

Monmouth County Library Commission Minutes
September 8, 2020
Headquarters Library

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

Absent: Commissioner Nancy Grbelja

Guests: Muriel Smith, Publicity Consultant; Fay Szakal, Special County Counsel

The meeting convened at 11:18 am.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Frank Wells opened the meeting of Tuesday, September 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

Chairperson Frank Wells gave a few minutes for review of the meeting minutes from June 16, 2020. Opportunity was given for additions, corrections, and suggestions.

A Motion to approve the open public meeting minutes of June 16, 2020 was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Brain Boms. Unanimously Approved.

Liaison Report

Freeholder Lillian Burry expressed concern regarding the Eastern Branch sculpture recognition ceremony. The plaque is anticipated to be delivered on September 18th and the County has indicated the site will be completed soon. Freeholder Burry would like to ensure that Franco Minnervini, Sculpture Artist is available to attend the dedication event. Additionally, the Raffetto family should be the highlight of the event.

Freeholder Burry complimented the library and Director Tolchin for all the work being done during this difficult time. Director Tolchin thanked Freeholder Burry for her kind words and stated, while we have faced challenges, library staff have been terrific in supporting patrons.

Director Tolchin inquired of Freeholder Burry as to the status of the Monmouth County Library Commission. At this time, two appointments remain open 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. A suggestion was made to consult appointed Special Counsel, Fay Szakal and all questions can be directed to her.

Chairperson Remarks

Chairperson Frank Wells expressed gratitude that the members of the Commission and all library staff remain safe and well. The library has done a magnificent job during this time.

Director Tolchin thanked Chairperson Wells for his kind words and additionally recognized the essential staff team that has made everything possible: Assistant Director Heidi Amici, Children's Coordinator Pat Findra, Eastern Branch Manager Kim Avagliano, Headquarters Branch Manager Robyn Miller, Branch Services Librarian Rachael Yost Scalise, Programming Coordinator Laura Migliore, and Senior Management Assistant Kate Hardy.

New Jersey State Public Library Construction Bond Act Update

Director Judi Tolchin stated the application has been submitted and is hopeful that the library will be a recipient of grant funding. There were approximately 120 applications submitted and there is competition in funding. A determination should be received in September.

Eastern Branch Sculpture Installation and Dedication

Director Judi Tolchin stated Monmouth County Buildings and Grounds is continuing work on the Eastern Branch sculpture site. All of the necessary supplies have been ordered and preparations are being made for potential weather concerns in the month of September. A recommendation was received to choose a date in October for the dedication event. The plaque will be completed by September 18th. An inquiry was made regarding the names that have been included on the plaque. If any additions or corrections are needed, the plaque would need to be remanufactured at an additional cost and extend the date of completion.

The Commission agreed upon Friday, October 16th at 11am for the sculpture dedication event. A rain date of Friday, October 23rd was chosen. A suggestion was made to have a small band in attendance to perform patriotic music, if possible.

Financial Report

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

Director Judi Tolchin submitted the August 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 \$6,161,724.62 posted to the actual budget of \$17,485,000.00. This total includes encumbered amounts. The 2019 reserve budget reflects \$600,463.78 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 August 31, 2020. These funds are reserved for the completion of the adult library and the lobby including lobby furniture. 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 August 2020 Financial Report including the Detail Budget, Check Writing, Reserve Budget, and Capital Budgets was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

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 will be charged to the operating budget.

Budget 2021

Director Tolchin stated the County of Monmouth has requested that all budgets remain flat for the year 2021. A budget for next year has not yet been created but Director Tolchin is confident she can remain within the established parameters, with two conditions: 1. indirect charges do not exceed the budgeted amount for 2020 and 2. fringe benefit costs do not increase. The County may request to review the budget in advance but it is the Commission that approves the budget. Director Tolchin will continue to work with Craig Marshall, Monmouth County Director of Finance.

Re-opening – Phased Plan, Hybrid Service Model, Evening Hours, Sunday Service, and Statistics

Director Tolchin stated the phased plan remains in effect. At this time, the hybrid service model offers door-side service and in-person library service for portions of each day. Door-side service is popular and shows high statistics of approximately 3,000 door-side patrons in the month of August. Library locations have received an equal number of reference questions, as well. In the evening hours and on weekends, library locations have seen a reduction in patron traffic and use. We are here to serve the patrons but should consider the status of Sunday hours in regards to the reduction in traffic. The Commission is in agreement that Sunday service hours will not resume until January 2021 and will revisit discussion at a later date.

Staff inquiries have been received regarding if library locations should remain open on Saturday, December 26, 2020. Library locations will be open from 9am-5pm on Thursday, December 24th and will be closed on Friday, December 25th in observance of the County holiday.

A motion to close Monmouth County Library branch locations on Saturday, December 26, 2020 was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.

