special Counsel Fay Szakal will reach out again to the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Reports pertaining to the automobile accident that occurred outside of the Monmouth County Library Headquarters have been submitted to the County for reimbursement for the re-establishment of service operations.

### **Publicity Consultant Report**

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated the virtual programs have been wonderful. And she will continue to promote programming. Mrs. Smith commended staff on their hard work and stated the community is enjoying the programs.

Commissioner Boms stated the response on social media has been great to see.

Director Tolchin stated there are approximately 7,000 subscribers to the library's e-newsletter.

### **Chairperson Remarks**

Chairperson Wells stated he would like to have the HVAC project made a priority. He stated air circulation and fresh air will help maintain a better environment.

Chairperson Wells inquired if the County still has an award program to recognize staff for superior performance. If so, he would like to nominate Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici for recognition for their outstanding work during these difficult times.

### **Commissioner Comments**

A suggestion was made to offer a virtual attendance option at the next scheduled Commission meeting.

Commissioner Boms inquired about the conclusion from a meeting that was previously held with the Sea Bright Library. Director Tolchin stated answers were provided to all of the questions posed by Sea Bright.

The Commission extended their appreciation to Library Administration and staff on their continued hard work.

### **Closed Executive Session**

A Closed Executive Session was not held during the course of the meeting.

### **Public Comments**

**A Motion to open the meeting to public comment was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. 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 Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.**

### **Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting**

**A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.**

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at the Monmouth County Library

Headquarters at 11:00 am. The meeting will be held in a hybrid manner, with both in-person and remote attendance options. Special Counsel Faye Szakal will confirm that the library is in compliance when the updated meeting information is posted.

**Adjournment**

**A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.**

The meeting concluded at 12:30 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover