

WASHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting
Library Board of Trustees
November 23, 2020

MINUTES

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER/COMPLIANCE WITH THE SUNSHINE LAW: President Ron Duryea called the regular monthly meeting of the Washington Public Library Board of Trustees to order via Zoom call at 7:24 PM and read the Open Public Meeting Act.

II. DECLARE A QUORUM: Ron Duryea declared a quorum.

III. ROLL CALL: Mayor David Higgins, Ron Duryea, John Valentine, Jaymie DeWitt, and Rosemarie Rosati.

Absent: Jaqueline Nassry and Frank May-who may have not known that the Zoom call was finally organized late.

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

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Ron Duryea made the motion that the agenda be approved, and Jaymie DeWitt seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor, five (5) ayes.

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: A motion was made by Mayor Higgins and seconded by Ron Duryea to approve the minutes of the Washington Public Library Board of Trustees meeting held on October 26, 2020. Approved with five (5) ayes.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING/AUDIENCE: President Ron Duryea opened up the audience portion of the meeting. With no one from the public on the Zoom call, this portion of the meeting was closed.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS: None.

VIII. REPORTS:

1. President's Report

Ron Duryea reviewed purchases he made for COVID protection at the Library, including masks, face shields, sanitizer, plus Plexiglass sheeting to create a barrier for the circulation desk. A few additional items had to be ordered. Upon approval by the Borough Council, the Library's total of \$1285.60 is to be included in the Borough submission to the State for reimbursement. The Trustees thanked the President for his generosity in fronting the money and for his efforts in shopping for so many supplies.

2. Treasurer's Report -

John Valentine made the motion to approve the report, and Rosemarie Rosati seconded the motion.

Roll call: Jaymie DeWitt – yes, Rosemarie Rosati – yes and John Valentine-yes. Ron-abstain and David Higgins-abstain due to an inability to review the reports.

Approved with 3 ayes, 2 abstentions, and 0 nays.

3. Director's Report

Full report distributed. Highlights include:

Fire Inspection: The Fire Marshall completed his annual fire inspection for the library on November 5, 2020. The library received a “violation notice and an order to correct” the fire alarm panel breaker so that it was locked in the “on” position as per NFPA 72. The Borough Department of Public Works (DPW) will correct the violation.

E-Rate Updates and Training (Funding Year 2021): The Director attended a webinar sponsored by the New Jersey State Library (NJSL) on the E-rate program that helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband: internet access, telecommunications, etc. The information focused on applying for funding, with discounts for support depending on the level of poverty and whether the school or library was located in an urban or rural area.

Delivering Effective Customer Service While Keeping Library Staff and Patrons Safe in the New Normal: This workshop sponsored by the NJSL was a presentation on ways/scenarios of dealing with customers in the new normal due to the Pandemic.

State Aid and Municipal Appropriation 2021: The State Aid will be \$2800, and the municipal appropriation will be \$149,734, an increase of \$1,000 over the 2020 appropriation.

Rosemarie Rosati made the motion to approve the Director's Report, and Jaymie DeWitt seconded the motion. All in favor with 5 ayes.

4. Committee Reports

- a. Finance Committee – Rosemarie Rosati provided an analysis of the “In-House” financials to demonstrate the Library's lack of sustainability. Despite the limited operation this year due to the Pandemic, the year to date spending indicates that the total for this year is likely to reach the original budgeted amount of approximately \$15K if the audit were to be charged to this account. The spending exceeds the income listed in this year's budget, which uses last year's amount of almost \$9k. The forecast for next year is dire given that 2021 In-House budget will rely on the income from this year, which is likely to be half the normal amount given our closure. Since In-House expenses always exceed our income, each year we are using our reserves to balance the In-House budget for expenses not covered by the 1/3 mil Borough appropriation. The good news is that the Borough budget is likely to have funds available due to lower expenses being charged this year. We are free to use these funds

to charge this year's audit and any additional expenses at the end of the year.

The Finance Committee will still need to meet to strategize how to address the larger deficit anticipated next year, when we will hopefully be fully operational, but at the same time, will only be able to rely upon the limited income from 2020. The Committee further needs to address the ongoing challenge of sustainability given that our reserves are dwindling.

Some discussion ensued regarding the available Construction Grant, with Jaymie DeWitt offering to work on the grant preparation. Usha Thampi-Lukose reminded the Trustees that the challenge was to secure the Borough matching funds. Jaymie DeWitt and the Mayor will follow up to further discuss that issue.

- b. House Committee – No report beyond the earlier discussion of the Fire Inspection.
- c. Policy Committee – The focus this month has been on the development of procedures to more fully open the Library by 12/1/20, but the Board of Trustees decided to hold off on the opening given that the physical environment needs more preparation; e.g., DPW installing the recently purchased Plexiglass.

Jaymie DeWitt reported that she will be circulate recommended modifications to the By-Laws prior to next month's meeting.

- d. Friends of the Library – The November 1st Tricky Tray event generated between \$6,000 to \$8,000 despite the difficulty arranging local advertising beyond the advertising of the event on a popular Tricky Tray website. The committee was complimented for their amazing effort pulling together so many wonderful donations and organizing such a successful event.

Discussion regarding the promotion of the Giving Tuesday Challenge. The Trustees acknowledged Mayor Higgins' generosity in offering to shave off his goatee, which he has had for more than 20 years, if the funds raised surpass \$500.

No update regarding the development of an Affiliation Agreement/ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Friends of the Library and the Board of Trustees nor a formal wish list of needs to be supported by the Friends fundraising.

IX. OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Pandemic Funding for Library: No additional information beyond that reported during the President's report.
- 2. Audit: The Mayor again affirmed that the Borough Auditor cannot include library in the Borough audit due to the conflict of interest issue. He did suggest that the Library ask their auditor to offer a reduced cost for this year's

audit given the extraordinary circumstances of the Pandemic which had such a large negative impact on income.

- X. NEW BUSINESS:** Library opening delayed. Preparations continue.
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION (as needed):** None.
- XII. COMMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS:** Ron Duryea brought up the outstanding issue related to the replacement of Library security cameras. Usha Thampi-Lukose reported that the Borough Council had approved the quote that had been submitted by the Library. Given the amount of time that has elapsed, she is now attempting to get an updated quote. The vendor indicated that he will try to match the prior cost quoted.
- XIII. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Ron Duryea announced the adjournment of the meeting at 8:12 PM.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Washington Public Library, Board of Trustees, will be held on Monday, December 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemarie Rosati – Secretary