

The Public Library of the Township of Mahwah  
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting  
November 18, 2020

**Call to Order:**

Ms. Clarkin, President, called the special meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

- In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, this meeting was announced in the Bergen Record, on the Library's website and on signs posted at the Library entrances.
- This meeting is taking place on-line in accordance with New Jersey state statute 10:4-8B, which authorizes local units to conduct public meetings through the use of streaming services and other online meeting platforms.
- Information on accessing this public meeting has been posted on the library's website, members of the public are welcome to participate only during the public portions at the beginning and end of the meeting by voice, telephone or webcam using the "chat" feature in the conferencing software.

**Present:**

Ms. Cassotis  
Ms. Clarkin  
Dr. Fitts  
Mr. Grob  
Mr. Koster  
Mr. Orlich  
Mr. Wendrychowicz  
Mr. Wolf  
Mr. Haderler  
Mr. Gallina  
Mr. Liden  
Ms. Senedzuk  
Ms. Mercadante

**Absent:**

Mayor Roth

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Mr. Grob led the pledge of allegiance.

**Public Present:** None.

**Public Session:**

A motion was made at 7:30 PM by Mr. Orlich and seconded by Mr. Lee to open the meeting to the public. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was at made at 7:31 PM by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Orlich to close the meeting to the public. Motion passed unanimously.

**Secretary's Report:**

A motion was made by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Orlich to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:**

- Operating Budget vs Actual as of October 31, 2020

- Mr. Wolf reported that income is about \$11,000 below budget, following the same trend as the past eight months. The municipal appropriation is on budget and in line with the year's plan.
- Expenses for the month rose slightly this month. Overall, we are below budget and do not expect any change next month.
  - Year-to-date expenses are \$267,000 lower than budgeted.
  - It is expected that expenses for the year will be about \$300,000 under what was planned since we are not operating at the capacity due to COVID. Given the circumstances, we are operating above normal conditions.
- Mr. Hadelier reported that the fourth quarter appropriation was received on November 13th. He agreed to prepare a forecast through February, the first payment in 2021, so we know how much to keep in reserve.
- Mr. Wolf stated that we transferred the budgeted amount to the capital fund. Based on expenses running under budget and anticipated capital expenses over the next few years, we can make an additional transfer in December.

A motion was made by Ms. Clarkin and seconded by Ms. Cassotis to accept the operating budget, account balances and reconciliations in the October 2020 Treasurer's Report.

Roll Call:

Ms. Cassotis – yes  
 Ms. Clarkin – yes  
 Dr. Fitts - yes  
 Mr. Grob - yes  
 Mr. Koster - yes  
 Mr. Lee – yes  
 Mr. Orlich - yes  
 Mayor Roth - absent  
 Mr. Wendrychowicz - yes  
 Mr. Wolf – yes

Motion passed unanimously.

- Bills for Payment -

- Mr. Wolf stated that the bills this month are as usual, including the BCCLS quarterly bill.
- Mr. Hadelier explained that the CDW-G bill from the capital budget was used to purchase six new staff computers, which were installed. The CDW-G bill for \$2,400 out of the operating budget was used for monitors, PC mounting brackets and KVM switch for our server racks.

A motion was made by Mr. Lee and seconded by Mr. Wendrychowicz to approve the November 2020 Bills for Payment from the operating and capital funds.

Roll Call:

Ms. Cassotis – yes  
 Ms. Clarkin – yes  
 Dr. Fitts - yes  
 Mr. Grob - yes  
 Mr. Koster - yes  
 Mr. Lee – yes  
 Mr. Orlich - yes  
 Mayor Roth - absent

Mr. Wendrychowicz - yes

Mr. Wolf – yes

Motion passed unanimously.

