

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

Present: Chairperson Nancy Grbelja and Library Commissioners Barbara McMorrow, 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:

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

The meeting convened at 11:16 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Nancy Grbelja opened the meeting of Tuesday, December 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 November 9, 2021. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the Open Public Meeting minutes of November 9, 2021 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

A Motion to approve the Closed Executive Session minutes of November 9, 2021 was made by Frank Wells and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

Library Liaison Report

County Commissioner Lillian Burry stated a meeting was held by the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners to discuss Monmouth County Library Commission appointments. The Monmouth County Library Commission currently has one vacancy and one appointment term expiring.

Financial Report

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

Director Tolchin submitted the November 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 \$7,237,712.78 posted to the Approved Budget of \$17,885,000.00; this total includes encumbered amounts. Fringe benefits and indirect expenses for 2021 from Monmouth County will be charged to the December check writing. The 2020 Reserve Budget reflects \$2,935,193.98 remaining in unencumbered funds. That amount will transfer to the fund balance on January 1, 2022. 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 November 30, 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 November 30, 2021.

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

A voucher was submitted for approval for Monmouth County Indirect Costs in the amount of \$3,842,804.00. Supporting documentation reflects the charges for Headquarters, Eastern Branch, and the County of Monmouth. The invoice was processed by the Monmouth County Finance Department and was approved by The Board of County Commissioners at the December 9, 2021 County Commission meeting.

A Motion to approve the voucher for Indirect Costs to the County of Monmouth in the amount of \$3,842,804.00 in settlement of actual costs for 2019 and authorize the Library Director to act as signatory on behalf of the Monmouth County Library Commission was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

A voucher was submitted for approval for Monmouth County Fringe Benefits for library staff for Quarters 1, 2, and 3 in the amount of \$2,022,394.27. Supporting documentation was presented with the voucher with Quarters 1, 2, and 3. 4th Quarter charges will be assessed by the Monmouth County Finance Department at a later date, after the final pay period of December 2021. The invoice was processed by the Monmouth County Finance Department and was approved by The Board of County Commissioners at the December 9, 2021 County Commission meeting.

A Motion to approve the voucher in the amount of \$2,022,394.27 for Monmouth County Library Staff Fringe Benefits for Quarters 1, 2, and 3 of 2021 and authorize the Library Director to act as signatory on behalf of the Monmouth County Library Commission was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

Headquarters Renovation Report

Director Tolchin stated Settembrino Architects have provided a potential vendor to assist in developing the specifications for the high technology meeting room eight. Due to an escalation of cost and project delays, room eight technology features will be an add-on item in consideration of the award of contract. Room Eight will receive flooring and painting upgrades, but the technology features may not be available within project funds. The company Sharp has provided the Library preliminary ideas for equipping Room Eight. There is no determined final plan at this time as pricing proposals have not yet been received. Assistant Director Amici stated the equipment needed for hybrid meetings and video signage has been prioritized.

Covid-19 Library Operations Update

Director Tolchin stated the Library continues to follow Monmouth County Policy relative to Covid-19 procedures for illness during the pandemic. The County of Monmouth has provided new signage regarding masks, stating:

“It is strongly encouraged that vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals wear a mask in crowded indoor settings.”

Director Tolchin continues to participate in webinars provided by the State of New Jersey for Library Directors and staff that are related to Covid-19 issues and concerns.

At this time, adult programming will remain virtual. While we have received many inquiries as to when in person adult programming will return, the Library continues efforts to not create crowded indoor settings. Children’s story-time programming is being offered indoors, with all indoor programming at a reduced capacity and socially distanced.

Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement – Ocean County Library

Director Tolchin stated the Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement expires on December 31, 2021. Generally, the agreement is established for a three-year period with the Ocean County Library to allow Monmouth County Library patrons access to Ocean County Library resources and materials and access for Ocean County Library patrons to Monmouth County Library resources and materials. There is a net-lender agreement stating whoever borrows more pays the other. In the past three years, the Monmouth County Library has been the recipient of payment. There are some stipulations relating to the e-collection that need to be discussed. Director Tolchin requested approval from the Monmouth County Library Commission to move forward with renewing the agreement and permit Library Administration to finalize the details relating to the e-collection. The Commission inquired if the agreement allowed access to the Ocean County Library’s museum pass program. At this time, access to museum passes is excluded from the agreement. Additional exclusions from the borrowing agreement include Hoopla and Kanopy access.

Director Tolchin is open to further discussion on how to establish and fund a museum pass program within the Monmouth County Library system. Some museums in the State of New Jersey have suspended or cancelled their pass programs. Library Administration and the Programming Department will research available passes and costs to present to the Commission at a future scheduled meeting.

A Motion to approve a three-year Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement with Ocean County Library System at mutually agreeable terms with the net-lender reimbursement of \$1.00 per item at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.00 annually was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Westlaw Subscription/Legal Reference

Director Tolchin stated Westlaw is an important legal resource offered by the Library. Access to this database is available at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters and Eastern Branch. Cost proposals have been received for a one-year subscription, a three-year subscription, and a five-year subscription. The Library anticipates an annual cost not to exceed \$33,000.00. Director Tolchin is seeking Commission approval to continue to provide this resource through the Library’s database budget.