Outdoor Wireless – Headquarters and Eastern Branch

Director Tolchin stated the New Jersey State Library has recommended and acknowledged libraries that are open to having Wi-Fi available in their parking lots when libraries are closed. During the pandemic, building closures restricted patrons from Wi-Fi access. The library is looking to increase access by offering Outdoor Wi-Fi at the Headquarters and Eastern Branch locations. A quote has been provided from Monmouth County ITS in the amount of \$24,706.84. After this initial investment, there would be subsequent annual charges for maintaining this service. It is recommended that the Wi-Fi be accessible during the hours of 9am-9pm. This would be a managed system with ten access points. Assistant Director Amici is waiting on a response if there is a possibility to reduce the number of access points. Director Tolchin and

Assistant Director Amici feel this is an essential service to provide. The Commission is in agreement that the library should continue pursuing further information regarding this service. Director Tolchin will present on this topic again at a later date.

Staffing – Temporary Positions

Director Tolchin stated, with the current reduction in patron traffic, library locations have been able to manage staffing needs. If or when patron traffic increases, additional staffing will be necessary. At this time, Temporary Monitors have not been recalled to work.

Currently, electronic circulations are approximately 42,000 – 44,000 per month; these numbers do not include electronic magazines or streaming video. At this time, due to the pandemic electronic based resources are how patrons have been able to engage with the library and its services. There is potential for electronic materials and resources to remain popular going forward.

As of September 28, 2020, the library will have 27 staffing vacancies. Temporary staff have begun training and could be potential candidates for permanent positions in the near future. Monmouth County Human Resources continues to support the library in its recruiting efforts. Due to current staffing levels, all employees were requested to submit all remaining vacation requests by September 1st.

E-Magazine Subscriptions – Limited 2021 Print Journal Purchase (Research Periodicals Exclusions)

Director Tolchin stated for 2021 she has requested limited periodical purchases and would like to convert to more electronic materials. Current data states the Covid-19 virus may live on stacked surfaces for up to six days requiring all daily periodicals to be quarantined after one use. Periodicals will be re-evaluated in 2022.

CARES Act Projects

Director Tolchin stated she is working with the County to see if projects can be brought forward without the library incurring the cost. One potential project is a drive-up window at the Headquarters location for patrons to pick up materials. Another project consideration is self-checkout locations. The third project for consideration is a locker system with a checkout machine for contactless pick-up. There are still several considerations to be made in relation to all of the projects. All Cares Act funds must be utilized by December 31, 2020. All personal protective equipment purchases, such as masks, face shields, and gloves have been submitted to the County as Covid-19 purchases for potential coverage under the Cares Act.

Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adult – Policy Updated

Director Tolchin stated modifications have been made to the library's Unattended Children Policy. The policy has been reformatted for easier viewing and vulnerable adults (as defined by Adult Protective Services) have been added.

A Motion to approve the revised Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy was made by Brian Boms and seconded by Barbara McMorrow. Unanimously Approved.

Revenue – Fine Free vs. Collection of Fines

Director Tolchin stated fine amnesty has been extended through September 15, 2020. The library has not collected fines on items as a result of the pandemic. Generally, the library collects approximately \$220,000.00 - \$250,000.00 annually for fines, copies, and lost materials. Discussion on this topic will be revisited at a later date.

Extended Library Card Renewals

Director Tolchin informed the Commission that temporary library card expiration dates have been extended through December 31, 2020. Photo identification still must be submitted for a library card to be issued or renewed.

Lunch and Learn

A Lunch and Learn session was held titled *Short Takes for Trustees* from United for Libraries; the Division of the American Library Association for Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations. The training session reviewed the process and procedure of conducting an effective board meeting.

Virtual Trustee Institute – NJSL and NJ Library Trustee Association

A Virtual Trustee Institute will be held on October 17, 2020 from 9am-1pm. Commissioners Brian Boms, Barbara McMorrow, and Mary Ann Musich will be in attendance. Director Tolchin will submit all registration forms and provide the necessary log-in information.

Remembering the 20th Century: An Oral History of Monmouth County – Copyright Request

A request has been received from Patty Shaw, Author for permission to use copyrighted material from the library's *Remembering the 20th Century: An Oral History of Monmouth County*. The requested material features Russell Treiber and Mina Treiber Pomphrey. All material used will be properly cited.

A Motion to give permission for the use of copyrighted material from *Remembering the 20th Century: An Oral History of Monmouth County* featuring Russell Treiber and Mina Treiber Pomphrey was made by Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Art Donation

The library has been offered bicentennial memorabilia for display. The Commission will convene an Art Committee for evaluation. Freeholder Burry and Commissioner Boms volunteered to participate on the committee.