- Capital Projects Schedule - Mr. Haderler reviewed the capital funding for the capital projects and noted that following:
  - **Driveway and parking lot renovations** – After speaking with Boswell Engineering this week, they will give an updated estimate for the driveway and parking lot. They are going to consult with their solar specialist to determine if exploring a solar canopy for the back parking lot is worth it.
  - **Re-roofing the bump-outs over the window seats** – Advanced Roofing provided an updated estimate of \$30,000 for the base cost of ripping off the existing roofing material and replacing it. The total cost for the project is estimated at \$45,000.
  - **Refreshing the In-between teen room** – We met with Janice Davis, the designer, to discuss changes to the teen room. She provided an estimate of about \$45,000 for the entire project.
  - **Restructuring the checkout area** – Mr. Haderler believes it will be in our best interest to hire an architect or designer with extensive experience working with libraries to make sure our ideas for the new checkout area are accurate and appropriate. He estimates the fees will run from \$5,000 to \$8,000.
  - **Public water fountain** – The plumber estimates that the cost for a new water fountain which doubles as a water bottle filling station is \$5,000.
  - **Changing bathroom fixtures to touchless** – Replacing the fixtures (lavatory sink, toilet and urinal fixtures) with touchless fixtures in those restrooms that will not be renovated in the near future (children's room, lower level and staff restroom) is estimated to cost from \$10,000 to \$11,000.
  - **Technology upgrades** – Some technology upgrades in the plan include
    - 2021: begin replacing the adult public computers and some internal computer networking
    - 2022: replacing the teen public computers
    - 2023: replacing some network switches

The board agreed with the overall direction and timing presented. In keeping with past practice, projects will be voted on and approved individually before they begin.
- 2021 Draft Operating Budget – Mr. Haderler stated that coming up with the 2021 budget has been problematic for the following reasons:
  - We do not know if and when the public can return to the library for programs and events. In the first draft of the budget, we tried to anticipate holding many on-line programs from January through June and resuming regular in-person programs starting in July.
  - When summer begins, we will start with our big summer reading extravaganza and by fall, hopefully return to our program schedule.
  - We have also taken a look at our personnel budgets: if we run on a limited basis from January through June, we will not need the full complement of staff budgeted for the year. If staff leave for whatever reason, we will not backfill those positions, resulting in reduced budget-to-budget personnel costs by 2.5%.
  - We continue to emphasize materials and collections. Our strategic plan goal indicates an allocation of 11.9% to collections: we are up to 12.9%.
  - Our goal for programs was 5.4%: we are down to 4.4%. Staff have discussed doing more virtual programs next year: if we are virtual for the first six months of next month, we can do more at a lower cost and resume spending on in-person programs in the summer and fall.
  - There are other changes the board should agree to conceptually, as they shift our goals and priorities. They include the following:
    1. Approach to marketing – In the past we had two lines in the budget; one for printing and another one for postage, both which have increase significantly for 2021.

- Postage has been increased for home delivery. Residents who have discovered this service really like it and find it valuable.
- We would like to do a direct mailing of a quarterly newsletter in 2021 to every household in Mahwah to reintroduce the library to people in the community who do not either use or know about the library. A quarterly newsletter would feature major library program and events, library news and on-line services. The cost would be \$16,000 to \$18,000 a year, which we can carve out from next year's budget.
- Mr. Hadeler asked the board's approval. If we are going to do this, he needs to let staff know soon so they can ramp up their programs for the spring and have the first quarter programs scheduled by the end of December. The board agreed with the expanded emphasis on marketing.
- 2. Two new lines in the budget:
  - One is a budget line dedicated to summer reading, to clearly differentiate what is spent on summer reading.
  - The other line item relates to expanding library materials along the lines of those offered for a few years, "Library of things (e.g. Kindles, GoPro camera, Roku streaming devices, wireless hot spots, etc.). We would like to expand to cover items used occasionally, such as cake pans, lawn games, seed library, etc.
- 3. Strategic decisions:
  - The strategic decisions made for materials in this budget emphasizes fiction, by putting more money into the young adult and children's fiction collections than the non-fiction.
  - The other strategic decision we made is to do away with audiobooks on CD. This year, online e-Audiobooks far surpass the circulation of physical audiobooks: we can better use space and financial resources for other collections.
  - We have increased the amount of money for computer support, maintenance and repair, to have a consultant or specialized IT service help with targeted projects.
  - We have decreased professional development since it is unlikely anyone will be traveling for conferences in 2021.
  - We have increased on eContent, allocating \$30,000 to adult, \$6,000 to young adult, \$5,000 to children's eBooks and audiobooks, to reflect the incredible demand for these items.
- The bottom line of the budget, as it shown in the first draft.
  - We have a net income/surplus of about \$85,000 and a budgeted transfer to capital of \$100,000, which will require transferring approximately \$15,000 from the operating reserve account.
- Mr. Wolf noted a few areas to focus on from a risk perspective:
  - The state aid is \$11,000: he is leery of receiving those funds next year.
  - On page 28, the "other insurance line" includes general liability, business practices, MEL insurance and bonding the treasurer. The expense is likely going up from prior years, due to the lawsuits in the town, as part of the town the library is allocated a percentage of the amount. Mr. Hadeler stated he can increase the amount to \$17,500 or \$18,000 for next year.
  - Mr. Wolf stated we are waiting for the medical plan amount to finalize the budget next month. He requested if anyone has any questions, comments or concerns to bring them up now so they can be addressed and we will plan to approve the budget next month.

