

WESTFIELD MEMORIAL LIBRARY
550 East Broad Street
Westfield, New Jersey 07090-2197

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting
February 24, 2021

Ms. Habayeb, President of the Board, called the regular meeting of the Westfield Memorial Library Board of Trustees to order at 7:35 P.M.

Ms. Habayeb announced:

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting of the Westfield Memorial Library's Board of Trustees is being held virtually through a Zoom Webinar. 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, Mr. Capone, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Oporto, Ms. Ramakrishnan, and Ms. Saltzman. Staff members attending were Mr. Israel and Ms. Karwowski.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Habayeb moved the approval of the minutes of the January 27, 2021 regular meeting. Ms. Oporto seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report – Temporary Budget for January 2021 was reviewed by the Board. The Director is still waiting for the figures on how much the library owes the town for expenses. Once the amounts are known, the budget will be updated and forwarded to the Finance Committee for review and approval, followed by presentation to the full board.

The Fines Account on page 4 has been updated to reflect the reimbursement for the second CARES related submitted expenses. The budget balance of \$170,660 remaining

at the end of last year was apportioned out between the fines account, General Building Fund Reserve, and Boiler HVAC Building Fund Reserve as reflected on pages 2 and 4. The two reserve funds will allow the WML to meet the matching share of the HVAC expense if the library is fortunate enough to be awarded the full amount of the applied for grant. Also, the WML still has \$150K in unbudgeted surplus.

[Ms. Motwani joined the meeting during the Financial Report.]

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

Mr. Israel added an expense of \$425.50, which he paid through his personal credit card, for the annual subscription to Constant Contact which the WML uses for the online newsletter after Ms. Ramakrishnan had reviewed the bills and claims for the first time. Mr. Israel displayed the voucher on the screen during the Zoom presentation and requested approval for this expense with the February Bills and Claims. Since there were no questions, Mr. Capone moved to approve the Bills and Claims Report totaling \$31,398.05 for February 2021. Ms. Ramakrishnan seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Ms. Lechner and Mr. Miller, co-President of the Friends, gave their report to the board.

Ms. Lechner informed the board that a little over 250 members renewed their membership for the 2021 year. The Friends will try to obtain new members at program events and will publicize membership on facebook.

Mr. Miller discussed the joint fund raising event that is being planned with the Westfield Historical Society on Saturday, April 24. In addition, the Historical Society is planning joint ventures with other organizations, but the Friends are pleased that they were asked and hope to learn from the event as the Historical Society is more experienced in fund raising. The proceeds from the event will be shared between the Friends and the Historical Society. The Historical Society is in charge of the venue which is the Reeve House on Mountain Avenue. The Friends will provide the programming. They are planning on reading and crafts for children in the morning, family offerings such as scholarship and Little Free Libraries in the afternoon, and a speaker from the Hale Speaker Series and/or Senior program lecture at the end of the day. The Friends are exploring the possibility of having Lionshead Brewery providing beer for sale during the last few hours of the event.

The plans for the reading program with the High School Community Service Club have become more solidified. They will have a dry run next week and if things run smoothly, then they will start to promote the program on March 5. Ms. Oporto offered to mention this program at the next school board meeting on March 2, but Ms. Lechner would rather

wait until after the results of the dry run prove that it is operating smoothly. Ms. Lechner will reach out to Ms. Oporto at that point.

Mr. Miller and Ms. Lechner had sent an email to Mr. Israel that offered the Friends financial and manpower support if needed. Mr. Israel asked that the email be resent since he does not recall receiving it. Ms. Habayeb thanked the Friends for this offer.

Mr. Israel mentioned that the Town Administrator is thinking of setting up a recycling bin at the Conservation Center and is concerned on how that might affect future Friends' annual book sales. Mr. Miller will reach out to Mr. Gildea, but they do not feel that this would have a negative impact on the book sales. Related to the recycling, the Friends hope to hold a book recycling day in the library parking lot in the summer on a day when the library is closed. The books will be boxed for stocking their Little Free Libraries, set out for browsing by the public, and/or shipped to Better World Books.

