

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting

March 27, 2024

Ms. Habayeb, President of the Board, called the regular meeting of the Westfield Memorial Library Board of Trustees to order at 7:31 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: Mr. Collum, Mr. Domogala, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Ramakrishnan, Ms. Reilly, Ms. Saltzman, 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 February 28, 2024 regular meeting. seconded the motion, and it was approved as follows:

AYES: Mr. Collum, Mr. Domogala, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Ramakrishnan, and Ms. Saltzman.

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Ms. Cusick, Ms. Motwani, Ms. Reilly, and Ms. Serapiglia.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report for February 2024 was reviewed by the Board. Mr. McGinley said that it was still early in the year, and nothing had been too major yet. The bills and claims were a bit higher, including \$6,000 in elevator repairs, and funds to purchase annual digital content credits.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

Mr. Collum moved to approve the Bills and Claims totaling \$76,159.38 for March 2024. Ms. Ramakrishnan seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Ms. Davidson, co-President of the Friends, submitted their report after the Director's Report, as a change in meeting space caused Ms. Saltzman and Ms. Davidson to arrive at 7:36 pm.

- The April book sale is looking for help. The Friends get 1,000s of books donated.
- DPW will provide a truck for discarding items like previous years.
- The Friends will have a table at the April 20th Free Market.
- The Little Free Libraries need kid's books donated. The Friends refill the Mindowaskin park library twice a week, especially if the weather is nice.

FOUNDATION

Ms. VanArendonk, President of the Foundation, was not present at the meeting. Mr. Collum and Mr. McGinley gave updates for the Foundation.

Mr. Collum stated that the Foundation is working on a new logo. Mr. McGinley mentioned a piece of art that the library considered a while back. The library would pay half for this art, and the Foundation would pay the other half. A drone picture of the library has been the best reference for the artist. The intent is to use the image for National Library Week on cards, as well as having a physical copy in the Local History room, plus five more the Foundation can use for fundraising auctions.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- Another good statistics month, with numbers increasing across the board. Instagram stats were down, but the library paid for ads last year, and this year we have not paid for ads.
- The statistics have been submitted to the State for State Aid. Mr. McGinley included other library statistics in his report for comparison. The LMXAC circulation statistics is projected as we have only been in the consortium for 8 months, and do not have a full year's data yet. Westfield was number one for digital content circulation. Mr. McGinley has focused on increasing the digital content in the last year, and this statistic shows how important that was.
- Under Building and Grounds, construction on the Local History Room is completed. The library is waiting on reframing of historic prints for the walls. Also, the HVAC inspections were ok.

- Per Capita State Aid was submitted, the library should receive it in October for 2025 budgets.
- NJ Maker’s Day had 300 people. The High School Robotics team is fantastic, and the students were great with the kids. NJ Workshop for the Arts taught about instruments. There were also programs from the 4H club, the Girl Scouts, and an accessibility app creator.
- Rockness Music is parent and me enrichment classes, that are popular and fully registered for each event.
- 18 people attended the Banned Book Discussion Group on Maus by Art Spiegelman. The group on June 10 will be about All Boys Aren’t Blue by George M. Johnson.
- In Technology, Mr. McGinley highlighted that there has been a ton of progress on RFID tagging, and has over 3,000 books tagged already. There will also be a new one on one technology assistance program led by librarian Victoria Pawlicki.
- New Artist in Residence program, in partnership with the Westfield Art Association, will receive dedicated gallery space for 3 months. In return, they will provide public events, with at least an art demonstration, hands on workshop, and a discussion about the art.
- The Girl Scouts have partnered with Lifelong Westfield to host a game night for seniors. Mr. McGinley this is the girl scouts working towards their bronze award.
- LMXAC continues to bring in more Union County libraries, adding Union (Twp), Hillside, and Garwood.

Follow up questions for this report included Ms. Habayeb asking about the status of the library’s hacked Facebook account. Mr. McGinley said the library is not likely to recover the account, and it might be time to formally “sunset” the account. Close the Facebook chapter and shift to Instagram for social media outreach. Ms. Saltzman asked about the stats on Facebook interactions, and if it will be a future issue since Instagram is owned by Facebook. A discussion of the two services ensued.

