

Watchung Library Advisory Committee Minutes, May 17, 2023 – **FINAL**

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 web site to view the video.

Please be advised that, pursuant to a Borough policy, all committee meetings will be recorded; at 6:06 PM all participants were alerted that recording had begun.

President Tamara Benc posted the agenda (which had been emailed in advance to all members), then opened and called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

Attendance:

Tamara Benc, President – present
Margaret Ellis, Vice President – present
Virginia Hartmann, Secretary/Treasurer – present
Ann Cruz Koufomihalis – absent
Marianne Candiloros –present
Paul Fischer, Borough Council Member -- present
George Alexis, School Superintendent – absent
Hannah Kerwin, Watchung Library Branch Manager – present
Patricia Keane, Valley View Librarian – present

Also, three Watchung residents attended the meeting.

Minutes of the March 15, 2023 meeting were emailed to members in advance of the meeting for review. Mr. Fischer noted that the record of events and conversations as recorded by Secretary Hartmann were not in chronological order. Secretary Hartmann explained that she grouped comments of each topic together even though the comments did not necessarily occur in chronological order to make it easier for readers to follow the written minutes. Mr. Fischer suggested other changes. The minutes were approved with two amendments.

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

The WLAB escrow account totaled \$29,887.16 as of 13 March 2023. The Aquarium Fund accounted for \$3,276.12 of that total with \$26,611.04 remaining in general funds.

On March 10, 2023 a \$200.00 payment was made to Reefco Aquariums for aquarium services provided on 21 February 2023 and 6 March 2023. And on April 12, 2023 another \$100.00 payment was made to Reefco for services provided on March 21, 2023.

On 2 May 2023 a \$271.83 payment was made to Walker Display, Inc. for the art hanging system now installed on the upstairs hallway wall.

As of April 21, 2023 the WLAB Escrow Account totaled \$29,315.33. Our Aquarium Fund accounts for \$2,976.12 of that total with \$26,339.21 remaining in general funds.

Watchung Community Fund

The part of the Watchung Community Fund designated for the Watchung Library had a balance of \$2,076.01 as of 28 February 2023.

On 31 March 2023 the part of the Watchung Community Fund designated for the Watchung Library received \$70.26 and on 30 Apr 2023 it received \$65.15. This income came from New Legacy.

As of 30 April 2023, the Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund totaled \$2,211.42.

Friends of the Watchung Library Report: Ms. Ellis offered the following Friends report:

Ms. Ellis provided a written report with pictures. Watchung Friends member Amy Fiorilla completed a completely handmade fairy village outside the children's section picture window. The village is made entirely of natural materials such as birch bark. The Friends have requested that the DPW remove the piles of leaves that resulted from the construction of the fairy village.

The Friends are giving away 30 tickets to a Somerset County Patriots game. Winners will be drawn soon. Virginia Hartmann and Tammy Benc were asked by the Friends to attend the game to welcome ticket winners.

Watchung Library Branch Manager Report: Ms. Kerwin gave the following Branch Manager report:

Ms. Kerwin announced that she will be accepting a new job within the SCLSNJ as a communication specialist within the marketing department. She will be taking a lot of pictures which is her specialty. Ms. Benc told Ms. Kerwin that it has been a great pleasure working with her for the past eight years. Our president presented fresh cut flowers to Ms. Kerwin. Ms. Kerwin's last day will be May 30, 2023. The SCLSNJ is interviewing for a new branch manager. Lauren Ryan will be the interim branch manager.

Ms. Kerwin announced the hiring of a new library technician, Raechal Zalle.

The new art space has opened in the Watchung Library. Ms. Kerwin's beautiful photographs of irises is displayed right now. It provides a good demonstration for how future art work can be hung. There is no real security for the art work so artists whose work is selected for display will be advised that staff members will not be present in this area to

prevent visitors from handling or damaging their work. In the future, the new Watchung Library Branch Manager will choose artists to display their work. The WLAB may suggest artists. Artists would be required to provide framed, matted art that have wire hangers – not saw tooth hangers.

New Business:

Mr. Fischer informed the WLAB that planting grass seed is on the list of things to do for the Borough administrator. The Borough Council is willing to buy the library a new picnic table. A new architect will be chosen at the next Borough Council meeting.

For at least the present time, the WLAB would rather refurbish the picnic table that is already in the back yard of the library. The plan is to paint a checkerboard and other games on the table. The table is an Eagle Scout project donated to the library; therefore, the WLAB is reluctant to ever dispose of the gift. Ms. Hartmann said that she believes that renting a sander, buying sand paper, buying paint and urethane will cost about \$150. Mr. Fischer suggested we allocate up to \$200 for the project since paint is very expensive. It was moved, seconded, and passed that up to \$200 be spent on the project with all labor provided by Ms. Hartmann.

Ms. Benc mentioned that some time ago “Community Conversations” was suggested by the SCLSNJ. She reported that up to now, there have been no conversations.

Ms. Benc asked Ms. Keane to pass on our goodbyes to Mr. Alexis. He has our best wishes and regards. He is a lovely gentleman with whom it was a pleasure to work.

Ms. Ellis suggested that we start investigating a bench for the children’s section. It would provide more seating for adults during story times and give the children a good view of the fairy garden if they kneel on it.

The next meeting will be on July 19, 2023. Please inform Ms. Benc if this interferes with your summer plans. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM.