

NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday February 11, 2021
Zoom Meeting

Dierdra Gray Clark, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Dierdra Gray Clark, President
Whitney Barrat, Vice President
Daniel Bonnet, Secretary
Charles Burke, Jr
Corey Galloway
Sarah Langlois
Beth Acocella

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The January monthly meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Dierdra Clark moved that the minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Whitney Barrat and approved.

WLS REPORT:

Francis Okelo presented the following report:

WLS met virtually January 26, 2021, its first meeting of this year. The Board continues to monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the WLS staff, operations and activities, and services to the library patrons; The Board amended its Bylaws to state that all Trustees must be at least 18 years of age and residents of the WLS district they represent and that no current employee of the System or any member library shall be eligible to serve as a Trustee. (This is to avoid any conflict of interest in any form).

The Board approved a capital budgeting the amount of \$510,000 to be used as follows:

- a) Improve member library network by replacing existing equipment to elevate the speed and performance of member library network (\$175,000);
- b) Replacement of all public-designated computers in the member library to make them consistently faster and more productive user experience (\$300,000);
- c) To replace the ageing WLS vehicles (\$35,000);

The Board took note of the new WLS Service Level Agreement (SLA) draft, prepared by the Audit Working Group and the reviewed by the PLDA, and decided to forward the

draft text to the legal counsel for advice on future steps for the process of implementation; The Board approved assignments for its five Committees (Budget, Financial Audit, Governance, Nominating and Board Development and Strategic Planning). I have been assigned to the Governance and Strategic Planning Committees and (at my request) as ex-officio member of the Budget Committee. Lastly, the Board had a retreat on Feb 9 to brainstorm and exchange views on the role and functions of the WLS trustees and the Mission of WLS and how it could be more service to the library patrons in the County. It was an exciting and productive retreat.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Dierdra Clark reported that she was anxiously awaiting more information (as an outcome of tonight's meeting) relative to the numerous library facility issues facing our Board – and the community.

Dierdra Clark moved to endorse the election of the following individuals to the Foundation Board: Stephanie Tomei, Leslie Newman, Mica Wilson, Aline Halle and Davina Burnett, seconded by Sarah Langlois and approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

+ Library Operations:

Our library continues to be closed to public access due to the pandemic (similar to the vast majority of WLS libraries) but service to the public is consistent and strong. We continue to be very busy with curbside service to patrons (694 transactions in January) as well as answering patron inquiries via phone and email communications. Children's staff introduced the "Book Bundle" service to great acclaim. Virtual programming is popular with our younger patrons and their families. Our electronic content (books, audio, magazines, and streaming services) continue to see high usage.

+ Main Library Gateway (Circulation Desk/Area) Project: This project is nearly complete with some final lobby improvements slated for completion within the next month.

+ Main Library 2nd Floor Renovation Project-Phase 1: This project has moved forward with furniture equipment and other improvements nearly complete. Unfortunately, the pandemic has delayed installation of most of the furniture. We are still planning to close this grant out in April

+ HCL Furnace/Boiler Replacement Project: The project has been successfully completed but we are unable to close out this grant as we have remaining unspent monies. We have spoken with the New York State Library staff and are exploring options in appropriately spending the remaining grant monies.

+ Main Library 2nd Floor Renovation Project - Phase 2: The grant funds were made available to us in November 2020. We are rapidly moving forward in the implementation of the 2nd phase of this project as Phase 1 is nearly complete.

+ HCL Stairway Replacement Project: The grant funds arrived in November 2020. Construction is underway with the removal of the aging unsafe stairway having taken

place. The new stairway is still on schedule to be installed by late February. Additional electrical and painting work will follow upon the completion of the stair installation.

+ EDAP Grant: Access to this grant, as sponsored by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, is pending until we are able to close out the Gateway Project.

