

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday June 9, 2022**

Whitney Barrat, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Barrat, President
Daniel Bonnet, Vice President
Sarah Langlois, Secretary (absent)
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 May Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Whitney Barrat moved that the minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

The May Public Budget Hearing minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Whitney Barrat moved that both sets of minutes be approved, seconded by Chuck Burke and approved.

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo presented the following report:

WLS Board of Trustees has approved a new WLS Strategic Plan of action for the medium term. The Plan includes the revised Mission, Vision and Overview of services as well as three specific strategic goals: a) Promotion of Equity and Access; b)Expansion of community engagement among the libraries and patrons and; c) Updating and improving the overall WLS infrastructure.

The Plan recommends that this Strategic Plan should be circulated as widely as possible and shared with the various audiences including library directors. The Executive Team of the Board has been charged with the task of evaluating the implementation and impact of the strategic plan with the relevant organizations and units within the WLS. The revised Mission, Vision and Overview have already been incorporated into the 2022-2026 WLS Plan of Service, and into the WLS Bylaws.

Earlier, the WLS Board approved the WLS Whistle-Blower Protection Policy Revision which incorporates the recently enacted legislation by the NY State. The amendments to the law provide employees, former employees, and independent contractors to a wider range of claims to pursue against companies, especially as related to threats of retaliation. The amended law went into effect on January 26, 2022. The Board also accepted the 2021 WLS Annual Report for submission to the Division of Library Development of the State Education Department.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Whitney Barrat gratefully thanked the New Rochelle community for its overwhelming passage, on May 17th of the proposed FY 2022/23 Library Budget request. She also congratulated Rhiannon Navin regarding her election as the newest member of the Library Board of Trustees.

Whitney Barrat moved to accept the reappointment of the following Foundation Board members: Joan Clarke, Rod Rolette, Theresa Leghorn, Leslie Demus, Lynn Green., seconded by Lucille Renwick and approved.

Whitney Barrat moved to accept the appointment of the following Foundation Board members: Erin Harrell and Sharon Weekes., seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

Whitney Barrat moved to accept the FY 2022/23 Library Board meeting schedule as amended, seconded by Beth Acocella and approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

+ Library Operations: Staff continue to report increased general activity levels throughout both library facilities. As documented in earlier reports, teen room, study/conference room Wi-Fi and computer usage continue to be strong but other areas of growth include children/family and adult usage. In-house and remote Adult programming along with Children's preschool programming are growing steadily in relation to audience numbers. As previously detailed, our wide array of social service efforts continue to elicit significant community support and interest.

+ 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. Library Administration continues to await

further analysis by New York State Library and DASNY staff. The process will continue through the current fiscal year with confirmation likely to be delayed due to the effects of the pandemic on state executive and legislative government agency work output. It is estimated that the grant monies will be made available to our library in October /November 2022.

+ Main Library Fire Stopping & Safety Project: In September 2020, our library received a NYS Library Construction Grant in order to address issues surrounding the integrity of the existing fire-rated demising walls throughout the Main Library. The project architect and his team (along with assistance from the library custodial staff) have completed the examination of the facility demising walls and expects to present a revised proposal with a more precise plan of action in relation to work, cost estimates, outcomes and timetable/schedule of work by July.

+ 2022 Prospective NYS Library Construction Grant: The library is continuing to explore the possibility of applying for 2 NYS Library Construction Grant in August 2022. The Main Library grant will provide for the installation of a series of sound absorbing acoustic reduction solutions throughout our noisy facility. The Huguenot Children's Library grant will likely allow for the installation of storage solutions throughout the facility and may possibly include other yet to be determined elements.

+ Family Foundation Grant: The library continues to be engaged in discussions with an anonymous Family Foundation regarding a possible series of grants. With the strong advance support of this foundation, we have determined to apply for a grant in order to create a Sewing Program, comprising in-library workshops, use of sewing machines by individual patrons inside the library, and circulation of machines for patron use outside of the library. We expect to submit the grant next week and will likely receive a response by the end of June. We may apply for other grants as well but to date no final determination has been made regarding this possibility. Much discussion regarding this opportunity ensued with strong support for this program articulated by the Board.

+ ARPA Grants: The City of New Rochelle will be making significant amounts of American Rescue Plan Act funding available to New Rochelle local not-for-profit, service, and educational organizations. The goal of these grant awards are to assist in responses to current COVID 19 challenges as well as improve the delivery of health services and more efficiently respond to future public health challenges. Additionally, achieving educational equity and overcoming learning challenges are projected as grant outcomes. Our library is in the process of looking at possibly submitting a number of grant applications as a stand-alone organization as well as involving our Foundation and Montefiore New Rochelle Hospital as grant partners.