A Motion to approve a five-year subscription with Westlaw to provide legal reference services for patrons and staff was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Frank Wells. Unanimously approved.

Branch and Member Report

Director Tolchin stated a meeting was held with Holmdel Township. Another meeting will need to be scheduled in the near future to continue communication with the Township and their service needs. It was suggested that meetings be held with all member library townships.

Tinton Falls has received funding from the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act Grant for building repairs. Marlboro Township was not listed as a recipient of grant funding.

Cookie trays were delivered to all branch and member libraries.

The Borough of Bradley Beach contacted Library Administration to inquire about the benefits of becoming a member of the Monmouth County Library System. If they are interested, they will contact the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners.

Monmouth County Library 100th Year Celebration

The Monmouth County Library started on September 27, 1922 with a resolution from the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The Library is looking to plan a 100th Year Anniversary Celebration in September 2022. Other programs will be scheduled throughout the year highlighting the anniversary and some program ideas include a library birthday party and a poster contest. Director Tolchin stated it is a true joy to have the honor of leading this institution and serving the community.

Commission Meeting Schedule 2022

The Monmouth County Library Commission meeting schedule for 2022 was submitted for approval, with meetings held the second Tuesday of each month except in the months of June and November; which will be held on the third Tuesday of the month. Meetings are not scheduled in the months of July and August.

A Motion to adopt the meeting schedule for the 2022 calendar year was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously approved.

Monitor Compensation - 2022 Minimum Wage

Director Tolchin stated minimum wage rates are increasing. Library Monitor's typically work ten hours per week and the position is offered at the minimum wage rate. Director Tolchin is requesting approval to increase the minimum wage to \$13.00 per hour beginning on January 1, 2022.

A Motion to increase the minimum wage to \$13.00 per hour for the 2022 year was made by Marcy McMullen and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously approved.

Publicity Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith stated the Department of Health and Senior Services inquired about the Library's virtual programs and were provided with the website and upcoming programs. Additionally, the decorated tree at the Eastern Branch has been receiving attention.

The tree was donated and decorated with creative ornaments made out of newspaper, magazines, x-ray machine parts, film, lightbulbs, and other materials by volunteers. The tree will be up through the end of the year.

Director's Report

Director Tolchin stated the Library currently has 49 vacancies and 5 new hires are scheduled to start on January 10, 2022, reducing the number of vacancies to 44. Thank you to County Human Resources for their support and hard work.

Limited vacation carryover requests for staff will be submitted to Teri O'Connor, County Administrator. Due to staffing levels and maintaining operations, some staff cancelled paid vacation time requests and they hope to have the carryover requests approved. Any approved carryover will have to be used by March 2022.

Director Tolchin will continue to inform the Monmouth County Library Commission of trustee training opportunities. A thank you was extended to Commissioner Marcy McMullen for attending the most recent training offered. The training discussed the growing trend of fine free libraries. Assistant Director Amici stated the Library has begun collecting patron email information in order to be able to implement automatic item renewals in the near future.

The department head presentations will be made at the January 2022 meeting.

The Monmouth County Library Commission Bylaws should be reviewed and updated in 2022.

The Monmouth County Library Commission has one vacancy. The Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners appointments the representatives of the Monmouth County Library Commission.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici stated the van purchase will continue to be pursued in 2022. Funds will be added to the account, with Commission approval, once a price-line is received from the County Fleet Services.

The Library is researching equipment to assist with virtual and hybrid meetings.

A podcasting two-part program will be held in February or March at the Holmdel Branch. Additional equipment will need to be purchased.

The student database access cards for Freehold Regional Schools are now live. Cards have been created for 9,680 students and 669 staff members. These cards will provide students with access to 95 databases through the Library's website, State subscribed databases through Jersey Clicks, and access public internet computers at branches. The Library is looking forward to expanding the program to other area schools.

Commissioner Comments

The Commission would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year.

The Commission extended a heartfelt thank you to Chairperson Nancy Grbelja for her years of service and dedication to the Monmouth County Library Commission and community.

Commission Remarks

Chairperson Nancy Grbelja stated she will continue to work for the residents of Monmouth County and uphold her oath to them. She is grateful for her tenure with the Monmouth County Library Commission. It has been a pleasure to work with the exceptional members of the Commission.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held at 11:00 am on January 11, 2022 at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters.

Scheduling of Closed Executive Session at Next Meeting

A Motion to schedule a Closed Executive Session at the next meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 was made by Barbara McMorrow 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 Frank Wells and seconded by Marcy McMullen. Unanimously approved.

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

Commissioner Mary Ann Musich exited the meeting.

Public Comments

Let it be known for the record that no comments were made.

The public meeting concluded at 12:31pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover