

WASHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting  
Library Board of Trustees  
June 24, 2019

**AGENDA:** Reading of the Open Public Meeting Act

**ROLL CALL:** Scott McDonald, John Valentine, Rosemarie Rosati, and Deputy Mayor Ethel Conry representing Mayor David Higgins - A quorum was present

Absent: Jeanine Gleba, Ron Duryea, and Jacqueline Nassry

Also in attendance: Usha Thampi-Lukose; Library Director and Tracy Quamme, Account Clerk

The regular monthly meeting of the Washington Public Library, Board of Trustees was called to order by President Scott McDonald at 7:03 PM.

The Board of Trustee members were informed by Michelle Norris that she has been appointed to the Board. Since there was no advance notice to any of the Officers of the Board, Ms. Norris will need to be sworn in at the July meeting.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** A motion was made by Rosemarie Rosati and seconded by Ethel Conry to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Washington Public Library Board of Trustees held on May 20, 2019 with corrections needing to be made to the spelling of the Deputy Mayor's last name.

All in favor with 4 ayes.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** none

**AUDIENCE:**

President Scott McDonald opened up audience portion. Seeing no one, Scott asked for a motion to close this portion of the meeting. Ethel Conry made the motion to close the audience portion; John Valentine made the second. The motion passed with all in favor (4 ayes).

**REPORTS:**

1. President's Report

Scott McDonald stated that his only report for this meeting was to introduce the Trustee Manual that he had emailed earlier to all Board of Trustee members. Mr. McDonald reported that he has done some limited editing to the 2015 NJ State Library document to tailor it to our needs. He asked that all Board members review the document and come to prepared to vote on its approval at the July meeting.

No discussion. John Valentine made the motion to approve the report and Ethel Conry seconded. All in favor 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions

## 2. Treasurer's Report

Scott McDonald made the motion to approve the May financial reports and accept the Treasurer's report; Ethel Conry seconded the motion.

Discussion – none

Roll Call: Scott McDonald, John Valentine, Rosemarie Rosati, and Deputy Mayor Conroy representing Mayor David Higgins

All in favor 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions

## 2. Director's Report

The Director reported that the Friends of the Library has been added to Amazon Smile. John Valentine said that he will find the directions for selecting it as the designated charity. Scott McDonald suggested that these directions be added to an announcement that this group can be chosen in Amazon Smile.

Usha Thampi-Lukose stated that the library door locks have been changed. She also reported that the Warren County Technical High School student (under the supervision of his teacher) has completed the floor plans for the Library. He did a wonderful job that involved detailed work.

The Director further reported that the pest issue continues. Scott McDonald requested that Ethel Conry remind the Borough Council that the ground still needs to be regraded away from the outside wall due to the insect problem and the deterioration of the tiles.

Finally, Ms. Thampi-Lukose announced that the Summer Reading program kick-off was a success with 116 children registered from Washington Borough and the surrounding area. The kickoff event was supported by the Woman's Club, and the remaining funds from them were used to also buy supplies such as prizes and folders for the reading program.

A motion was made by Ethel Conry to accept the June Director's report; John Valentine seconded the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously with all in favor (4 ayes).

## 3. Committee Reports

- a. House Committee – No report.
- b. Policy Committee - Usha Thampi-Lukose provided an update that the patron acknowledgement of the AUP policy is functioning.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Friends of the Library Update

Per Board Liaison John Valentine, the tricky tray event was a success. Close to \$2,900 were generated. Mr. Valentine is also talking to Habitat regarding support. He reported that the Friends of the Library has secured a new volunteer.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Josh Melchor from Merrill Lynch Wealth Management- not able to attend due to illness.
2. Suzi Mar, Washington Borough Green Team – Also did not attend.
3. Proposed Trustee Manual – See President’s report. Will be voted on during the July Board of Trustees Meeting.
4. Policies for Approval or to be amended

*DVD/Video Game, Audiobook and Music CD Lending Policy-* Ethel Conry made the motion for approval and John Valentine seconded. No discussion. All in favor (4 ayes).

*Reserve Policy-* John Valentine made the motion for approval and Ethel Conry seconded. All in favor with 4 ayes.

