

The Public Library of the Township of Mahwah
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Special Meeting
May 8, 2019

Call to Order: Mr. Wendrychowicz, President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM, in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act adequate notice for the special meeting was published in the *Record*, posted in the library website, on the library website and filed with the Township Clerk.

Attendance:

Public: Sharon Javer, Jennifer Park, Tom Murphy, Ward Donigian, – Advocacy Committee
Evelyn Slockbower – Public
Robert Ferguson – Township Council Representative

Present:

Mr. Grob
Mr. Clarkin
Mr. Koster
Mr. Orlich
Mr. Wendrychowicz
Mr. Hadelers
Ms. Gildert
Ms. Laforme

Absent:

Ms. Cassotis
Mr. Lee
Mayor Roth
Mr. Wolf
Dr. Schoen

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Wendrychowicz expressed his appreciation and thanked the Girl Scouts for the work they did in developing and re-opening the pathway between Joyce Kilmer and the library. At the last Board of Education meeting he thanked them for the good job they did and their part in making life long readers and library users by opening the pathway up to students.

Mr. Wendrychowicz and Mr. Hadelers explained that purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide feedback only on the presentation that was prepared to present to the Township Council on June 13th. The presentation explains the request by the Library board of trustees to the Council to approve a referendum on the November 5 ballot that will allow residents to vote on increasing the library's millage rate from 1/3 mill to 3/8 of a mill.

Mr. Hadelers ran a video of the prerecorded presentation.

Mr. Wendrychowicz commented that the presentation is well done, it addresses all the issues that were brought up by the advocacy committee and the board of trustees.

Ms. Javer recommended a change where it mentions that there will be a decline in customer service, since comes across as not being nice.

Mr. Donigian questioned the run time and asked if the last slide would stay up, he would add that any surplus will go back to the Township as tax relief, an important aspect that the Council needs to know.

Mr. Ferguson questioned if we are going play the recorded presentation or if is going to be presented in person. Mr. Hadelers responded that he was planning on speaking directly to the Council and that the

Council is going to be given a written report in advance of the meeting and a version will be posted on the library website.

Mr. Ferguson recommended showing the purchase of library materials will go down if we do not do this and showing key bullet points, stating we are going to go from here to here.

Mr. Koster asked, what questions can we anticipate from the Council. Mr. Ferguson responded they may include, what other revenues are you trying to generate and what are you doing to lower expenses.

Mr. Dongian questioned if in the written presentation included a timetable to illustrate to the Council that the item cannot be tabled. He also asked if BCCLS could provide us with a support person to speak. Mr. Hadelers responded that he is the BCCLS president this year and asked about information from BCCLS that might be helpful. He noted that there are a number of towns that fund their library's over the 1/3 of a mill, including Ridgewood, Paramus and Bergenfield. Mr. Ferguson questioned how those libraries get the additional money. Mr. Hadelers explained that municipalities can fund libraries up to 15% over the 1/3 of a mill. This is done by many libraries in BCCLS. Mr. Ferguson stated that it is important to explain that funds are coming out of operating and capital, and that this is a better option.

Mr. Orlich questioned on page 3 if the source of the 18.5% inflation rate was identified and recommended including it, on slide 6 to change the font to a dollar sign. He questioned the basis for the 17.5% fixed expenses. Mr. Hadelers explained that it is projecting future budgets with personnel costs, 2 to 2.5% increases for the staff, plus what we think are reasonable expectation for health benefits which could be up to 6% each year. Mr. Ferguson recommended flipping this, whatever document you are handing out we can refer to that so it ties back. Mr. Orlich had recommendations for the graphics, Mr. Hadelers agreed to make the graphics clearer.

Mr. Ferguson recommended having a hard copy for the audience since it is difficult to see the screens in the court room and letting people know that the slide presentation will be on the web-site. Mr. Hadelers anticipates the presentation running 10 minutes, and he is working to trim it slightly.

Mr. Wendrychowicz stated that he does not believe that the second meeting on May 22nd is necessary. Mr. Hadelers stated that a second meeting would be useful if the Board wanted to discuss any additional materials that will be given to Town Council.

Mr. Wendrychowicz questioned if there were any other concerns. Ms. Clarkin stated that we may be questioned by the Council how it would be promoted if approved. Mr. Hadelers responded that the Library, which includes the staff and trustees, cannot *advocate* for the referendum but they can *educate*. The Friends of the Library and the members of the advocacy committee, who are not staff or trustees, can advocate for the referendum.

Mr. Murphy stated that if the Council asks about other options, they can raise the appropriation up to 15% or a petition can be used to get the referendum on the ballot which the Library is not prepared to do at this time.

Mr. Wendrychowicz stated that if our request to Town Council is successful, we will begin planning the public education and advocacy components. Mr. Hadelers reiterated that the Library educate residents about the referendum, such as highlighting what "yes" votes and "no" votes mean, and explaining how the funds will be used. The Advocacy Committee and Friends can advocate for a "yes" vote. After the first introduction to Council on June 13th there are two Sunday concerts that we plan to show a short video presentation before the start of the concert. Assuming approval from the Council to be on the ballot on June 27th, we will show the video at the Summer Reading kickoff, summer reading programs and from Labor Day through November to attendees of programs and concerts, an opportunity to focus on people who use the library and understand its value.

Mr. Wendrychowicz stated that once we get our presentation made to the Town Council that is the time to approach Town Council members that we really need that vote. Mr. Hadelier pointed out that the salient point is that we are not asking the Town Council for money we are asking for them to allow a democratic process to move forward and empowering residents to vote.

Ms. Slockbower stated from a residents point of view she does not understand why the Council would not let residents vote on this. Mr. Ferguson stated that there is a general apprehension that you are promoting a tax increase, that is what people fear.

Mr. Orlich stated that people can go there and speak during public session.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Koster and seconded by Mr. Grob to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Curtis P. Koster
Vice President