

Watchung Library Advisory Committee Minutes, September 13, 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; it was later discovered that recording had not taken place.

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 6:17 PM upon the arrival of Board member Candiloros. .

**Attendance:**

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

Minutes of the July 19, 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.

Our president announced our new member, Superintendent Dr. Julie Glazer. Due to a conflict, Dr. Glazer could not attend.

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

The WLAB escrow account totaled \$28,914.75 as of June 9, 2023. The Aquarium Fund accounted for \$2,726.12 of that total with \$26,188.63 remaining in general funds.

On July 7, 2023 a \$100.00 payment was made to Reefco Aquarium Service, LLC for aquarium services.

On July 31, 2023 a \$657.88 payment was made to School Outfitters for a nested bench, a purchase approved by the WLAB at an earlier meeting. Also, on July 31, 2023 a \$584.88 payment was made to School Outfitters for a second nested bench. Finally, a \$354.90 payment was made on July 31, 2023 for shipping the benches.

On August 7, 2023 a \$32.98 payment was made to Reefco Aquarium Service for aquarium chemicals and a clown loach fish.

On September 1, 2023 a \$48.97 payment was made to Reefco Aquarium Service for aquarium chemicals. However, that was an overpayment of \$32.97. The payment should have been \$15.00. Mr. Hance will ask for a credit on our next invoice.

As of September 1, 2023 the WLAB escrow account totaled \$27,135.14. The Aquarium Fund accounts for \$2,544.17 of that total subject to the credit mentioned above, with \$24,590.97 remaining in general funds.

#### Watchung Community Fund

As of June 30, 2023, the Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund totaled \$2,361.92

On July 25, \$70.91 was paid to the Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund by New Legacy Books. On August 30, 2023 another \$72.45 was received from New Legacy Books.

As of August 30, 2023 the Watchung Library portion of the Community Fund totaled \$2,505.28.

Ms. Leigh moved that the Treasurer's Report be approved. Ms. Candiloros seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### Friends of the Watchung Library Report:

Our Library Director gave the Friends report as Ms. Ellis was absent. The Second Annual Sweet Start event was a huge success. A total of 55 new library cards were issued that day. A fun time was had by all, eating ice cream and painting rocks for the library rock garden. Attendance was higher this year than last. Over 150 children, their families, Superintendent Glazer, Borough Council President Ead, Councilman Gibbs, and Councilwoman Abi Habib attended this festive event.

#### Watchung Library Branch Manager Report:

#### **NEWS FROM SCLSNJ**

- Passport Services will be available at the Watchung Branch on Wednesday, October 04 from 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- Programming Department now encompasses programming for all ages - Allie Ziff is the Program and Outreach Manager
- New Jersey State public or state library workers now qualify for an SCLSNJ card
- The following communities now receive reciprocal borrowing privileges: Franklin, Bedminster/Far Hills, and Bernards Township. (They must have a library card from Clarence Dillon, Franklin, or Bernards Library to receive their SCLSNJ card.)
- The price of a non-resident library card is now \$52

- Argo-Prep is a new SCLSNJ online resource, offering 80+ digital workbooks for grades kindergarten - 8, for math, language arts, science, and social studies skills practice.

### **UPCOMING PROGRAMS AT THE WATCHUNG BRANCH**

- We will be hosting 15 different programs in September and 15 programs in October encompassing every age range including the highly anticipated Stuffed Animal Sleepover, Sunflower Watercolor Painting for adults and a “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” Story Hour.
- STEAM Programs continue to be offered once a month for ages K-5.

### **BRANCH NEWS**

- The Sweet Start Event was a huge success thanks to all who helped!
- Since June of 2023 we have added approximately 250 new library card holders.
- The Children’s Room has been enhanced with the addition of a new children’s story-hour carpet and narwhal wall decor.
- Watchung Library has booked artists to showcase their work at the library until January 2024. Mr. Lee Gaskins and Mr. Allan Jann, both of Watchung will exhibit.
- Watchung has been added to the Arts & Exhibits information page at <https://sclsnj.org/programs-events/art-spaces-exhibits/>

### **YOUTH SERVICES UPDATES**

- Summer Reading program has ended. Watchung has increased engagement across the board. 74 kids participated in the Summer Reading Challenge. 71 kids logged their reading. There was a total of 3173 days of reading logged at the Watchung branch.
- We now have 5 teens volunteering weekly at the Watchung Library.