Ms. Schulze, the WML Senior Department Head, noted that she had booked the program Women's History – Civil War Ladies which is being sponsored by the Friends for March 10th.

Ms. Habayeb added that the Friends of Brightwood Park offered the use of space for library activities.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report was reviewed.

Building and Grounds

Mr. Israel shared photos of the Local History Room and Mechanical Room (over the Local History Room) in order to explain the problems that will be encountered in replacing the heating coils that burst over the weekend of January 30 and 31. The grates and sheetrock will have to be removed so as to lift out the coils and hoist it down to the History Room. Duct work will need to be removed and the water to the sprinkler system must be shut off. Mr. Israel has been receiving quotes for the different aspects involved in the repair. Once he receives the final quote, which should be tomorrow, he will submit the information to the insurance company for approval. This repair will need much coordination.

Ms. Motwani asked if we are replacing damaged items that will later be replaced with the big HVAC system project. Mr. Israel responded to Ms. Motwani's satisfaction that the answer is no. The big HVAC project deals with the two boilers, compressor, two chillers, and controller in the Boiler Room. The engineering company thought that it would be too expensive to remove equipment from the Mechanical Room so it was not included in the big HVAC project.

A restoration company ServPro blew air into the walls for three to four days on the second floor to minimize/prevent the growth of mold. This did not have to be done in the Children's area. The first and second floor rugs were dried out and even the book shelving was lifted to dry out the areas underneath. This effort was aided by the custodians who had vacuumed up a lot of the water with the WML's wet vacuum machine on the Sunday that we first became aware of the problem.

Ms. Jennifer Schulze has been the lead person in assuring that all appropriate materials are being removed from the Local History Room and that the titles of damaged materials are noted. Ms. Schulze described her ongoing efforts. The WML was fortunate in that the history books by prominent Westfield historians and yearbooks had not been damaged. The damaged materials were the NJ Legislative Manuals and Genealogical Magazines and Newsletters. The heavily damaged items will be recycled. She is in the process of assessing the value of material damaged and Ms. Adams is doing the same for the Children's area. She must also assess which materials to retain and is coordinating with the Genealogical Society, Plainfield Library, the Miller-Corey house, and the town's historian to determine if any of the groups want any of the undamaged material that will otherwise be discarded.

Ms. Basso assisted Ms. Schulze in clearing out the library material from the History Room. At this point, the majority of the collection has been physically removed from the History Room by the custodians and placed on carts. This effort falls in with the Strategic Plan which recommended that the History Room be emptied and used for public Meeting Rooms.

Ms. Saltzman had several questions: (1) She inquired about the damage to the Children's collection. Mr. Israel replied that a few dozen fiction books had been damaged and some ceiling tiles. (2) Ms. Saltzman asked if an 8-week period is still needed to fabricate the coils. Mr. Israel replied to her satisfaction that the answer was no since one quote was for \$31,690 to fabricate in five days and another for \$27,015 to fabricate in 15-20 days.

Ms. Habayeb commented that this might be an opportunity to install some type of water monitoring system. Mr. Israel will inquire about this matter but he stated that the board members must remember that there are four other coils in the Boiler Room.

Ms. Habayeb thanked Ms. Schulze and Ms. Basso for their efforts.

Technology

- The IT specialist started installing new software, which replaces three existing software packages, on the computers. The software will allow staff to log in remotely to their work computers. Also, the software allows the IT specialist to monitor all the computers remotely in case the staff is experiencing difficulties. The price of the software is the same as the three software packages that it is replacing.
- Mr. Israel will be meeting with T-Mobile next week to discuss adding additional Mobile Wi-Fi Hot Spots to be used by both personnel and to lend to patrons.

- Mr. Israel suggested that the board consider addressing a work from home policy once CDC guidelines permit a full return to work without the need for scheduling pods. A question he suggested for discussion is if personnel would be responsible for a laptop that is damaged while in their care at home.

