

Watchung Library Advisory Committee Minutes, November 15, 2023 – **APPROVED**

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

The meeting of the WLAB was held in person in the Bicentennial Room of the Watchung Library. The meeting was also recorded. Please go to the Watchung Borough website to view the video. The Zoom platform was opened.

Please be advised that, pursuant to a Borough policy, all committee meetings will be recorded.

President Tamara Benc posted the agenda (which had been emailed in advance to all members), then opened and called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Attendance:

Tamara Benc, President – present
Margaret Ellis, Vice President – present
Virginia Hartmann, Secretary/Treasurer – present
Marianne Candiloros –present by Zoom
Catherine Leigh -- present
Paul Fischer, Borough Council Member – absent
Dr. Julie Glazer, Superintendent of Watchung School District – present
M. Miracle, Watchung Library Branch Manager – present
Patricia Keane, Valley View Librarian – present
Ann Cruz Koufomihalis – present by Zoom

Minutes of the September 13, 2023 meeting were emailed to members in advance of the meeting for review. Ms. Leigh moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Keane seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Hartmann gave the following treasurer's report:

On September 10, 2023 a \$100.00 payment was made to Reefco Aquarium Service, LLC for aquarium services.

On October 6, 2023 a \$146.01 payment was made to Reefco Aquarium Service for the repair and replacement of broken items of our aquarium.

On November 1, 2023 a \$100.00 payment was made to Reefco Aquarium Service for aquarium services.

As of November 1, 2023 the WLAB escrow account totaled \$26,863.93. The Aquarium Fund accounts for \$2,198.16 of that total subject to the credit mentioned above, with \$24,590.97 remaining in general funds.

Watchung Community Fund

On September 13, \$74.80 was paid to the Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund by New Legacy Books.

On October 10, 2023, \$74.60 was paid to the Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund by New Legacy Books.

The Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund now totals \$2,654.68.

Ms. Ellis moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Ms. Koufomihalis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Friends of the Watchung Library Report:

Ms. Ellis gave the following report:

In September, the Friends sponsored the Second Stuffed Animal Sleepover. Children bring their stuffed animals to the library; the stuffed animals are posed and stay overnight in the library. Fleece blankets are given to the children as gifts.

In October, the Friends started selling certain used books on eBay. They have learned that some books in their used book store are worth more than the one or two dollars they have been charging. Ms. Benc suggested that the Friends research an app that quickly displays a book's worth. Also in October, the Friends entered a scarecrow, Hootie the Owl, in the town contest.

The Friends sponsored their first artist reception for the artist featured on the library guest artist wall. Mr. Gafkin's reception was a big success with many friends, relatives and students attending. Mr. Allan Jann will be the next guest artist for the months of December and January. He will also be given a reception by the Friends.

Hazel Bell, of the Friends, will be providing a "Breathing for Wellness" program in the near future.

Watchung Library Branch Manager Report:

Our Branch Manager is working hard to eliminate all "pain points" in our library. For example, if a patron orders a book in large print and receives a book in regular print, the mistake will be resolved quickly and not repeated if at all possible.

NEWS FROM SCLSNJ

- Bound Brook Library is closed for long term repairs; expert testing has revealed that there is asbestos in the newer part of the Bound Brook branch. Out of an abundance of caution, the Bound Brook branch will continue to be closed for long term repairs for the safety of staff and library customers. The involved parties are working on a solution for

temporary services while we wait for the building issues to be addressed. Consequently, we have the temporary assistance of two Bound Brook members: Circulation Supervisor, Jesse Farparan and Library Technician, Steve Barrientos.

- Staff In-Service Day was held on 11/14/23. All system library staff participated in a virtual session from their building in the morning and in a branch meeting and activity in the afternoon.
- Watchung Library will be closed; Nov. 23 & 24 and Dec. 25

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT THE WATCHUNG BRANCH

- Hazel Bell, a member of our Friends of the Watchung Library will hold a Breathing for Wellness Class at the library on November 16. In December, Denise will run a program called Gifts in a Jar and in January a program on bean mosaic art.
- Mr. Allan Jann will be our exhibited artist for December and January featuring oil paintings and Chinese Ink paintings and we are working on a potential reception.
- STEAM Programs continue to be offered once a month for ages K-5. Other notable programs are Friendship Bracelet Making for grades 5-8 and Playful Songs for Kindred Spirits (seasonal music for families with children between 2-7 years old.)
- In November we scheduled 13 programs and in December we scheduled 12 programs plus a scheduled Passport Services visit on December 13 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

BRANCH NEWS

- We wrapped up our outdoor outreach season and will be focusing on outreach to our senior population and the business community.
- We moved the Mahjongg tables and chairs downstairs. This will also serve as additional seating for our general users. We have more than doubled our seating options for patrons.
- The Friends have agreed to purchase whiteboard wallpaper for the Study Room.
- Garden Club will be decorating for winter on 11/30
- Raechal Valle has resigned; her last day will be 11/17
 - Watchung Library is now exceeding program attendance numbers from 2019 and our checkouts have increased by 10.54% over 2022 checkouts.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

Mr. Fischer provided notice less than an hour before the meeting that he would not be in attendance. He did not provide a written report to be shared in his stead.

Old Business:

After receiving assurances from Mr. Damato, our Borough Administrator, that he saw no problems with getting approval for a new library parking sign to be erected in the Best Lake parking lot, the Library Advisory Committee voted on this question. Option one was a plywood

sign and Option two was cedar sign. Option two passed with Ms. Leigh abstaining. Ms. Hartmann agreed to get the question on the agenda of the next Borough Council meeting.

Ms. Benc thanked the committee who arranged the holiday party for the library staff and volunteers. The party will be held on November 17, at 1:00 PM.

The Borough Holiday Party RSVP deadline is November 27.

The question again came up as to when our meetings should begin. Some members would like our meetings to begin at 7:00. Ms. Candelaris moved to hold our future meetings at 7:00. Ms. Ellis seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Our reorganization meeting will be held on January 17, 2024 at 7:00.

New Business:

Ms. Benc reminded the Committee members that in our reorganization meeting we must elect a President, and a secretary. Our bylaws do not require a treasurer. Ms. Hartmann stated that if we only use Mr. Hance's accounting information, we will not be keeping track of the \$5,000 gift we received to maintain our aquarium. Ms. Candiloros agreed that we should have a treasurer.

Ms. Benc bid goodbye to Tricia Keane, the Valley View School librarian. She has attended the Library Advisory Committee meetings for years and has been a valuable resource in our projects. She is leaving after 24 years at Valley View School. Congratulations, Tricia! We wish you all the best in your future.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.