### **ADULT SERVICES UPDATES**

- Denise, our library technician, will be hosting a Sunflower Painting class and a Felt Craft program and has also created a take-home fall sewing craft to give away at the Farmer Market.

### **CIRCULATION SERVICES UPDATES**

- We have two staff members signed up to attend the Circulation Forum, a half a day training and networking opportunity solely focused on Circulation issues which will be held at the Bridgewater Library on Oct. 25.

## **FACILITY UPDATES**

- Thanks to DPW for making the grounds look so nice for the Sweet Start event.
- We removed one computer and desk and replaced the wood chairs with rolling computer chairs.
- We received a replacement book drop from our Hillsborough branch.
- We have reached out to Bridgwater Library about stainless steel wire shelving to replace the table in the foyer housing the transit bins which we would like to relocate.
- We received a nice red chair for additional seating in the library.
- Have reached out to DPW to ask for broken/outdated/surplus furniture removal.

## **OUTREACH:**

- Reached out to new Recreation Manager for Watchung, Damaris Quinones-Gray, and will be collaborating in the future.
- Continued outreach at Somerset County Food Bank.
- Have added a September and October Farmer's Market date
- Katie delivered flyers for distribution at Food Truck Friday.
- Katie will be regularly featured as a Bayberry Guest Reader.
- The library will be hosting the Pumpkin Painting Table at Harvest Fest.
- Have reached out to WHRHS librarian and will be scheduling an in-person visit.

### **Borough Council Liaison Report:**

Councilman Fischer was asked what progress he has made: arranging for a regular landscaping schedule; re-seeding the library lawn; requesting Somerset County to add a library sign on Valley Road; and researching the possibility of the Watchung Library Advisory Committee awarding scholarships for artwork featuring Watchung and essays regarding Watchung. He is still working on these questions.

### **Old Business:**

Our President thanked our Vice President Ellis for providing information about the choices of new benches for our children's section. Thank you also to Ms. Candiloros for serving on the bench committee. Special thanks to Katie, our librarian technician, for her research into benches and her help in preparing the smart TV presentation to the Library Advisory Committee. Finally, thank you to Secretary/Treasurer Hartmann for presenting the choices of benches and handling the ordering of our final choice. Ms. Hartmann reported that the benches will be shipped September 15, 2023, a little later than first promised. She will keep checking that the benches are shipped.

Ms. Leigh gave her update on providing a library parking sign for the Best Lake parking area. She spoke to Mr. Damato and requested that he consider removing our Watchung Library sign from the side of the library and relocating it to the parking lot. Ms. Leigh reported that

before a parking sign is added, the foot bridge must be repaired and a new or refurbished library must be completed. Some Advisory Committee members objected that the library sign was entirely too large (ten feet by three feet) to be used as a parking sign. Also, some Committee members do not want the Watchung Library sign removed from the library. The issue was tabled.

Ms. Benc reminded members to be sure to send committee correspondence through the [library@watchungnj.gov](mailto:library@watchungnj.gov) account and not through personal accounts. Access to this account was granted only six months ago.

#### **New Business:**

The annual thank you luncheon that the Library Advisory Committee hosts will be held Friday, November 17, 2023 at 1:00 PM. It was decided that only Watchung businesses will be contracted to provide food for the event. Marino's, Trevi Square Pizza, and Raining Sprinkles were a few of the businesses suggested. Ms. Benc and Ms. Leigh will help arrange for the party. The committee voted to spend a maximum of \$300 for the thank you luncheon.

Changing the time that the Library Advisory Committee meets was again brought up for discussion. Some members want the meeting time to be changed yet again to a later hour. Some discussion ensued but was tabled.

Our next meeting will be on November 15, 2023 and after that, our reorganization meeting will be held on January 17, 2024.

#### **Public Comments:**

There were a few public comments from Tom Hartmann, Watchung resident. He asked Mr. Fischer if he had any information regarding the possibility of the construction or refurbishment of a new library. Mr. Fischer had little information to add beyond the name of the architect hired to provide concept drawings is Potter. Apparently, formal meetings regarding the library are not being held yet so Mr. Fischer is not privy to any more information. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.