Ms. Saltzman wondered who coordinated the NJ Maker’s Day. Mr. McGinley said the Youth Services Department led this year. Ms. Ramakrishnan inquired where the art space for the residency would be. Mr. McGinley plans a new art wall in the meeting room hallway. Mr. Collum was curious how Mr. McGinley’s speaking engagement went. Mr. McGinley elaborated on the Monmouth program about censorship and book banning, and library advocacy went well. A discussion about banned books ensued, and Mr. McGinley added that we have not had substantially formal challenges to our books since the one challenge. Mostly it is informal questions to answer about the books.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Habayeb asked for committee reports. There were none.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any old business.

Art Gallery Policy

Mr. McGinley proposed a formal policy for displaying art in the library at the previous meeting and asked for a motion to approve it at this meeting. The policy adds language that would allow receptions as well as the artists to sell the art at a 5% commission fee paid to the library.

Ms. Habayeb inquired whether the policy would retroactively apply to the current art gallery waiting list. Mr. McGinley said he had been soft testing this policy and that it was working, so he wanted to make this officially the policy.

Mr. Collum made the motion to accept the Art Gallery Policy. Ms. Habayeb seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Habayeb asked if there was any new business.

Mr. McGinley brought up an interior design for private study room spaces. There would be 1-2 on one side of the second floor, and 5-6 on the other side. People are already using the library for group study, it's just not as convenient as an actual room. There is potential to create these spaces without an architect and serious construction. The north and south ends of the second floor have drop ceilings. An architect is reviewing, because of the sprinklers and duct work. The spaces should go up to the ceilings regardless, with sound panels, glass panels, and new furniture. Previously, this project was budgeted at \$300,000 and Mr. McGinley is waiting for a newer estimate. It may be closer to \$350,000 now, and the library received the surplus check in the amount of \$200,000. Mr. McGinley was asking to use \$50,000 from the unreserved money, possibly budgeting up to \$400,000 for these spaces.

A discussion ensued, covering a range of questions, including:

- When and how long? Several weeks, probably in the summer to avoid the heavy use of the library when the students have projects and finals.
- The Friends have \$5,000 in Beth Pollack's name that they are looking for a way to contribute.
- How many shelves will be displaced? With a follow up about getting new shelving? Mr. McGinley said we have too many books. Non-Fiction section is easy, while the Fiction section is tougher. There will be shifting of some stacks. Non-Fiction is twice as big as Fiction section, and used less than Fiction. There will be some potential for newer shelving in newer sections, but the second floor shelves will be repurposed, reducing cluttering.
- The tables by the Reference desk that the students use? Mr. McGinley is looking to redesign the second floor, with longer tables and smaller two person tables, and more modernized study carrels.

Mr. McGinley reiterated that the library has reserve funds for improvements, and that we can not do everything at once. After Town investments, and working on what we can first, we can partner with others afterwards. There is \$300,000 budgeted, and the ask is to add another \$50,000 to the budget. Mr. McGinley will come back with specific resolutions at a later meeting for plans and vendors. Ms. Saltzman asked if this is enough of a budget. Mr. McGinley is looking to earmark \$400,000 specifically for the second floor study space renovations.

Ms. Reilly motioned to budget \$400,000 for the small group rooms on the second floor. Ms. Ramakrishnan seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

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 8:22 P.M. Ms. Saltzman seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted:
Nicole Peist

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

The Public Session reconvened at 8:36 P.M.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Mr. Collum, Mr. Domogala, Ms. Habayeb, Ms. Ramakrishnan, Ms. Reilly, and Ms. Saltzman. Staff members attending were: Mr. McGinley.

Ms. Habayeb reported to Mr. McGinley that the board has really appreciated his work over the past year and appreciates the goals that he has set for the coming year.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 P.M.

Submitted by Mallary Saltzman, Board of Trustee secretary