+ AARP Tax Preparation Program The onsite/in-person AARP Tax Preparation service for 2021 has been canceled by the national AARP organization due to the pandemic. However, a remote service, staffed by New Rochelle AARP volunteers, has been instituted for patrons by utilizing phone and email services in the provision of service to interested residents. Our library is collaborating with our local AARP group in publicizing this option.

+ Friends of NRPL: The Friends Book Store continues to be closed due to the closure of our library. Donations are not being accepted as few Friends are currently able to volunteer.

+ NRPL Foundation: The Foundation Board will hold its next meeting on March 15th. On February 4th, the Cocktails and Conversations series featured “The Trial of the Chicago Seven and met with popular and critical success. The next Cocktails and Conversation is scheduled for March 18th and will bring together authors Sara DiVello (*Where in the OM Am I?*) and Catherine Pearlman (*The Family Coach*) for an evening focusing on self-care set in the context of our world passing into the second year of the global pandemic.

The City Wide Scavenger Hunt – also known as the “Scavaganza” –has been rescheduled for October 2nd due to concerns regarding the pandemic and its impact on participant participation.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported that, the library is still awaiting final Civil Service approval for the upgrade of the Community & Services Support Specialist and the Social Media / Videographer. Board members Chuck Burke and Daniel Bonnet and Director Tom Geoffino will interview the candidates for the Communications and Marketing Coordinator position on February 18th. It is anticipated additional interviews for the finalists will occur in the February/March time period.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

Chair Dierdra Clark reported that the Budget Committee met on February 1st and began the process of preparing a variety of budget options relative to the draft FY 2021/22 Budget proposal. Given the economic climate, it is anticipated that this budget will be prudent but appropriate to meet the needs of our residents. The Committee intends to meet again and review the changes as agreed upon at the first Committee meeting. Action in regards to a proposed budget for community consideration at the May 18th election will be taken by the Board at its March 11th meeting

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Chair Sarah Langlois reported that the Committee (along with CROC) is gathering information about the creation of a priority listing of the infrastructure projects relative to time frame and order of magnitude costs. The goal is to reengage with Architectural Preservation Studio (APS), author of the Building Audit, in order to capitalize on their expertise in the construction of such a document. Sarah also indicated that options are being explored regarding the employment of potential Project Managers candidates for our infrastructure improvement program. Discussion ensued regarding the importance/viability of a 2nd Quarter delivery date for infrastructure project recommendations given the potential need to seek public approval of a bond request. General consensus indicated that this action is only possible starting in the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Chair Daniel Bonnet reported that the Westchester County (and the City of New Rochelle) is sponsoring a 1-year remembrance of the onset of COVID 19 on March 3rd.

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Chair Whitney Barret reported that the Committee proposed that the Board vote to accept its recommendation that Architectural Preservation Studio (APS) be hired to perform Phase 1 (only) from its Memorial Highway Courtyard Project proposal at a cost of \$8,500. Whitney Barrat moved that the Special Projects recommendation be approved, seconded by Daniel Bonnet and approved.

Chair Whitney Barrat outlined that the Committee was interested in enhancing the Public Works Partners (PWP) Needs Assessment proposal in order to include the creation of Long Range plan for the library as the current NRPL plan expired in 2021. Additional dialogue regarding the scope, scale and cost of this effort will be shared with the Board and Director Tom Geoffino. This revised PWP proposal will be brought back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

Marjorie Sachs 14 Lakeside Drive

FOUNDATION GRANT COMMITTEE:

Chair Chuck Burke asked Tom Geoffino to share the staff driven draft FY 2021/22 Foundation Grant document with all Board members. Mr. Burke requested Board members evaluate this document as well as consider making suggestions independent of this list for projects to consider for inclusion. He indicated that the Board will take action regarding this request at its March meeting. Whitney Barrat indicated that the Board needs to further explore with the Foundation regarding its potential financial support for soft costs relating to the fees of the architectural firm, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Bonnet
Secretary