

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
December 8, 2020
Headquarters Library

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

Absent: Chairperson Frank Wells and Freeholder Lillian Burry

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

The meeting convened at 11:02 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chairperson Nancy Grbelja opened the meeting of Tuesday, December 8, 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

Vice Chairperson Nancy Grbelja gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from November 10, 2020. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of November 10, 2020 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act Update

Director Tolchin said that the letter from the New Jersey State Library has been received via email stating that the Monmouth County Library has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,950,000.00. County Finance Director Craig Marshall recommends the required matching funds portion from the Operating Budget come from the 2021 Budget, not the 2020 Budget. All funds allocated in the 2020 Budget will be moved to the Reserve Budget for 2020 expenses in 2021. The 2019 remaining Reserve Budget funds will be transferred to the Fund Balance. Matching funds will have to be allocated for the remaining balance of the grant match in the amount of \$200,000.00 and an increase to the budget in that amount.

Financial Report

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

Director Tolchin submitted the November 2020 Financial Report to the Commission, including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, Capital Budgets, and Grant Budgets wherein the 2020 Detail Budget Account charged year to date is \$9,442,136.13 posted to the Actual Budget of \$17,485,000.00. The current remaining balance is \$8,042,863.87 and this total

includes encumbered amounts. The 2019 Reserve Budget reflects \$611,246.20 remaining unencumbered. Any remaining unused amounts will transfer to the Fund Balance on January 1, 2021. The approved invoice for the purchase of computers will be coming forward soon. 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 November 30, 2020. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby, including lobby furniture with \$216,385.20 available from the toilet room renovation and the matching funds as specified previously. These funds will be used for matching funds as a recipient of the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act grant.

The Estate of Charles Raffetto Grant Detailed Account status reflects \$3,428.80 remaining in unencumbered funds. These funds were used for the sculpture and site amenities.

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 reports are submitted into the meeting record for Commission approval.

A Motion to approve the November 2020 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 McMorro. Unanimously approved.

A voucher to the County of Monmouth for Indirect Charges in a not to exceed amount of \$3,618,584.00 was submitted for Commission approval. Director Tolchin spoke with County Finance Director Craig Marshall regarding questions relating to the charges. Permission was also requested for the Library Director to be able to sign the voucher.

A Motion to approve the voucher for Indirect Charges to the County of Monmouth in a not to exceed amount of \$3,618,584.00 and permit the Library Director to sign the voucher was made by Barbara McMorro and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

There are no additional recommended changes by County Finance Director Craig Marshall to the indirect charges budgeted for 2021.

A Motion to include the sum of \$4,000,000.00 in the 2021 Budget for Monmouth County Indirect Charges was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

A Motion to include an additional \$200,000.00 in the 2021 Operating Budget for the required matching funds necessary for the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorro. Unanimously approved.

Approval is being requested for an account to be established at Investor's Bank for the acceptance of PayPal and online payments. This will allow for patrons to make electronic payments for fines and bills. It was suggested that a minimum threshold of \$5.00 with an

additional small transaction fee be established to reduce service charges. The bank account will be established and at the next scheduled meeting Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici will submit recommendations to the Commission for approval. The Commission agrees to establish the account and will establish a minimum threshold based on the recommendation provided at the next scheduled meeting.

CARES Act Projects

Director Tolchin stated these exciting projects will be helpful to patrons. The outdoor Wi-Fi project is moving forward and will allow for internet access outside of the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations. The Library will also be receiving approximately eight self-checkout kiosks. The Library will have to pay for the second year of service on these devices, as well as on-going maintenance. The tablet station project is still waiting for approval. These tablets will allow patrons to use the Library's digital resources while at the library, accessing such things as newspapers, magazines, and databases. The tablets will be cloud managed and self-charging to aid in reduced staff contact while also offering an antibacterial screen component. If this project is approved, the total cost charged to the CARES Act will be approximately \$292,000.00 with the Library incurring an annual maintenance cost of \$30,000.00. For the project to move forward, it will need to be approved, completed, and the devices delivered by December 30, 2020.

A Motion to endorse and support Envisionware Tablet Stations for all thirteen Monmouth County Library branch locations and seven member library locations, including Brielle, Fair Haven, Eatontown, Manasquan, Rumson, Little Silver, and Monmouth Beach using CARES Act funding, if determined feasible, and in coordination with approvals by Monmouth County Administration was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorro. Unanimously approved.

Vice Chairperson Nancy Grbelja commended Director Tolchin and Assistant Director Amici for their hard work on seeking these grant opportunities to benefit patrons.

Revenue Budget 2021 Draft

Director Tolchin stated a draft of the 2021 Revenue Budget has been submitted for discussion. Director Tolchin has been in contact with County Finance Director Craig Marshall regarding the budget. The \$200,000.00 needed to support the renovation will increase the budget. It is anticipated that fringe benefit costs and indirect costs will remain level. The tax levy may be recommended by the Monmouth County Library Commission, but it is brought forward by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Director Tolchin has compiled multiple Revenue Budget projections, including: 0% which will keep the tax levy at \$15,850,000.00, 0.5% which will bring the tax levy to \$15,930,000.00, and 1% which will bring the tax levy to \$16,010,000.00.