#### **Director & Staff Reports:**

- BCCLS
  - Mr. Hadeler stated that BCCLS has not been able to provide a way to differentiate items checked out at the desk from those checked out through the two self-service platforms. They are working on new reports that will break down the information: by the December meeting, we should have percentages of items checked out with self-service vs. with staff assistance.

- Mr. Haderler reported that as of Monday, we are truly fine free. There were some issues with going fine free and patron records: as of Monday, those issues have been fixed by BCCLS.
- Tutoring service – Mr. Haderler expressed his frustration with the current online tutoring service because of billing and authentication issues. The youth services team has identified a new product that seems to give us more value, including additional unlimited use services at a comparable cost. Mr. Haderler confirmed the cost for the new service is reflected in the new budget.
- Personnel – Ms. Cassotis questioned if the employee that returned to work after having a positive COVID test was an error in the report. Mr. Haderler confirmed it was an error, the employee tested negative and returned to work.
- New Door Counter – Mr. Wolf questioned if there is a real benefit to installing new door counters with the new doors. Mr. Haderler responded that he would like to install a new camera-based system by the end of the year, which is better at tracking door traffic. A better counting system would give a count based on days of the week and hours of the day, which could help determine best staffing levels for different times during the week.
- COVID NJ Executive Order 196 – Mr. Haderler reported that while libraries are not mentioned specifically, we are being cautious and have taken all the chairs and remaining tables out of the library and turned them into displays. We have turned off half of the computers and are allowing two people in the quiet study rooms.

**Statistical Reports:** The statistical reports for October 2020 were acknowledged. Mr. Wolf congratulated Mr. Haderler on the month's circulation numbers which increased 7% over last year.

#### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Friends of Mahwah Library Report:**

#### **Correspondence:**

#### **Old Business:**

#### **New Business:**

Trustee appointments for 2021 – Ms. Clarkin reported since a new mayor will be sworn in at the reorganization meeting in January. She will reach out to Mayor Roth to find out if he plans to pass the baton on to Jim Wysocki for appointing two trustees and the mayor's alternate. She will also reach out to Jim Wysocki to welcome him and discuss the appointments.

Monthly board meeting start time- Mr. Lee questioned if there is any reason why the monthly meetings should not begin at 7:00 PM instead of 7:30 PM, especially considering some of the employees have put in long days.

A motion was made by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Lee to change the start time of the regular monthly meetings to start at 7:00 PM beginning in 2021. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Trustee Education:**

- Mr. Wendrychowicz reported that the Trustees 201 training was a success: 107 people attended and the evaluations were super.

- Mr. Wendrychowicz reported that the State came out with the list of libraries that were awarded the library construction grants.
  - Many libraries are upset because no reasons were given as to why libraries were rejected.
  - Mr. Wendrychowicz stated that in response, a letter sent to the State Librarian, Mary Chute from the NJ Library Trustee Association asking about the process.
  - The response from the State Library was that they are not allowed to answer questions about the awards or the steps for future grants. No answers can be provided right now and Association will inform libraries as soon as they become available. They are working on a mechanism to provide answers.
- Mr. Wendrychowicz stated that the BCCLS trustee committee is interested in possibly developing a trustee portal, my BCCLS, where trustees access resources, including recorded programs and training.

#### **Public Session:**

A motion was made at 8:57 PM by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Mr. Orlich to open the meeting to the public. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made at 8:57 PM by Mr. Wolf and seconded by Ms. Clarkin to close the meeting to the public. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Executive Session:**

#### **Upcoming Meetings & Events:**

- Wednesday, 11/25 – Library closing at 2pm for Thanksgiving
- Thursday, 11/26 – Library closed for Thanksgiving
- Wednesday, 12/16, 7:30pm – Board of Trustees regular monthly meeting. Revised 2021 budget presentation.
- Thursday, 12/24 – Friday, 12/25 – Library closed for Christmas.
- Thursday, 12/31 – Friday, 1/1/2021 – Library closed for New Year.

#### **Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Ms. Clarkin and seconded by Ms. Cassotis to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Zoe Cassotis  
Secretary