

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting

September 27, 2023

Ms. Habayeb, President of the Board, called the regular meeting of the Westfield Memorial Library Board of Trustees to order at 7:34 P.M.

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. Cusick, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Motwani, Ms. Reilly, and Ms. Serapiglia. Others attending were Mr. McGinley, Ms. Peist and Ms. Davidson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Habayeb moved the approval of the minutes of the August 23, 2023 regular meeting. Ms. Cusick seconded the motion, and it was approved as follows:

AYES: Ms. Cusick, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Motwani, Ms. Reilly, and Ms. Serapiglia.

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Mr. Collum, Mr. Katz, Ms. Ramakrishnan, and Ms. Saltzman.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report for August 2023 was reviewed by the Board.

Mr. McGinley stated that the financials are well for over halfway through the year. The \$30,000 budgeted for the overlap in Heads of Tech Services may not need to be used. Mr. McGinley pointed out that the majority of one-time payments for benefits were listed on the bills and claims in this meeting. He also stated that the bills and claims for September were revised to include a 50% deposit for the Local History Room renovation.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

Ms. Habayeb moved to approve the Bills and Claims totaling \$58,271.68 for September 2023. Ms. Motwani seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Ms. Davidson, co-President of the Friends, stated the Friends are preparing for the November Jewelry Sale. Donations are slowing, so Ms. Davidson encouraged donation reminders. A member of the Summit Friends of the Library has been a huge help to the Friends. A discussion ensued about donated items.

Ms. Davidson mentioned that Sharing the Warmth, the Friends knitting group, donated 38 Afghans to the WYMCA for abuse victims. There is also a new little library in Mindowaskin Park.

FOUNDATION

No Foundation reports.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director's Report was reviewed. Mr. McGinley reported:

- According to the statistics, typically the last 2 weeks of August slow down, but we did not see that this year. All the stats are up and increasing. Web views stats are reported to the state. That number may be down, but it is consistently in the 15,000- 19,000 views range monthly. We pay for advertising, and the organic views are up. Mr. McGinley considers the website a door to services, not the end goal.
- The parking lot was milled, paved, restriped, and now has ADA pads as well.
- The consortium grant from Union County for \$32,067.10 was approved and will cover the extraction costs from our old system as well as the startup costs related to joining LMXAC.
- The Women's Club of Westfield donated \$200,000 for an electric bookmobile. A bookmobile will have more costs, and Mr. McGinley recapped the discussion of converting a gas powered mobile, or native EV "Book Hauler" type options. Electric vehicles would have on board weight restrictions, which is why they are called book haulers. Good for hauling books around, not for people being on board the mobile. Mr. McGinley will work on a photo for the donation and investigate staffing a driver for the book mobile.
- The Youth Services department has new programs. They are hosting a Halloween costume exchange. Mr. McGinley stated the library will monitor this and see how to continue it in the

future. Partnering with other libraries to donate costumes is an option. Another new program is the Pokemon club. It is a super popular club and may grow to teach the game as well. Story time is expanding to Saturdays once a month to meet demands. Discussions ensued about these Youth Services programs.

- LMXAC hired a full-time cataloguer for their system. They will help train libraries in transition.
- In response to the Chicago public libraries violence threats, ALA released this statement:

The American Library Association (ALA) vehemently condemns the violence, threats of violence and other acts of intimidation that are increasingly taking place in America's libraries, including the recent bomb threats to Chicago-area public libraries, putting the lives of our communities, families, and library workers in danger.

Libraries are meant to be a safe haven for our communities, welcoming of people everywhere who believe in the peaceful exchange of ideas. These ongoing and rising attacks on America's libraries pose an existential threat to the cornerstone of our democracy. Libraries are committed to upholding and defending the core values of inclusion and free and equal access to ideas and information, which are essential to an informed democratic society. The freedom to read is a constitutionally protected right, and reading choices must be left to the reader, and in case of children, their parents. Threats of physical harm and harassment are not, and never have been, protected speech.

ALA continues to call upon community leaders and elected officials to stand with libraries and others who promote the free and democratic exchange of ideas and to denounce those who would undermine it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Habayeb asked for committee reports.

Financial Committee

The Financial Committee met to discuss strategic priorities for the budget. The plan is to have a draft of the FY budget for the October meeting. There is a 5% increase from last year.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any old business.

Meeting Room Policy Revisions

Mr. McGinley discussed the meeting room policy changes again. Limiting for profit and not based in Westfield usage. Continuing to have issues with social media promotion that the library was unaware of and didn't intend. Mr. McGinley pointed out that the local girl scouts had 5 meetings in September, plus the ALA and the state library hold the opinion that there should be no charge for meeting spaces.

Ms. Habayeb motioned to approve the revised meeting room policy. Ms. Serapiglia seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any new business.

Book Sanctuary Resolution

Mr. McGinley stated libraries across the country are seeing unprecedented book challenges. He would like the board to make a proactive stance ahead of the banned book program the night after the board meeting. The Freedom to Read statement was attached to the resolution.

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

Mr. McGinley stated that this was first adopted in 1953. It has been revised some but is the same language. As part of the resolution, Mr. McGinley highlighted lines of section 5. Book Sanctuary Actions. Host and join in-person or virtual banned book clubs to encourage critical discussions of censored stories. Supplying and collecting donations of banned books for little libraries. Mr. McGinley said that so much of this is core library foundations. A discussion ensued about various attempts to ban books in the past, as well as bans that are not outright bans, like checking out banned books or making them go missing so they are not available.

Ms. Haybayeb motioned to approve the Resolution Adopting the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement and Declaring the Westfield Memorial Library to be a Book Sanctuary. Ms. Cusick seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Resolutions for Local History Room renovations

At a previous meeting, the board approved plans to renovate the Local History room. Mr. McGinley asked for approval of the contracts and vendors to move forward with the plan. The projects will be managed by Soyka Smith Design Studios. Resolutions proposed are as follows:

- Resolution to award contract for conference chairs to Krueger International for \$3,300.00.

- Resolution to award contract for shelving to Fleetwood Furniture for \$29,500.00.
- Resolution to award contract for tables & chairs to Soyka Smith Design Studios for \$35,000.00.
- Resolution to award contract for flooring to Hannon Floors for \$6,000.00

Motions to accept each resolution were put forth by Ms. Haybayeb, and seconded by Ms. Motwani.

Roll call voting for each resolution was the same for each resolution.

AYES: Ms. Cusick, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Motwani, Ms. Reilly, and Ms. Serapiglia.

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Mr. Collum, Mr. Katz, Ms. Ramakrishnan, and Ms. Saltzman.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Nicole Peist