Note: This policy was later voided when Rosemarie Rosati questioned the redundancy with the comprehensive “Circulation Policy” when that policy was later reviewed and found to include the “Reserve Policy.”

John Valentine and Ethel Conry withdrew their prior motions and all voted in favor of voiding the “Reserve Policy” with 4 ayes.

*Telephone Use Rules-* John Valentine made the motion to approve this policy and Ethel Conry seconded. All in favor with 4 ayes.

*Scooter, Rollerblade, Skates, Skateboards & Bicycle Policy -* John Valentine made the motion to approve and Ethel Conry seconded. All in favor with 4 ayes.

*Circulation Policy-* Rosemarie Rosati made the motion for approval and Ethel Conry seconded. All in favor with 4 ayes.

5. Budget Issues

As the new chair of the finance committee, Rosemarie Rosati met with the Borough Manager, Matt Hall, to get a better sense of the perspective of the Borough Council toward the library’s financial situation. Tracy Quamme, Account Clerk also participated to assist with giving Matt Hall an overview of the impact the lower appropriation will have on the library’s separate funds.

On a positive note, Mr. Hall appeared to have complete confidence in Ms. Quamme and the management of existing funds. Budget projections were presented, which he understood were based on historic levels of expenditures and recent efforts to freeze discretionary spending. Given that salary increases this year will result in personnel costs equaling our total Borough allocation, Ms. Rosati explained that utility costs of approximately \$15k, which have been covered by the Borough allocation in the past, will now have to be covered by Library funds. She also pointed out the facility costs that have already been traditionally covered by the library fund, such as the alarm system, and the significant new cost of the audit (\$4,000).

Mr. Hall heard the concern about the new costs moving to the library in light of the fact that in the last couple of years we have already been spending more on the library side than we have brought in as income in amounts of \$6-10k. Ms. Rosati told the Borough Manager about efforts to do more fundraising, but indicated that is not likely to balance the budget in the near future. Mr. Hall expressed agreement that it is important for the library to maintain our reserve funds rather than gradually spend the funds down.

For the rest of the meeting, the Borough Manager expressed questions that he and the Mayor (and most of the Council?) have about our salary costs. Although they may acknowledge that staffing decisions are under the Library Board's authority, it seemed clear that the Borough will not allocate additional funds if they feel that cuts could be made, especially given the concern about not raising taxes. Mr. Hall heard that we froze one position, but he repeatedly emphasized that municipalities have been forced to reduce administrative costs.

The Borough Manager noted that our current expense for a Library Director accounts for half of our personnel budget. He and others are questioning whether a 29.5 hour/week position is necessary. (He asked what the Director does that requires that much time.) Mr. Hall repeatedly noted the number of administrative positions in small municipalities that are filled by people who work full time for a larger municipality and only work a few hours for the smaller town. He gave the example of their CFO who only works 7 hours per week for Washington Borough and works full time elsewhere.

The salary level of the Director position was also questioned. I told the Borough Manager that he could not compare the salary of a professional to one of his non-professional managers, but Mr. Hall questioned what professional certifications are actually needed. I told him that we would have to check the state requirements. Mr. Hall cautioned that we not rely on the State Library Association since that is just a lobbying group. He stated that it is the NJ State Library is the authority and that we should consult with the attorney who leads their legal division.

As an example, which Mr. Hall admitted was extreme, he brought up the Alpha Public Library. He conceded that Alpha is very small compared to Washington Borough, but he claims that the library is fully functional with just one librarian. The Borough Manager was the first to say that this is not an arrangement that we should strive to copy given that the library closes when that person is not working, but he noted their strong online presence which details extensive programming.

Scott McDonald indicated that he could reach out to a member of the Alpha Public Library Board of Trustees to get more information about how their library is functioning.

Deputy Mayor Ethel Conry will again discuss various library budget concerns with the Borough Council and make requests for additional support. Rosemarie Rosati emphasized the importance of educating the Borough Manager and Council members about the importance of the Library Director position so they do not consider a cut to this position as the answer to the library budget shortfall.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** (as needed):

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, a motion was made by John Valentine and seconded by Scott McDonald to adjourn. The motion was carried. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Washington Public Library, Board of Trustees, will be held on Monday, July 22, 2019 at 7:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemarie Rosati  
Secretary