Virtual Programming Update

Programming Coordinator Laura Migliore presented to the Commission on current and upcoming virtual programs at the library. At this time, all in-person programming and associated publicity remains on hold at all branch locations. Due to this, the Programming Department took the initiative to develop virtual programming alternatives and is acting as one cohesive Monmouth County Virtual Library. The Programming Department learned the virtual presentation platform Webex and established Virtual Programming Guidelines and Procedures, a

Virtual Performer Agreement, and Social Media Guidelines. Initial programs have been based on “library basics”, primarily using in-house talent. Virtual Book Discussions are offered twice a month, and include a variety of genres such as history, mystery, novels, author talks, and a teen book club. The library is offering a bi-weekly virtual film discussion group, featuring movies found on the library’s *Access on Demand Video* database. We have also been offering a virtual weekly Bereavement Meeting through a Headquarters Volunteer, Beth Stamp. The Children’s Department coordinated with the Programming Department to offer virtual story times, including bedtime story time and activities. Two librarians have volunteered to assist with Teen Programming and they have created a variety of virtual activities including writing workshops, art programs, and Teen Advisory Board Meetings. Opportunities for Teen Volunteer Hours will be available through the library, as teens can read and review books for their peers with reviews featured in an online gallery. The Programming Department is forming new partnerships to serve patrons County-wide, including: Literacy NJ Monmouth, 180 Turning Lives Around, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Seton Hall University Law School, US Census and League of Women Voters, and the Monmouth Arts Council. Events are promoted on our website through Social Media, printed flyers, a postcard, press releases by Muriel Smith, and an eNewsletter. Within six months: YouTube subscribers increased from 5 to 200, videos were viewed 126,507 times, Facebook followers increased by 3,000 with average daily views of 16,126, Twitter is averaging 38,000 hits per month, Instagram is averaging 400 views per post, and eNewsletter subscriptions increased from 5,690 to 7,425.

Additionally, the first virtual concert featuring Tim McLoone will be held on September 17, 2020. The Programming Department looks forward to offering Online Meeting Rooms which can be requested via our website and expanding the breath of programs offered.

Director’s Report

Director Tolchin stated she will investigate the efficacy and viability of ultraviolet wands.

Director Tolchin stated the Monmouth County Library Holmdel Branch will be featured in the *Bell Works: How it Works* Facebook stream. A librarian from the branch will be present to talk about library services.

The letter to Sea Girt residents will be sent out in October.

Some of the State Aid requirements have been changed for 2020, including waiving the hours of operation and staffing number requirements.

A letter from a patron was received expressing concern on the status of a sculpture located at the Eastern Branch. This patron is interested in helping to raise funds for restoration of the concrete sculpture. Director Tolchin will reach out to the patron.

The library requires all patrons and staff to wear face coverings at all times as per NJ Executive Order 157 and adhere to social distancing guidelines. Signs have been posted at all locations.

An automobile accident occurred outside of the Headquarters location that affected building operations. The accident report was submitted to the County and the County worked to restore

power and Fios internet service. The buildings water pump was affected during this time and there was a water backup in the basement.

Assistant Director's Update

Assistant Director Heidi Amici acknowledged Programming Coordinator Laura Migliore and her staff for the amazing job they have done and their willingness to try new things. She also acknowledged the Children's Department and their hard work in making virtual content for children.

Sea Girt has requested their patron, item, and circulation information be exported from the library's Sirsi system to their new system. This was completed on September 2, 2020.

The van purchase is at the County level. As soon as all of the vehicles arrive, the County can submit for the vehicle's registration and title.

Assistant Director Amici is continuing to work on the database access card for school students. She will continue working with Allentown and Freehold Regional schools to format sample data.

New computers for library locations have begun the duplication process and will ship soon.

The library continues to work on the registration correction project and letters will be sent out soon.

Publicity Consultant Report

Publicity Consultant Muriel Smith praised Director Judi Tolchin, Assistant Director Heidi Amici, and Programming Coordinator Laura Migliore for their incredible and innovative work. Muriel Smith has submitted stories for publication and will submit more next week. She inquired about what is the maximum number of check-outs a patron can have at one time. There is no limit on the number of physical material check-outs per person.

Closed Executive Session

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

Commissioner Comments

A suggestion was made to promote the library's virtual programs on public access television.

Freeholder Burry stated September is Library Card Sign-up Month and suggested promoting this at the next scheduled Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting.

Commissioner McMorro stated she has been receiving positive comments from members of the public regarding the library and shared some of the comments with the Commission.

Commissioner Boms stated e-books have been great for summer reading access and parents are grateful for these options. Director Tolchin highlighted the tremendous work done by Karen Harrington, Eastern Branch Librarian and Assistant Director Heidi Amici on the library's electronic resources.

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 Barbara McMorrow and seconded by Mary Ann Musich. Unanimously Approved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 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, October 13, 2020 was made by Mary Ann Musich and seconded by Brian Boms. Unanimously approved.

Adjournment

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

The meeting concluded at 2:01 pm.

Submitted by Kimberly Conover