

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday October 14, 2021**

Whitney Barrat, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Barrat, President
Daniel Bonnet, Vice President
Sarah Langlois, Secretary
Charles Burke, Jr.
Corey Galloway
Beth Acocella
Lucille Renwick

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The September Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Lucille Renwick moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Chuck Burke and approved.

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo made the following report:

- + He warmly congratulated the Library Foundation, the Library Director and his staff and the volunteers for the successful Scaveganza and Family Fair events, and the impressive amount of money raised by the Foundation of the Library.
- + After the Summer recess, the WLS Board of Trustees met on Tuesday September 28 to resume its work. The Board noted with satisfaction that many of our libraries were gradually returning to normal while coping with the continuing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- + The Board also approved a grant of \$342,674 for renovation of the 3rd floor of the main library which included reconfiguration of overall floor space, energy-efficient lighting, new furniture, fixtures, wall and floors.. A grant for the Huguenot Children's Library air-conditioning had earlier been approved by the Board.

+ The WLS Executive Directors Report of the September 2021 had earlier been circulated to the Board members and the Library Director. Special attention of the Board members is being drawn to:

- a) the training opportunities referred to in the Report;
- b) the digital equity projects being implemented by the WLS to address the digital divide challenges in the County;
- c) as regards the Information Technology, it was noted that the final draft of the WLS IT Service Level Agreement (SLA) was circulated to the Library directors for their consideration and comment. Each library received a unique version of the SLA which covers their contracted services from the WLS IT in 2022. WLS IT expects that those libraries who are continuing to use WLS IT as their wireless service provider for 2022 would switch over by the end of the Fall 2021.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

President Whitney Barrat congratulated the NRPL Foundation for the previous weekend’s amazing, enjoyable and successful Scavanza fund raising effort as well as the joint collaboration between the Foundation and the library staff hugely entertaining and popular Family Fair event. She also provided an overview regarding the current status of the strategic plan effort. Whitney reported the second (and final) hybrid town meeting held on September 29th at 7 pm in our theater provided important input for consideration. and shared some details regarding the survey responses (as provided by our consultant Public Works Partners/PWP) given its closure as of October 3rd. She indicated PWP will begin work on the creation of a rough draft for future consideration. Whitney additionally congratulated the library on its partnership with the NRSD relative to serving as a host site for NRSD town hall meetings throughout the FY2021/2022 academic year.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

+ Library Operations: Staff are witnessing an increasing level of activity taking place in our libraries. In particular, growth in use of our children’s and teen areas as well as computer and Wi-Fi and study room usage is noticeable.

+ NRPL Foundation: The (Saturday) October 2nd City Wide Scavenger Hunt – also known as the “Scavanza” – can be characterized as significant success relative to its fundraising (nearly \$67,000 – well above the goal of \$60,000 goal) and the level of fun experienced by its participants. Additionally, the bookend (Sunday) October 3rd Family Fair event (including the ribbon cutting of the 2nd Floor Renovation Project) saw attendees, estimated over 1,000 in number, enjoying multiple “Superpowers/Comic Con” themed programs for children and teens. Everyone involved regarded this event as a huge success, especially given our recent quiet pandemic past. Tom praised the hard work, dedication of the Foundation Family Fair Committee and library staff (including Bobby Simic, Rio Aucena, Lisa Itzkowitz, Ed Roddy, Nikki Fudge and the custodial staff.)

+ Pending NYS Library Construction Grants: The WLS Board voted to approve the WLS PLDA Grants Committee recommendation to fund our 2 NYS Library Construction Grants for Main and Huguenot Children's libraries submitted in late August 2021. The Main Library grant application requests \$342,674 (with a library match of \$114,224) and proposes to provide a significant renovation of the 3rd Floor space (similar in scope to the 2nd Floor Renovation Project) with significant renovations, upgrades and updates scheduled throughout the space. The Huguenot Children's Library grant application requests \$17,813 in grant monies (with a library match of \$5,937) and proposes to replace the 3 poorly performing aged ductless mini splits installed during the successful PHCL 1998 renovation with 3 replacement units. Further analysis by New York State Library and DASNY staff will occur throughout the current fiscal with confirmation likely to be obtained by June 2022. It is estimated that the grant monies will be made available to our library in October 2022.

+ Main Library 2nd Floor Renovation Project - Phase 2: We continue to slowly move forward in the completion of the 2nd phase of this project as the manufacturing and delivery of items have created unanticipated postponements and delays (as a result of the pandemic.) To date, certain furniture and equipment have been installed on our 2nd floor - and all other elements are now on order. Time frames for the delivery of outstanding items are still uncertain. We are hoping to complete the installation of these "missing" elements by early 2022.

+ Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) Grant Application: Our library was recently notified that it was successful in its application for a grant of \$87,313 (with no matching funds required from our organization.) awarded by this new Federal Government program. ECF seeks to reimburse schools and libraries for the reasonable costs of eligible equipment and broadband connections used to help students, staff, and patrons who otherwise lack access to be able to engage in remote learning. Our grant will allow us to acquire 100 Chromebooks and 50 WiFi hotspots in order to loan out to our residents. Specific details regarding anticipated arrival of the grant monies are still pending.

+ Library Collaboration with NRSD: We have been in touch with Superintendent Raymond regarding the temporary closure of NRHS due to the aftereffects of Hurricane Ida. Given this unfortunate situation, the library has offered to work with the School District relative to providing space for students, staff or faculty. We did host a NRSD town hall meeting earlier in October and are planning to host future monthly meetings throughout the remaining academic year. We continue to look forward to other possible collaborations as they become available.

+ ArtsFest: The perennially popular citywide ArtsFest will be held once again the weekend of October 15th. A varied selection of programs will be held at our Main and HCL facilities as well as in many other locations throughout the community.

+ AARP Tax Preparation Assistance: Lead AARP Tax Preparation volunteer Tim Oberg continues to be in touch with our library regarding their proposed program service for 2022. He is awaiting guidance from the AARP national office and is still uncertain regarding a pre-pandemic resumption of their extremely popular work given the current pandemic situation. Tim and his AARP colleagues are committed to working with our

staff in order to create a service delivery model acceptable to AARP, his team and our library.

+ Thanksgiving Parade 2021: The Chamber of Commerce announced the City Thanksgiving Parade will be scheduled for Saturday, November 20th. Library Board and staff, along with Foundation and Friends Board members, will march upholding the library banner.

+ Friends of NRPL: The Friends Book Store continue to provide the community with open hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Donations are currently accepted with 2 small boxes/bags allowed per individual.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported that the application pool for the vacant Librarian I and Librarian II positions was strong with many viable candidates. He indicated that 3 positions were filled with the following individuals scheduled to start on November 1st:

Librarian II (Circulation): Milton Cobb

Librarian I (Adult Services) Brian Zamek

The hourly Librarian I (Archivist) will be filled by Patricia Perito with a start date yet to be determined

The Librarian II (Adult Services) position was filled by the promotion of Librarian I David Torres.

Whitney Barrat made the motion, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Board of Trustees does hereby approve the promotion of David Torres, Librarian II, effective October 1, 2021 at a salary of \$68,210 per year, seconded by Sarah Langlois and approved.

Tom indicated that the interviews for the full time Library Assistant (Circulation) will begin within the next week as well as interviews for the hourly Children's Librarian, Library Assistant and Trainee positions. The closing of the reposted Assistant Director position occurred earlier in the month with applications still being held by Civil Service. The newly created Programmer position will be voted upon by the Civil Service Commission later in October.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Chair Daniel Bonnet briefly highlighted the many community programs and services undertaken by our library – and praised the library staff (including Denise Link) responsible for these efforts. He asked about the recent JazzFest event and our reasons for not agreeing to be a sponsor. Tom indicated, to the best of his knowledge, the library had never been contacted regarding this program.

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

Chair Corey Galloway reported the Committee is expecting to make a recommendation regarding the Library's new banking affiliation at the November meeting. He discussed the Committee meeting held on September 28th and detailed the three recommendations made as a result of this gathering. He indicated that the Committee unanimously agreed to provide obligatory matching funds for 2 library grant awards and the creation of a Capital Expenditures Fund. All monies are to be taken from the Library's Fund Balance.

Corey Galloway moved to transfer \$250,000 from the Operating Fund Balance into the Money Market Capital Fund in order to make the funds available for future Capital Expenditures, seconded by Lucille Renwick and approved.

Corey Galloway moved to provide \$122,058 from the Operating Fund Balance for the purpose of meeting the match requirements for the New York State Library Passive Fire Safety Construction Grant, seconded by Chuck Burke and approved.

Whitney Barrat moved to provide \$72,136 from the Operating Fund Balance for the purpose of meeting the match requirements for the Universal Service Administrative Co. E-Rate Category 1 & 2 Grant, seconded by Daniel Bonnet and approved.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

Chair Lucille Renwick reported that the Personnel Committee recently met with the union negotiation team. It expects to meet again following additional consideration regarding the status of variety of issues.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:

Chair Whitney Barrat indicated that she had provided the Special Projects report as a part of her President's report made earlier in the evening.

PUBLIC TO BE HEARD:

Marjorie Sachs

14 Lakeside Drive New Rochelle NY

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Langlois
Secretary