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

Absent: County Commissioner Lillian Burry

Guests: Fay Szakal, Special Counsel and Beth Stamp, Friends of the Library President

The meeting convened at 11:02 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Nancy Grbelja opened the meeting of Tuesday, October 12, 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 September 14, 2021. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of September 14, 2021 was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Frank Wells abstained. Approved.

A Motion to approve the Closed Executive Session minutes of September 14, 2021 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Frank Wells and Mary Ann Musich abstained. Approved.

Commission Remarks
Chairperson Nancy Grbelja stated she did not have any additional remarks at the time of the meeting.

Library Liaison Report
County Commissioner Lillian Burry was not present at the time of the meeting.

Financial Report
September Financials - Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets

Director Tolchin submitted the September 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 $5,974,188.38 posted to the Approved Budget of $17,885,000.00; this total includes encumbered amounts. Note that fringe benefits and indirect expenses for 2021 from Monmouth County have not yet been charged. The 2020
Reserve Budget reflects $2,935,193.98 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 September 30, 2021. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby, including lobby furniture. Some older purchase orders have been closed, leaving more funds available than last month. Director Tolchin will further explore with County Finance these changes in charges. 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 September 30, 2021.

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

Voucher Approval – Library App
A voucher was submitted for approval in the amount of $14,008.00 to OCLC for the Capira application that supports the Library’s mobile app.

A Motion to approve the voucher in the amount of $14,008.00 to OCLC for the Library’s mobile application and authorize the Library Director to sign the voucher was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Headquarters Renovation Report
Director Tolchin stated the architect has submitted a revised cost estimate in the amount of $4,611,000.00 for the renovation project. This amount exceeds the previous estimate of $3,900,000.00 for the project in the amount of $711,000.00. A meeting is planned with Settembrino Architects and Monmouth County Engineering on October 25, 2021. Monmouth County Engineering has requested an explanation, in addition to options for add-on items. There are concerns about cost escalation due to Covid-19 shortages and increased labor costs since the submission of the grant. Cost saving measures will be considered, as well as other funding options.

A meeting was held with Monmouth County Engineering regarding the public announcement system. Options continue to be explored for an announcement system with multiple zones that will allow for notifications to be made throughout the whole library or just in a given area.

Possible project areas for cost savings include: elimination of outside book drops, use of laptops instead of temporary electric for circulation functions, designate meeting room eight technology upgrades as an add on option, keep existing meeting room chairs, and request Library Interiors assemble and place their equipment in lieu of moving the equipment. The Library would like to consult with the County of Monmouth regarding all possible options.

The construction of the tunnel from the children’s area to provide access to the extension area was previously approved by the Monmouth County Library Commission. Additionally, Director Tolchin recommends that the lower gallery restroom remain part of the project.
The Monmouth County Library Commission agrees that they want to bring forth the fullest renovation and complete as much of the project plans as possible. Director Tolchin stated the Library did have an increased use of the 2020 Reserve Budget funds due to changes resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. However, she does recommend that all cost saving measures should still be reviewed. Regarding the increase in cost, a question was posed if there will be any additional increases prior to the project start date. Director Tolchin stated the costs received are estimates and may not reflect what a contractor will bid. However, there are contingency funds factored into the current cost estimate. Director Tolchin suggested a member of the Monmouth County Library Commission could attend the scheduled meeting on October 25, 2021.

Covid-19 Library Operations Update
Director Tolchin stated the Covid-19 pandemic continues to present daily challenges. The Library will continue to work and move forward in the best way possible. Public computer access has been restored to the policy and procedures used pre-pandemic.

The County of Monmouth has updated the Covid-19 Call Out and Travel Policies, which all library employees must adhere to.

The Library continues to work on developing a Volunteer Policy. The Library has also begun permitting meeting room use for small groups, government entities, and one-hour individual use. Children’s programming is being offered both outdoors and indoors, with all indoor programming at a reduced capacity and socially distanced. The consumption of food is restricted when using meeting space and the use of masks is recommended. Additionally, large gatherings continue to be restricted and the Library will continue to maintain virtual programming.

Branch and Member Report
Director Tolchin reported that the Holmdel branch has opened for extended hours and the Colts Neck branch has resumed full business hours. The Library continues to face staffing challenges.

A meeting was held with all Member Library locations. Member libraries do look to the Monmouth County Library for guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are excited to have more programming opportunities in the near future.

Director Tolchin stated member libraries have inquired about the growing trend of libraries becoming fine free. There are both advantages and disadvantages to going fine free. At this time, the Monmouth County Library will continue with the established fine policy.

Director’s Report
Director Tolchin stated, at the previous meeting, the Monmouth County Library Commission approved the purchase of AWE (Early Literacy) machines. The Library is waiting for special pricing to come forward to evaluate repairing any existing machines and extending warranties.

Assistant Director Amici is reviewing the cost of laptop equipment for use instead of installing temporary power poles during the renovation project. The Library would be able to continue to use the laptops after the renovation is complete. The price of laptops has increased and she will continue to research the best options for the Library.
Personnel Action Forms have been submitted to the County of Monmouth for all 18 Library Assistant positions created from the Table of Organization change. The Library continues its recruiting efforts to bring forward candidates for employment. There are currently 48 staffing vacancies. Staffing deficits do present a challenge in maintaining library services. It was inquired if the Library recruits staff from New Jersey universities and colleges. Director Tolchin stated jobs are posted on the Monmouth County website, the Library’s website, and library job forums.

Director Tolchin inquired if the Monmouth County Library Commission would like to have holiday baskets sent to branch and member libraries. The Commission agrees that they would like for holiday baskets to be sent.

The Library is looking to move the daily receivable account from Wells Fargo to PNC Bank. This change is expected to provide an annual savings of $600.00. The County of Monmouth has indicated they will likely approve this change.

The New Jersey Library Trustee Association provides continuing education for members of library boards and commissions. A board or commission must receive seven or more hours of library-related education annually to fulfil the state aid requirement. After registering for training, the Trustee Institute will provide a link to all who register so that they may view the training at their earliest convenience.

Assistant Director’s Update
Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated she will provide a cost estimate for the purchase of laptops at the next scheduled meeting.

Publicity Report
Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith was unable to attend the meeting and submitted her report in advance. The Library’s Programming Department schedules 30 events per month and a concert per month. Upcoming programming includes: celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, teen book author talks, virtual yoga, Master Gardener virtual helpline, a Veteran’s Day series, voting programs, and book clubs. The Patch is using the Library’s EventKeeper calendar for program promotion.

Commissioner Comments
There were no additional comments at the time of the meeting.

Public Comments
A Motion to open the meeting to public comment was made by Mary Ann Musich 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 Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting
The next scheduled meeting will be held at 11:00 am on November 9, 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, November 9, 2021 was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Marcy McMullen. 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 issues as permitted by the Open Public Meetings Act was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

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

The public meeting concluded at 11:51am.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover