

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday May 6, 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. (absent)
Corey Galloway
Sarah Langlois
Beth Acocella

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The April monthly meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Daniel Bonnet moved that the minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Whitney Barrat and approved.

WLS REPORT:

Francis Okelo presented the following report:

In compliance with the New York State labor law, WLS Board of Trustees has approved a comprehensive Health Emergency Plan in the event of a declared public emergency such as is the case now with the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan is not limited to COVID-19 only but applies to other communicable diseases and pandemic illnesses as well. The approved emergency Plan lays out in very clear terms the roles and responsibilities as well as other preparedness activities and response protocols that must be observed in any health emergency situation by WLS and the member libraries. The Plan will be circulated to Board members as soon as the approved text is available.

Among the serious destructions caused by the COVIS-19 pandemic is the emotional impact of the trauma which has affected and is affecting many people in our community. Trauma poses many challenges to our already overworked health providers and the health system generally. The trauma problem is not lost on WLS which has been focusing on it even before the arrival of the current pandemic. In fact, the widely viewed film RESILIENVE addresses this problem quite dramatically as it recognizes and attempts to

strengthen the ability of individuals and communities to feel safe, connected and be able to take the right response actions to trauma.

WLS continues to focus on the trauma issues in our community, working closely with the Westchester County health authorities, and taking part in any available training programs offered by the County and other organizations in order to better equip itself to provide effective and the necessary assistance to our community.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Dierdra Clark highlighted the FY 2021-2022 NRPL Public Budget Hearing held earlier in the evening. She also made a plea for all New Rochelle citizens to remember to vote on May 18th. Dierdra announced the appointment of the ad hoc Nominations Committee consisting of Corey Galloway, Beth Acocella and Dierdra Clark and charged the Committee to develop the slate of Library board officers for FY 2021/2022.

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 inquiries via phone and email communications. 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.

+ Reopening of Main and HCL Libraries: The Library will reopen on May 10th and will resume the curtailed schedule prior to its closure in December 2021. Regulations regarding mask wearing and appropriate distances along will be strictly enforced. Limited numbers of individuals will be allowed into the library facilities along with the return of some public tables and seating as well as limited computer access, printing, scan machine and copier machine service. Summer programs will take place outside (in addition to some "interior virtual programming.) Our theater, meeting rooms and study rooms will be available for public use but with limited numbers allowed in these spaces. Curbside service will end on June 1st. Future additional adjustments will occur as appropriate given the circumstances including the possible resumption of in-person Library Board meeting. Many notable achievements were accomplished during the library's physical closure in relation to the significant deaccessioning of dated and unused library print/non-print materials implemented by Adult Services and support staff along with the subsequent re-shelving of various collection. Carpeting and repainting of the Children's area was completed and much progress was achieved in the comprehensive efforts to renovate the 2nd floor adult services area.

+ Main Library Gateway (Circulation Desk/Area) Project: This project is nearly complete with the formal closure of the grant expected to occur by late 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 expected to occur in September.

+ 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 and other appropriate upgrades to the HCL facility.

+ 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 June.

+ May 18th Library Budget and Vote: The election is scheduled for May 18th. The Library is seeking to increase next year's budget at 2.7% (or \$158,000 over the current tax levy.) 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 tonight's 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.

+ WLS Free Direct Access Plan: WLS Board of Trustees and the WLS County Directors group recently endorsed the Free Direct Access Plan and so the Library Board was asked to approve this Westchester County plan designed to ensure equitable library services for all residents. After much discussion, Whitney Barrat moved that the plan be approved without amendment, seconded by Sarah Langlois and approved.

+ 5 Town, 1 Book Community Read: This successful Sound Shore collaborative effort was highlighted with especial emphasis placed on the April 25th event that featured a Zoom lecture/Q & A with author Isabel Wilkerson and moderated by President Dierdra Clark. This program achieved tremendous community participation with nearly 737 users accessing this hour program. Special thanks to Daniel Ogyiri, Tom Geoffino, Beth Mills, Nicki Fudge and Dierdra Clark for their work on behalf of this meaningful event.

+ Friends of NRPL: The Friends Book Store will reopen on May 10th and will provide the community with limited hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Donations are now accepted with 2 small boxes/bags with the maximum donation allowed per individual.

+ NRPL Foundation: The Foundation Board will hold its next Board meeting on May 17th with particular focus on the consideration of our library's FY 2021/2022 Annual Grant request. The next Cocktails and Conversation is scheduled for May 27th and will feature local celebrity and author Sunny Hostin (panelist on the popular TV show "The View") discussing her new novel Summer on the Bluffs. The City Wide Scavenger Hunt – also known as the "Scavaganza" – is rapidly moving ahead in relation to planning, sponsorship/fund raising and participation commitments.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported that the library was given Civil Service approval for the upgrade of the Community & Services Support Specialist and the Social Media / Videographer. The Communications and Marketing Coordinator position is in the process of being offered to a candidate. It is hoped that an offer will be made and accepted in late May. The library is still engaged in conversations with Civil Service regarding the creation of a Programming, Gallery and Theater position.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Chair Sarah Langlois reported that the Committee recently interviewed 2 prospective Project Managers candidates in order to prepare our library in meeting short term crucial facility infrastructure challenges. She indicated that both candidates made a positive impression but the time frame for a decision is on hold pending a resolution of our long range plan/needs assessment. Sarah also declared that the APS spreadsheet provided concise easy access to a priority listing of the infrastructure projects in regards to timely completion and order of magnitude costs.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:

Discussion ensued about the status of the Public Works Partners (PWP) Whitney Barrat provided an update about the current efforts regarding this project including an overview of the PWP timetable/schedule of deliverables. Whitney reported that plans are already underway to engage in focus group discussion with the Library Board and also library staff. Given the importance of this effort, Board members articulated a desire to create an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee to provide support and assistance to PWP and their work. Whitney moved that an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee consisting of Corey Galloway, Sarah Langlois and Whitney Barrat be appointed, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

Additional conversations regarding the PWP fee structure and the methodology of payment ensued. Daniel Bonnet moved that the \$47,000 PWP fee for the creation of the NRPL Strategic Plan will be paid from the Library Fund balance, seconded by Whitney Barrat and approved.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Chair Corey Galloway reported that a meeting was held with M & T Bank (with Tom Geoffino and Jean Manning in attendance) regarding our library's possible affiliation with this institution. Additional meeting will be scheduled with other banks possibly including TD Bank, Webster Bank and Chase Bank. Corey indicated he continues to research potential vendors for a more useful and effective library credit card.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Bonnet
Secretary