

## Watchung Library Advisory Board Minutes

### November 18, 2020

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

A meeting of the WLAB was held through a Zoom audio and video 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 4:06 PM.

In attendance:

- \*Amy Fiorilla, President
- \*Margaret Ellis, Vice President
- \*Stella Couchells, Treasurer
- \*Tamara Benc, Secretary
- \*Bradford Leigh, member (via phone)
- \*George Alexis, Watchung Public Schools Superintendent (joined at 4:50)
- \*Lindsay Goodloe, Borough Council member
- \*Daryl Eisenberg Knegten, Borough Council member
- \*Virginia Hartmann
- \*Tricia Keane, Valley View Librarian

Minutes of the September 2020 meeting were e-mailed to members in advance of the meeting. Vice President Ellis made a motion to accept the minutes. Member Bradford Leigh seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Treasurer Couchells shared the WLAB financial report:

11,527.30	September balance
-357.99	Debit; paid to Reefco (inc. three \$80 payments plus \$117.99 for new filter)
+2.26	Credit: fish donations
+42.43	Credit; fine check from county
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11,214.00	Ending balance

Library fines on overdue materials have been suspended until March 2021 which means we will go almost an entire year without income. The fish tank donation collection can has also been removed.

Treasurer Couchells reported that the representative from Reefco is quite efficient and that the bills have been paid in a timely fashion.

A new apartment-sized refrigerator for the library staff break room is needed. Borough Councilwoman Lindsay Goodloe, a member of the Administration and Finance committee, reported that the expenditure has been approved and will be paid for by the borough.

Friends Liaison Margaret Ellis reported that the group uses Messenger to meet. The Friends purchased mums from the Watchung Schools PTO for a seasonal display near the library's newly designated entrance. In previous years, the Garden Club has decorated spaces both in and outside the library. They will decorate around the exterior of the library during the first week of December. Marcia Walsh, the Friends of the Watchung Library President, has purchased white branches which will replace the mums to update the decorations to a wintry theme.

The Friends store has not been open since the pandemic shutdown; the Friends will donate books to supplement the supply at the recently reopened Little Free Library at Mobus Field.

The report of the Library Public Services Manager Chris Korenowsky was provided by President Fiorilla. Watchung was not on the list of first round grant recipients for state funds. President Fiorilla has a multiple page report with detailed information about the recipients which she will forward to us. Discussion ensued regarding the grant writer and the round two grant announcement which is expected from the NJ State Library in early 2021.

The report of the Library Manager Hannah Kerwin was presented by President Fiorilla.

- Due dates on library materials have been reinstated (with autorenewals and with no fines currently).
- The county system is now offering *Press Reader* which can be used to digitally read a large number of periodicals and newspapers from around the world..
- The staff used *Biblioboard* to display a Veterans' Day recognition presentation.
- The next virtual commission meeting is December 2. Our members are encouraged to attend/participate virtually.

Council Liaison Goodloe reported that the borough is reaching out to the grant writing firm who will research what we might do to win an award in the next round of state library grants. Member Leigh asked if our grant writer also wrote other library grant requests and if they were successful. The answer to this question is unknown.

Discussion regarding the state library grants continued. In the first round, \$87 million+ has been approved by the State. Fanwood's \$7 million project, which is very much like Watchung's, in a town with very similar economic demographics, was approved. Bernardsville will receive \$75,000. These numbers demonstrate that the grants varied in size. It is currently unclear if our current grant proposal will stay in the pool for round two or if can be revised and must be resubmitted. It is expected that grant writers will advise the borough on this question.

The next meeting of the Watchung Library Advisory Board is scheduled for January 20, 2021. Vice President Ellis moved to reschedule it for January 27, 2021. Treasurer Couchells seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the light above the library door. The Department of Public Works bought a second light that matches the first one purchased by the WLAB. The new fixture was installed above the second main door at the library: the door to the children's area that now serves as the main entrance.

Virginia Hartmann was thanked for helping to accomplish upgrades to landscaping around the library. Ms. Hartmann, Amy Fiorilla, and Council Member Goodloe met with Council Member Pete Martino to walk through ideas to improve the exterior of the library. From that meeting, the DPW buried the gutters, in order to avert a water runoff problem on the sidewalks; filled in the front planting beds with Delaware River rock, trimmed trees and brush on the property and removed and levelled an area in the back that had been stepped with failing railroad ties. New LED bulbs for the parking lot, to address the dim lighting situation, was discussed, but has not yet been resolved. The parking lot is dimly lit by the current bulbs and presents a public safety hazard.

Member Alexis joined us at 4:50 pm. He reported that it is wonderful for our Watchung School District to be open five days a week.

President Fiorilla thanked Councilwoman Eisenberg Knegten for sharing the Zoom link for today's meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 PM.

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