

Mission statement: The mission of the Watchung Library Advisory Board is to advise, support, and promote the interests of the Watchung Borough Public Library.

A meeting of the WLAB was held through a Google hangout call as all gatherings of ten or more people are prohibited due to the coronavirus pandemic.

President Amy Fiorilla opened and called the meeting to order at 4:13 PM.

In attendance:

- \*Amy Fiorilla, President
- \*Margaret Ellis, Vice President
- \*Stella Couchells, Treasurer
- \*Tamara Benc, Secretary
- \*Bradford Leigh, member
- \*Nina Leach, member
- \*George Alexis, Watchung Public Schools Superintendent
- \*Hannah Kerwin, Watchung Library Branch Manager
- \*Lindsay Goodloe, Borough Council member
- \*Daryl Eisenberg-Knegten, Borough Council member
- \*Virginia Hartmann

Minutes of the March 2020 meeting were e-mailed to members in advance of the meeting. Vice President Ellis made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 2020 meeting. Treasurer Couchells seconded the motion.

Treasurer Couchells shared the WLAB financial report and these highlights with members through an e-mail today:

1. After the last meeting and under Eileen Dicken's guidance, Treasurer Couchells completed the registration of the WLAB as a nonprofit with the IRS for this year.

2. Fishtank/Maintenance and Expenses:

- a) The previous treasurer, Eileen Dicken, had experienced difficulty last year with getting monthly payments to AQUA Service Professionals (ASP) in a timely fashion. At the time Ms. Couchells took over as Treasurer, we were already 2 months in arrears and another invoice had just come in for March.
- b) Ms. Couchells conferred with Bill Hance, the Borough's CFO, prior to the closing of the library due to COVID 19, and he paid them in full and arranged for a monthly auto-pay of \$75.00 to AQUA Service Professionals for their services. Their representative, Kason, now forwards invoices to Mr. Hance and Treasurer Couchells, and the company gets paid on the same date each month.
- c) This arrangement had gone smoothly until the library closed due to the quarantine. Hannah Kerwin (Watchung Branch Manager), Kason (from ASP), and Treasurer Couchells made arrangements for AQUA Service Professionals to get into the library to clean the fish tank in April. Kason suggested at that time that we install an auto-feeder at a cost of \$32.99 so that Ms. Kerwin did not have to go in as often to tend to the fish. We made that purchase and the auto-feeder was installed.
- d) The fish are very happy and the tank is sparkling!

3. Financial Report for 2020 to date:

- a) We began the year with \$11,761.10
- b) AQUA Service Professionals costs = \$421.99
- c) Added revenue included: \$24.00 returned from the end of the year party; our shares of collected fines from the SCLS of \$362.90 and \$142.47, totaling \$505.37, and fish donations totaling \$4.39
- d) There was a debit of \$132.17 for two card tables ordered from Amazon.
- e) Ending Balance = \$11,740.70 as of 5/1/2020

Laura Sargent from SCLS contacted President Fiorilla and Treasurer Couchells on May 12 about signing a voucher for \$171.60 for fines. Ms. Fiorilla signed the voucher but we have not yet received a check to be added to the revenue.

President Fiorilla reported the library commission meetings are now online. This is an opportunity for interested community members to attend without having to drive to Bridgewater. At the May commission meeting it was noted that a volunteer appreciation event would be held in November. A commissioner expressed gratitude to library advisory boards for all that they do.

Grant applications are still due by June 5, 2020. Our grant writer is in charge of our borough's application. The narrative is progressing; it is not in its final form yet. President Fiorilla stated the grant application is in order and progressing to meet the deadline.

Treasurer Couchells reiterated that two card tables were ordered from Amazon and paid for and she believes they have been delivered. However, with the building closed it's unclear if the tables were delivered to Borough Hall or the library.

Bridgewater Library has started curbside pick-ups for holds that were placed before the closing. Holds placed after the library shutdown are not yet being filled.

Friends of the Watchung Library liaison Margaret Ellis reported that the Friends' board has not met recently. Pi Day, scheduled for March 14 and chaired by Virginia Hartmann, had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The group is planning an online meeting to discuss events that may be planned within current constraints.

Significant audio issues occurred during this meeting. Branch Manager Kerwin was having difficulty connecting with her mic and could not be heard for part of the meeting. President Fiorilla adjourned the meeting at 4:41PM.

Following the meeting, Watchung Branch Manager Hannah Kerwin shared details that may have been missed due to audio glitches during the meeting:

"Hands Free Holds" is the library's curbside pickup initiative for getting materials out to patrons. It is limited right now. Patrons can pick up their holds that were already waiting back in March at three locations: Bridgewater, Warren and Mary Jacobs.) SCLSNJ Area Manager Lauren Ryan (through Manager Kerwin) added that the system is working on expanding Hands Free Holds to other branches including fulfilling requests placed since closure. Strategizing by staff across the system is taking place as all are working on reopening plans, including a look at the governor's Road Back staged plan and aligning services with those recommendations.

The first phase of returning to library services is that SCLSNJ is providing "contactless" borrowing. The way it works is that staff members phone patrons and ask if they still want their holds. They schedule a date and time for the patron to show up. The staff checks out the materials on the patron's card prior to setting the holds out at the appointed time, so all the patron does is grab the items from an outdoor table. Patrons are told that the items do NOT have due dates yet and patrons may NOT return any items yet. It is a hospitable season for this weather-dependent service! Meanwhile, staff members continue to take virtual training, pursue library database quality and/or work shifts at the three branches that are open for holds, pick-up and internal projects. Staff members always adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Manager Kerwin shared that the two goldfish continue to thrive. AquaService Professionals installed a clam shell that pops open periodically with a burst of air.

Finally, Manager Kerwin reported it is apparent that the cleaners have not come since the building was closed. No trash or recycling pickup has occurred. The flowers by the parking lot are in bloom, but the shrub next to the entrance is definitely dead. The large tree in front bloomed in late April.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tamara S. Benc  
WLAB Secretary