CWA Complaint

With temperatures rising outside and the use of 10 new space heaters, Mr. Israel planned that the staff would return back to work on their pandemic work schedules on Monday, February 22 and curbside services commence on Wednesday February 24. However, mid-morning during the Monday AM shift, he received a phone call from the CWA Union who complained that it is too cold for their people to work in the building. They planned to file an unfair labor practices and breach of contract complaint. Mr. Israel consulted with Board President Ms. Habayeb and they agreed to close the library to personnel at 2 PM at the shift change. In addition, he consulted the labor attorney who concurred that this was the way to proceed.

Mr. Israel stated that the library is a big building and it takes a lot to warm it. Library personnel were working with their jackets on that Monday morning. Even with the space heaters on, the temperature in the building was ranging from the high 50's to low 60's. Ms. Habayeb added we do not want to put the employees in a position where they are working in a cold environment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Habayeb asked for committee reports.

Mr. Israel had no chance to pursue the Fines and Fees policy with the Community Relations & Publicity Committee since the last month due to the heating problem.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any old business.

Mr. Israel will follow-up with Treasurer Scott Olsen concerning procurement cards to purchase items on behalf of the library. The last that he heard was that it might be in place by the beginning of March. Ms. Ramakrishnan inquired if there will be only one or several names associated with the account. Mr. Israel is not sure, but once we obtain the card then he will find out if other names can be added to the account.

Ms. Saltzman mentioned the recording of zero reference questions on the January Monthly Statistics Report which is included in the board packet. After the January board meeting, Mr. Israel instructed personnel to once again record the statistics beginning in February.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any new business.

A question was posed by one of the board members as to whether library books can be returned to the library. Mr. Israel responded that library material can be returned in the book drops which the custodians empty periodically.

Ms. Oporto inquired if the Wonder Trucks are using the library parking lot at their own initiative or is the WML affiliated with it. It can be perceived as an implied library endorsement. She elaborated that Wonder Trucks are associated with a new food service app. They make dinner at the end of your driveway and then deliver the food to you.

Since the library parking lot is a municipal parking lot, the library cannot stop the trucks from parking there. Up to four trucks have been observed using the parking lot for several months from late afternoon into the evening. They usually stay for up to 30 minutes and then depart. Once the library reopens, it will be challenging for the trucks to find a space for their large trucks.

Mr. Capone questioned whether the annual meeting minutes included in the board packet needed to be approved at this meeting. Ms. Karwowski responded that the annual minutes are approved at the next annual meeting, but if anyone noted any inaccuracies then she will make the corrections before the January 2022 meeting. Ms. Habayeb had requested to include the annual minutes in the board packet while the meeting was still fresh in everyone's mind. She asked the board members to notify Ms. Karwowski of any needed corrections.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Habayeb asked if anyone from the public wished to address the board.

Ms. Adrienne Basso, Department Head of Technical Services, inquired if there was any information that the board can share regarding the Library Director position upon Mr. Israel's retirement. She later added that the WML has a second in command Ms. Jennifer Schulze who is Senior Department Head at the WML and a qualified candidate for the director position.

Ms. Habayeb replied that after the board was notified about the retirement at the last board meeting, the Personnel Committee has been gathering information on estimates and proposals for the use of search firms to obtain candidates. They are in the planning process at this point. At tonight's Executive Session, they will discuss what the search will be like and what will be done in the interim period of when Mr. Israel retires and the new candidate is hired. The board will consider existing qualified personnel at the WML for the position, but they cannot promise anything.

There was a brief discussion about what occurred in the past in the interim time between when a library director departed and the new director's start date. In the past, an interim director was appointed and served for a period of time lasting from the spring to early September. The second in command at the library had been offered the position in the past but declined for personal reasons.

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 8:54 P.M. Ms. Saltzman seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted: Mary Anne Karwowski

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

The Public Session reconvened at 9:11 P.M.

Ms. Habayeb made a motion to hire Library Development Solutions at a cost of \$18,000 plus expenses to conduct the search for a new library director. The motion was seconded by Ms. Oporto. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Habayeb moved the meeting adjourn. Ms. Oporto seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted: Phil Israel