+ May 21st Library Budget and Vote: The library election on May 21st was a great success for the library in relation to its passage of its proposed FY 2022/23 budget (76.51% of the voters endorsed the budget with a winning majority achieved in all 13 districts.) Rhiannon Navin was elected to serve a 5-year term as a Library Trustee and will assume office in July 2022.

+ Appointment of Assistant Library Director: After a lengthy and effortful recruitment, Elizabeth Joseph was appointed to the position of Assistant Director. Ms. Joseph's background is diverse and impressive. A native New Yorker, she is a graduate of City College and was awarded an MLS from Queens College. Ms. Joseph began her professional career at New York Public Library but previously had worked at a number of

Westchester public libraries. Since 2005, she has been employed at the Ferguson Library (Stamford's Public Library). Ms. Joseph was initially hired as a Librarian I but was later appointed to the position of Information and Adult Services Head and currently serves as Associate Director, Community Engagement at Ferguson. She will begin her career at our library on July 18th.

+ Continuing Education: The 2022 Trustee Handbook Club Schedule will complete its program series on June 14th. The topic will be "PR & Advocacy" with accessibility limited to Zoom.

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

+ NRPL Foundation: The annual Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for June 20th. This meeting will witness a vote on the FY 2022/23 Foundation grant requests for the Main Library and the Huguenot Children's Library. The May 12th Foundation Guardian Gala event was a significant success in relation to the enjoyable quality of the program, large number of attendees and sponsorships and funds raised on behalf of our library.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

No report was made.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

No report was made in the aftermath of the earlier Public Budget hearing held earlier in the evening.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Whitney Barrat reported that she met with Committee Chair Sarah Langlois and Director Tom Geoffino in order to discuss "next steps" relative to our Main Library facility analysis efforts.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair Daniel Bonnet shared the community activities report as created by Community Outreach Coordinator Denise Link:

Summer 2022 is almost here and the BTOP Help & Learning center has been busy with Library patrons needing help getting community resource information.

Job Search coach sessions with Rebecca Mazin continue Tuesdays from 5-8pm, with sessions in-person or virtual.

BTOP Help & Learning center sessions are on the rise, with many patrons needing assistance with unemployment benefits, snap recertification and passport information

- **Westchester County Health Care Navigator**, Elizabeth Blackwell, is in-person on every Wednesdays 10am-2pm @ NRPL. Appointments available (914) 336-0925
- **Summer Civic/Citizenship classes** are virtual on Thursdays in June and July @ 6pm. Register on our NRPL calendar.
- **NRPL Community Outreach/Info**. Session at the monthly IEYMS mobile food Wednesday, 6/8@ 4pm-5pm. Library information, free book giveaways. A successful NRHS Community Resource Night on 5/11 resulted in positive connections for the library and NRHS community.
- **Continued Lobby tabling sessions with non- profits** include Project Hope/People USA, Urban Strategies Head Start Program and NYS Healthcare vendors: MVP and United Healthcare.
 - **The BTOP Help & Learning Center supports the transition for students who are continuing their High School Equivalency Exam (HSE) journey.** The personalized learning program from WLS, GED Academy, is available for library patrons along with a study coach. Continued tutoring sessions with a volunteer math coach on Fridays in the BTOP room.
 - **ESL Classes** during the summer continue at the library, with mornings sessions filling up fast.
 - **A NR resident will be donating their services as a Notary Public.** Notary Nights at the NRPL will be on Thursdays @ 5:30 on 6/23, 7/21 and 8/18 in the BTOP room.

Tom also shared Marketing & Communications Coordinator Lisa Itzkowitz and Programming Coordinator Tobe Sevush's joint report:

May/June

- **Mindfulness Meditation**, May 12, 19, 26, Virtual program in collaboration with partner libraries- **11 NR attendees/week (21 registrants)**
 - **Freedomland USA**, May 14; Hybrid event - Lecture and presentation of memorabilia from famed Bronx amusement park. **Total attendance, 50: 37 in-person attendees; 13 virtual**
 - **Soundshore Chorale Spring Concert**, May 15. **70 attendees**
 - **Sing Your Heart Out Rehearsals Begin**, May 16; The popular adult singing program, led by Robert Puleo, returns for the spring/summer season. Weekly rehearsals to culminate in a final performance on July 16.
 - **Manzanar National Historic Site Lecture**, virtual program (with other libraries) in recognition of AAPI Month, May 18; Free program presented virtually by park ranger. **6 attendees from New Rochelle**
 - **Women's Jazz Ensemble** (rescheduled from March), May 22, **45 attendees**
 - **Film Series, Helter Skelter**, June 4- Postponed.
 - **Chair Yoga** (mid-day, 2x/week) and **Yoga and Meditative Arts** (evening, 2x/month) continue to have consistent and strong following each session (10 - 16 participants.)
- Coming Up:**
June

Citywide Juneteenth Celebration - Lisa and Tobe are working very closely with Linda Tarrant-Reid, Angela Farrish, Judith Weber, Leslie Demus and others, as part of the citywide Juneteenth planning committee.