Library Operations – Pandemic Modifications

Director Tolchin stated the Library modified protocols in response to Covid-19. These protocols are regularly reassessed and the Library is monitoring the increasing case numbers. There are safety concerns and the Library wants to ensure that they are putting forth their best efforts to keep everyone safe. The County of Monmouth came in to measure six-foot distances between staff desks and made additional recommendations for the Headquarters and Eastern Branch

locations. As case numbers relating to the pandemic rise, we have to consider equipping the Library in different ways. Masks are required at all times while in the library, but staff are experiencing issues with patrons not wearing masks or removing them while in the library. Announcements are made throughout the day reminding patrons about masks and social distancing. As numbers increase, the Library may need to consider reducing seating, establishing appointments for browsing, a reduction in hours if a curfew is implemented, or curb-side only service. Library Administration will continue to carefully review everything before making any decisions. Director Tolchin asked the Commission for any suggestions or recommendations they may have regarding this and if the Commission would support a last-minute decision by Library Administration in the transition of services in order to maintain staff and patron safety. The Library continues to circulate 3,000 to 4,000 items per day and wants to ensure we are here to support the patrons.

A Motion to give the Library Director authority to transition the Library to curb-side only service in the event it is necessary for the safety and health of patrons and staff was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Sunday Service – January 2021 thru June 2021

It is recommended to suspend library service on Sundays from January 2021 through June 2021, with the option to reinstate Sunday service if there is a reduction in Covid-19 cases and an increase in patron demand for Sunday hours.

A Motion to suspend Sunday operational hours for January 2021 through June 2021, with possible reconsideration in February should conditions related to Covid-19 improve was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Commission Meeting Schedule 2021

The Monmouth County Library Commission meeting schedule for 2021 was submitted for approval, with meetings held the second Tuesday of each month except in the month of June which will be held on the third Tuesday of the month.

A Motion to approve the proposed meeting schedule was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

Gilder Lerhman – Revisiting the Founding Era Grant Application

There is a grant opportunity through Gilder Lerhman Revisiting the Founding Era Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00. Donna Mansfield will complete the application for consideration of the grant. The application must be sent to the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Director Tolchin stated the Library has applied for this grant previously and was a recipient. Receiving this grant would be valuable to library patrons.

A Motion to approve the application of the American Library Association Gilder Lerhman Revisiting the Founding Era Grant was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Art Donation – Shrewsbury Historical Society

Commissioner Boms, as the representative for the Art Committee, stated it would benefit the Library to accept the donation of these beautiful tapestries. The tapestries will be located at the Monmouth County Library Eastern Branch. Director Tolchin stated a formal agreement with the donor will need to be drafted. The agreement should include that the donor attests they are the rightful owner, the donor is aware that the items may not always be on display, legal rights of reproduction are donated to the Library, and there will be no fees associated with the donation. Special Counsel Fay Szakal stated, for a donation such as this, it is standard for the donor to add specific conditions to the agreement. Director Tolchin stated she will look for previous agreements on file to consult and reach out to Don Burden to begin discussion on the terms of the agreement. Special Counsel Fay Szakal stated they may want to include, if the Library chooses to deaccession the items, that the donor has the right of first refusal to have the items back. She also stated the donor may want to complete an appraisal. Director Tolchin stated the Library will incur the expense of encasing the tapestries for protection and display.

A Motion to accept the donation of two antique tapestries from the Shrewsbury Historical Society to add to the Monmouth County Library’s art collection for permanent display at the Eastern Branch Library was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Director’s Report

Director Tolchin stated the Library has been experiencing difficulties in the recruitment of staff at this time. The Library currently has thirty vacancies. The Library continues to conduct interviews and will submit all candidates for hire to the County of Monmouth for approval. The next scheduled Monmouth County Orientation is in January 2021.

The letter to Sea Girt residents was sent in October 2020 and library services will suspend on January 1, 2021.

Overdrive and RBDigital have merged allowing for 3,000 magazines to be available to patrons digitally. Additionally, the Library has received favorable pricing for 2021, but pricing may change in years to come.

The cost for Kanopy Streaming is increasing by 128% for 2021. The Library is considering not renewing the subscription to this service. The Library does offer streaming through Access Video On-Demand.

Library usage statistics are healthy, with 3,000 to 4,000 circulations per day.

The Department Head reports will be given at the Monmouth County Library Commission meeting scheduled in January 2021.

Director Tolchin reported the Commission has fulfilled the annual trustee training hours.

The Freeholder title will change to County Commissioner, effective January 1, 2021; publicity and letterhead will need to be changed accordingly.

Director Tolchin asked Special Counsel Fay Szakal as to the status of the two Monmouth County Library Commission vacancies. She stated she will follow up and provide an update at the next scheduled meeting.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the outdoor Wi-Fi equipment has been received and the Library will coordinate with Monmouth County ITS for installation.

The new van is experiencing transmission failure and is in the process of being fixed. As the repair will take time, the Library is working with Monmouth County to find relief in the Library's delivery system.

All of the new computers have been delivered and four libraries, including Colts Neck, Hazlet, Marlboro, and Holmdel are complete with installation and cloud protection. All remaining branch library and member library locations will be completed in 2021.

The Library is considering establishing online payment via PayPal and credit/debit cards for fines.

Publicity Consultant Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated the New Jersey Public Library Construction Bond Act grant press release has gone out. She has also submitted the Library's programs being held in December.

Closed Executive Session

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

Commissioner Comments

No additional comments were made during the course of the meeting.

Public Comments

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

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 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, January 12, 2021 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brain Boms. Unanimously approved.

Commission Remarks

Vice Chairperson Nancy Grbelja extended well wishes to everyone and thanked Library Staff and Library Administration for all of their hard work. The Library has done an outstanding job of keeping everyone engaged and the Commission looks forward to speaking with the Department Heads at the next scheduled meeting.

Adjournment

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

The meeting concluded at 12:16 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover