

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday April 8, 2021
Zoom Meeting**

Dierdra Gray Clark, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Dierdra Gray Clark, President
Whitney Barrat, Vice President
Daniel Bonnet, Secretary (absent)
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 March monthly meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Dierdra Clark moved that the minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Chuck Burke and approved.

WLS REPORT:

Francis Okelo presented the following report:

Okelo informed the Board that The NYS budget for FY2021-2022 had just been approved and that it had some good news for WLS and the member's libraries. The State Library Aid has been held at the \$94.1 million, the same amount as last year. The State Public Library Construction Aid had been increased to \$34 million, and increase of \$20 million over last year's allocation of \$14 million. A new category of funding, \$15 Million for Digital Inclusion Competitive Grants, was also approved.

The first quarter of this year has been a busy time for the WLS Development Projects. After many months of cultivation and grant submissions, the funding for the WLS Digital Equity projects have increased to \$267,400. Westchester Community Foundation approved WLS grant request for \$158,500 to support a working collaboration with Head Starts and shelters which provide 253 families lacking adequate digital devices with Chromebooks and Wi-Fi support where needed.

In the area of Public Innovation and Engagement, WLS has been actively engaged in supporting the Senior Law Day Collaborative, this is a project which provides access to the knowledge and guidance of more than 150 professionals focused on elder law and related topics, such as the concerns of the elder adults, caregivers and people with disabilities. The Collaborative's attorneys, financial planners, geriatric care managers, and other specialists deliver free community presentations and brief one-on-one consultations at Collaborative throughout the year. During the Pandemic, the Collaborative quickly moved from delivering in-person programming at the libraries to producing bi-weekly webinars.

WLS has continued performing its normal activities which include providing direct service to our patrons, especially senior patrons, through the Senior Benefit Helpline; promoting Library awareness, and maintaining close working relationship with the Westchester County.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Dierdra Clark highlighted the "5 Town, 1 Book" Community Read program featuring Isabel Wilkerson's bestseller Caste now underway in New Rochelle and 4 other neighboring towns (Larchmont, Rye, Harrison and Mamaroneck) Zoom book discussions will occur on April 8th, 17th, 25th 28th and May 3rd. She indicated the April 25th event will feature a lecture/Q & A with author Isabel Wilkerson and moderated by herself.

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 (745 transactions in April) as well as answering patron inquires via phone and email communications. The Children's Department "Book Bundle" service is finding great success with young families. Virtual programming continues to be popular with our younger patrons and their families. Our electronic content (books, audio, magazines, and streaming services) continue to see high usage. Notable achievements not easily quantifiable relate to the significant deaccessioning of dated and unused library print materials implemented by our Adult Services and support staff along with the subsequent re-shelving of various collection. We have also replaced the carpeting in the Children's area and are underway in comprehensive efforts to renovate our 2nd floor adult services area.

+ Reopening of Main and HCL Libraries: After considerable conversation regarding the status of the reopening of our library, it was agreed New Rochelle Public Library will reopen sometime during the first 2 weeks of May. Tom detailed this time period is dictated by the need to witness the full vaccination status of library staff and the extensive renovation work underway on the 2nd floor of the Main Library.

- + Main Library Gateway (Circulation Desk/Area) Project: This project is nearly complete with the formal closure of the grant expected to occur by May 2021.
- + 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. Our goal remains to close this grant out in May or June.
- + Main Library 2nd Floor Renovation Project - Phase 2: The grant funds were made available to us in November 2020. We are rapidly moving forward on all fronts in the implementation of the 2nd phase of this project as Phase 1 is nearly complete. Some furniture and equipment have been installed with other elements ordered and yet other components still under consideration prior to ordering. At this point in time, closeout of this grant is uncertain in the near-term future.
- + 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. New York State Library staff have given us permission to spend our remaining funds in the installation of new LED exterior lighting.
- + HCL Stairway Replacement Project: The project has been successfully completed but we are unable to close out this grant as we have remaining minor unspent monies. We expect to close this grant in May or June.
- + May 18th Library Budget and Vote: We sent out letters to local neighborhood associations and other civic groups seeking the opportunity to present our FY 2021/2022 budget request. To date, we have only received 2 invitations to speak at meetings. We believe this unusually small number is attributable to the pandemic. Currently, 2 candidates (Dr. David Mener and Lucille Renwick) are contesting the Board seat vacated by Dierdra Clark. The library election budget flyer will be mailed to all registered New Rochelle voters following the May 6th Budget Hearing.
- + Wi-Fi Hot Spot/Device Program: We are in the planning stages to lend out Wi-Fi hot spots and devices (Chromebook and/or tablets) to New Rochelle residents. WLS has stated its intention to provide us with some limited number of equipment and we are pursuing grant opportunities with our Foundation and the City of New Rochelle in order to acquire additional units.
- + Pop Up Vaccination Clinic: Our library partnered with the City of New Rochelle in hosting a pop up vaccination clinic on April 1st through April 3rd. The effort was characterized as extremely successful with nearly 1,500 individuals given the Johnson & Johnson vaccination via a well-organized and safe effort.
- + 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. The IRS has extended the tax filing deadline to May 17th (from April 15th), but our New Rochelle AARP service is unable -at least as of right now—to extend their free online tax assistance program past the original tax filing deadline date of April 15th.

- + Red Cross Blood Drives: Our library continues to host a series of Red Cross Blood drives with April 8th as the next scheduled effort. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have hosted 6 events with 135 donations and 380 lives potentially impacted.
- + 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 Board meeting on May 17th. The next Cocktails and Conversation is scheduled for April 8th with its program providing a Trivia Night competition for all participants.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported that the library is still awaiting final (and much delayed) Civil Service approval for the upgrade of the Community & Services Support Specialist and the Social Media / Videographer. Third interviews for the Communications and Marketing Coordinator position are scheduled for later April with a decision likely in early May.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Chair Sarah Langlois reported that the Committee is proceeding forward with the scheduling of interviews with prospective Project Managers candidates in order to prepare our library relative to meeting short term crucial facility infrastructure challenges. She also indicated that the Committee expects to see Doug Emilio of APS to produce a spreadsheet document that will provide easy access to a priority listing of the infrastructure projects in regards to timely completion and order of magnitude costs

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Chair Corey Galloway reported that he is working on the reaching out to local banks with the capacity (and commitment to provide excellent customer service) to handle our banking needs given the Board's determination to examine the library's banking situation. He is hopeful we will begin a series of informal interviews in the near future.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:

Dierdra Clark indicated that an ad hoc Nominations Committee will be appointed and will make a recommendation regarding the nomination of Board officers for FY 2021/2022 at the June meeting.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

Committee Member Dierdra Clark reported that the library is still waiting on the library union to signal its interest in initiating the beginning of collective bargaining negotiations in order to consider the adoption of a new contract to replace the union contract expiring June 30, 2021.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Committee Chair Cory Galloway announced that the Special Projects Committee along with Foundation members Chris Selin and Lynn Green and Director Tom Geoffino will meet with Doug Emilio and APS regarding its presentation for potential infrastructure improvements to the Memorial Courtyard area

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

Marjorie Sachs 14 Lakeside Drive

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Bonnet
Secretary