

WESTFIELD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

550 East Broad Street
Westfield, New Jersey 07090-2197

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting

October 27, 2021

Ms. Habayeb, President of the Board, called the regular meeting of the Westfield Memorial Library Board of Trustees to order at 7:31 PM.

Ms. Habayeb announced:

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey, adequate advance notice of this meeting has been provided by posting a notice of this meeting on the Westfield Memorial Library's community bulletin board and by transmitting the same notice to the Westfield Leader, Star Ledger, and Town Clerk. Attendance at this meeting is welcome, however the public's right to participate is left to the discretion of the Library's Board of Trustees.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Ms. Behr-Shields, Mr. Boyes, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Ramakrishnan, Ms. Saltzman, and Ms. Serapiglia. Staff members attending were Mr. McGinley and Ms. Karwowski.

Ms. Habayeb announced that the Board wished to acknowledge the passing of the husband of Mary Ann Prokop, the WML Office Manager with a minute of silence. She asked that Mr. McGinley express the board's condolences to Ms. Prokop.

Ms. Habayeb also acknowledged the return of Amy Behr-Shields to the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Habayeb moved the approval of the minutes of the September 22, 2021 regular meeting. Ms. Saltzman seconded the motion, and it was approved as follows:

AYES: Mr. Boyes, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Ramakrishnan, Ms. Saltzman, and Ms. Serapiglia.

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Ms. Behr-Shields

[Mr. Capone and Ms. Motwani entered the meeting after the approval of the minutes.]

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report for September 2021 was reviewed by the Board.

Mr. McGinley mentioned that 75% of the budgeted expenses have been incurred and we will be within the budget at the end of the year.

In response to several questions posed at the last meeting, Mr. McGinley stated:

- The budgeted amount of \$11.5K for computer software on Supplement B represents the cost of the ILS system which allows the WML to check out books. This amount was prepaid in 2020. We have been using this budget line to purchase new software that our full time technology employee recognized a need for. This caused an overrun in that budget line. Mr. McGinley plans to design a multi-year technology plan with the IT employee to better meet the library's needs and financial constraints.
- The overrun in the Computer Network Maintenance budget line is attributed to the costs of a computer consultant which is covered under a service contract. Once the contract expires it will most likely not be renewed since we have a full time IT employee.
- The Miscellaneous/Savings Account on page 3 of the Financial Report has a small balance, which is autonomous from the Town's Trust Fund. We use it mainly for the receipt of the credit card payments. Associated with providing this service, the company charges us a fee which is deducted from this account. Further research would have to be done to determine if it is feasible and worthwhile to continue with this account. Most public libraries do have a small miscellaneous account.

Ms. Habayeb had asked for more detail on this account so Ms. Prokop prepared Supplement F and included the Bank of America Statement. Mr. Boyes asked for more details concerning the credit card disbursement from this account. Mr. McGinley will work with Ms. Prokop to provide more details.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

Ms. Ramakrishnan moved to approve the Bills and Claims totaling \$43,077.13 for October 2021. Ms. Habayeb seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Upon the start of the Friends 50th Anniversary, Ms. Habayeb read a statement of gratitude to the Friends and co-Presidents on behalf of the Board of Trustees for their outstanding leadership and all the endeavors of the Friends. Ms. Lechner and Mr. Miller expressed their thanks for the kind words.

The Friends' Report included the following:

- Details of the success of the October 14 Reception and Sunday October 17th Children's event were discussed.
- The Children's Book Sale, which was the first book sale held in two years, raised over \$4.1K which exceeded the usual amount raised.
- A thank-you breakfast was held for a core group of volunteers. Ms. Lechner wants to keep the volunteering momentum going.
- The membership drive will commence in another month. The Friends are exploring the possibility of partnering with the New Comers Club and offering a free Friends' membership to new residents.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report was reviewed. Mr. McGinley discussed the following items:

- The Township Engineer inspected the WML sidewalks and determined that the damage is superficial and not a danger to pedestrians. However, the library sidewalks will be included in the Township sidewalk repair/replacement project in the spring of 2022.
- The library's 1/3M funding will be \$2.8M which is a 4.9% increase.
- The Events Calendar will be migrating to a new platform called LibCal. It is more flexible and easier to use on mobile devices. The soft launch will be in mid-November.
- Mr. McGinley is using a different format to report library statistics. He is highlighting the key statistics at the top of his written report. It was noted that the programming attendance is reported as "n/a". This is because there was a lapse in collecting statistics for live program attendance. For zoom programs the attendance was recorded as program views. Since Mr. McGinley has to prepare a report in February on the library that will be forwarded to the State, he will work on a way to recreate the statistics.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Habayeb asked for committee reports.

Ms. Saltzman, chair of the Personnel Committee, asked the board members to review and comment on the new evaluation forms. The revisions were made so as to tie the evaluation into the strategic goals and mission statement of the library.