NRPL events:

- **Lincoln Avenue Corridor Exhibit**, “A Retrospective of the Lincoln Avenue Corridor - 1900’s - 1960’s”, June 4 - 24
- **Juneteenth Kid’s Art Workshop**, June 9 - “trial run” for program taking place on June 19
- **Gospel Choir performance**, June 17 (Friday evening)
- **Bokandeye African Dance Troupe workshop and performance**, June 20
- **Crossword Coach (Virtual)**, June 14, Continuation of successful interactive solving of NYT crossword puzzle. Small, but loyal following.
- **Summer Reading Kick Off Party**, June 25 Collaborating with NRBID to sign up children for reading challenge and host family-friendly activities in Ruby Dee Park.

July and August:

International Music and Dance Festival, 6 Tuesday evenings, July 12 - August 16, 7:00 pm performance in Ossie Davis theater including Native American dance, Arabian Dance, African Dance, Classical Chinese Dance and more. Calpulli Mexican Dance will be offering weekly workshops weekly as part of summer children’s programs. Closing out the international festival with a performance by these students.

Picnic Party in the Park, 4 Thursday evenings, July 14, 28, August 11 and 25. 6:00 pm, Ruby Dee Park: In collaboration with NRBID- family-friendly performances (music, magic, storyteller) coupled with option to purchase picnic dinner from downtown restaurateurs.

Meet the Presidents (Virtual), presented by New York Historical Society, July 6, in partnership with local libraries

The Golden Age of Television (Virtual), Presented by Fordham Professor Emeritus, Brian Rose, July 14, in partnership with local libraries

Sing Your Heart Out Performance, July 16 - culmination of Sing Your Heart out workshops with Robert Puleo.

New Rochelle and the Arts: An Artists Community, July 23 - Hybrid program with local historian, Larry Sheldon

Lunch & Learn, Pre-retirement Benefits Workshop (Virtual), July 26 - presented by Social Security Administration, free and in partnership with other libraries.

Art Gallery

New Rochelle Art Association exhibits, July/August

Jules Bauer Award Show June 25-July 23

Two week Themed Show July 30 - August 20

MARKETING MISC:

Distribution of Promotional Materials Through Circulation, Coordinating with Circulation to insert program flyers into Holds (and as patrons check out books). Moving towards creating monthly event listing bookmarks, as we are able to plan far enough in advance.

Sewing Machine Grant - researched and wrote grant to secure funding from family foundation

Financial Literacy Workshops: After success with *Financial Literacy for Teens*, exploring options for future workshops, including Spanish language programs.

Email marketing: Open rates continue to be strong, running between 34% - 36%. Enhancing contact list by adding new cardholder emails from past few years.

Summer Print Newsletter: Summer print newsletter in development for July distribution.

NRPL Presence at Jefferson Elementary as part workshops for parents to promote summer literacy for students and parents. Generated 30 card applications

Street Fair: Planning NRPL presence for City of New Rochelle September Street Fair

NRPL Gala: Continued to build community partnerships as member of NRPLF Gala committee.

ArtsFest: Continue to build community partnerships as member of ArtsFest planning committee

NRBID Continue to build community partnership with NRBID; in process of securing funding from NRBID for collaborative programs.

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

Whitney Barrat provided an overview of the Library Board Conflict of Interest Policy and its importance as a guide for Board conduct and behavior. She indicated that it was appropriate for the Board to endorse the current policy and as such annually sign and submit their agreement regarding this policy.

Chuck Burke moved to accept Conflict of Interest Policy with individual Board member signed annual certifications of agreement, seconded by Whitney Barrat as approved.

Tom Geoffino reported on the status of the proposed Chromebook/WiFi Hot Spot Borrowing Policy. Thanks to a successful Emergency Connectivity Grant (ECF) Award of \$87,263.64 (with no library match amount required), we have 100 Chromebooks and 50 WiFi hot spots to loan to New Rochelle residents. Daniel Ogyiri and Denise Link spent much time researching and crafting the draft Loan policy and, along with input as supplied by our Library Department Heads, created a document that recommends the rules and guidelines for the patron use of this technology. Tom furnished the details of the policy, specifically related to eligibility as well as, loan, return and renewal periods, and includes information tied to late or loss penalties. Much discussion ensued. The Board's conclusion was to accept the policy as presented but requested the library to revisit this policy in 3 to 6 month if changes are necessary.

Whitney Barrat moved to accept Chromebook/WiFi Hot Spot Borrowing Policy, seconded by Daniel Bonnet as approved

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PUBLIC TO BE HEARD:

No member of the public spoke.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Langlois
Secretary