The Long Range Planning Committee met with Mr. McGinley to discuss the strategic plan and offer guidance and priorities. They provided Leslie Burger's name as a contact from Library Development Solutions. Mr. McGinley has contacted Ms. Burger to obtain

the full community surveys. He plans to form some teams related to leadership, marketing outreach, and technology to assist in implementing the strategic plan.

Mr. McGinley contacted Ms. Oporto, Chair of the Building & Grounds Committee, to obtain more information on the use of the library's outdoor space. Ms. Serapiglia suggested holding a meeting of the Building & Grounds Committee.

Ms. Saltzman stated that the Personnel Committee needs to discuss salary issues.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any old business.

Mr. McGinley stated that his research regarding Executive Session Minutes indicated that the minutes do not have to be approved, only maintained.

Ms. Habayeb asked about the status on the research into the water sensors. This possibility is still being examined. The library has several leaks in the ceiling due to moisture from the roof and/or HVAC system. Mr. McGinley mentioned that he has reached out to the Town for contacts for roof and gutter cleaning. He wishes to obtain quotes on possible work in those areas. It appears that the original roof is still on the library. Mr. McGinley will also contact the HVAC Company since there should be some way to prevent moisture leaking from the HVAC system.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any new business.

The new "Fines and Fee Policy", included in the board packet, was discussed by the board.

Per Mr. McGinley, the plan is to move to a fines free library, with the exception of Wi-Fi hotspots and museum passes. A change from previous discussions is that fees on new items will not be charged. Fees for lost and damaged materials will be assessed. The language in the notifications of overdue material has been reworded. Notices will be sent out at 7, 14, and 21 days after the due date. If the item is not returned then the item will be declared lost at 35 days and the patron will be billed for the replacement cost of the material. The backend work on the notices will be completed in a few weeks.

The WML will manage the hold list for materials better since Mr. McGinley does not want the public perception to be that the wait for material is longer because of the new policy. This can be done by ordering even more copies of materials and eliminating the ordering of some esoteric work that does not circulate frequently.

Much discussion ensued. In answer to the board's questions, Mr. McGinley responded to their satisfaction as follows:

- There is currently from 400 to 500 items that are overdue but the due dates vary and a good number of the materials were checked out by patrons from surrounding communities.
- To ensure the return of materials, periodic notices will be sent to the patrons. The lost book notice is generated at 35 days past due at which point the patron account is frozen from checking out more material until the matter is resolved. Upon closure of the matter, the patron can immediately check out material.
- Any holds on patrons' accounts due to unpaid fines will be taken off immediately once the policy is approved.
- Other libraries that have adopted the policy have not reported any problems.
- He is recommending that we do not use a collection agency.
- If approved, the new policy will be publicized. Mr. McGinley prepared an FAQ to be available on the website. The publicist will issue press releases.

Ms. Lechner suggested that the new policy be publicized in the schools. Mr. Boyes extended a standing invitation to Mr. McGinley to speak at a Town Council Meeting regarding the new policy.

The board was comfortable in not charging fines on overdue new materials and not using a collection agency.

The resolution for the Elimination of Overdue Fees on Library Materials was presented by Mr. McGinley. The resolution read as follows:

RESOLUTION 2021-07

WHEREAS the core mission of the Library is to provide equitable access to information;

WHEREAS monetary fines present an economic barrier to access library materials and services;

WHEREAS there is mounting evidence that indicates eliminating fines increases library card adoption and library usage;

WHEREAS monetary fines create a barrier in public relations, and absorb valuable staff time applying, collecting, and managing late fees;

WHEREAS monetary fines create inequity and ultimately do not serve the core mission of the modern library;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that effective October 27, 2021, the Westfield Memorial Library:

1. Ends the practice of charging overdue fees on library materials, with the exception of certain high demand materials, as determined by the Library Director.
2. Waives existing overdue fines on the accounts of all Westfield Memorial Library patrons, but preserves existing replacements fees for lost items.
3. Continues to charge replacement fees for lost items, and all other existing library fees.
4. After one year, the Library Director will report on this change in policy.

Ms. Saltzman moved to accept the resolution and “Fines and Fees Policy” as written and Ms. Motwani seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The “Collection Development Policy” was also included in the board packet for review by the board members. It details how we select materials for purchase and the decisions made on weeding the collection. Ms. Habayeb made a motion to accept the policy and Ms. Behr-Shields seconded the motion. The “Collection Development Policy” was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Habayeb announced:

Whereas the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

Whereas this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist:

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, by the Board of Trustees of the Westfield Memorial Library, that the public shall be excluded from the discussion of the following matters:

Personnel

Be it further resolved that minutes will be kept on file in the library director’s office, and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes shall be made public.

Ms. Habayeb made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:38 PM. Mr. Boyes seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Anne Karwowski

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

The Public Session was reconvened at 8:55 PM.

Ms. Saltzman made a motion to offer Victoria Pawlicki a part-time librarian trainee position at the agreed hourly rate starting November 1, 2021. Ms. Habayeb seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

Ms. Habayeb moved to adjourn the meeting at 9 PM. Ms. Serapiglia seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted:

Allen McGinley

