

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday July 21, 2022**

Whitney Barrat, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

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

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino  
Jean Manning  
Yesika Torres  
Elizabeth Joseph

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

NEW BUSINESS:

Swearing in of Newly Elected Board Members:

Rhiannon Navin (term of office expires June 30, 2027) was sworn in by Board President Whitney Barrat.

Whitney Barrat discussed the status of the pending Library Board Committee assignments for Library Trustees. She indicated that each Board member will serve on 3 separate Committees and will also be designated to chair 1 Board Committee. Assignments will be made relative to particular Board members strengths and interests but changes to current assignments may occur given circumstances.

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The June Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Lucille Renwick moved that the minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo presented the following report:

*The WLS Board is in a Summer recess until late next month, September 2022. One of the issues that is most likely going to be discussed by the Board in the coming months is the worrying and highly politicized trend of book banning across the country, which is a*

*cause for concern for librarians as they affect the operations of the libraries and the established mandates. This matter was flagged and briefly discussed at the last meeting of the WLS Board's Executive Committee on June 27, 2022. The discussion is expected to continue.*

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Whitney Barrat introduced Nominations Committee Lucille Renwick in relation to the presentation of the proposed slate of Board officers for FY 2022/2023. Nominations Committee Chair Lucille Renwick moved to adopt the following slate of officers for FY 2022/2023: Whitney Barrat as President, Daniel Bonnet as Vice President and Sarah Langlois as Secretary, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

President Whitney Barrat thanked the Board for its continued support regarding her work as Board President. She indicated that the appointment of the Board Committee members will be announced at the August meeting.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

+ Welcome: Trustee Rhiannon Navin was welcomed to the Library Board as its newest member.

+ Library Operations: Summer 2022 has started with extraordinarily liveliness in both Main and HCL facilities. We are witnessing levels of activity in children, teen and adult programming rivaling pre-pandemic levels. Children's Summer Reading participation is also extremely active with over 472 children enrolled in this effort. Given the challenging heat wave, our facilities continue to serve as a designated Cooling Center for resident seeking cool and comfortable spaces for relief.

+ 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 with confirmation delayed due to the effects of the pandemic on state executive and legislative government agency work output. It is hoped 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 since completed

a more thorough examination of the facility demising walls and determined the extent of the work is far greater than the original estimation. Given the unexpected expansion of the work, additional cost has been attached to the project. Unfortunately, the NYS Library Construction grant will not cover this extra expenditure so the cost must be underwritten by the library. Tom Geoffino requested that the library contribute \$93,000 to this project in order to fully fund this effort. Much discussion ensued with the decision to table the vote till the August meeting in order to share more project and pricing information with the Board.

+ 2022 Prospective NYS Library Construction Grant: The library is intent on applying for 2 NYS Library Construction Grant in August 2022. The Main Library grant will underwrite the installation of a series of sound absorbing acoustic reduction solutions throughout our noisy facility. The Huguenot Children's Library grant will allow for the installation of storage solutions throughout the facility and will include enhancements to the basement relative to flooring, an upgraded kitchen configuration and the installation of an exterior patio artist wall.

+ Family Foundation Grant: The library successfully applied for a 3-year grant (from a anonymous family foundation) designed to create a multi-generational Sewing Program, providing 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 start the implementation process in Fall 2022. We may apply for other grants from this foundation but to date no final determination has been made regarding this possibility.

+ ARPA Grants: In collaboration with our library, the library Foundation submitted an ARPA grant proposal in the amount of \$450,300 in order to fund the purchase of a mobile library that can deliver library services – including circulation of materials such as books, chrome books, WiFi hotspots, and more; teen/children's programming, digital services such as printer and scanner access, technology training and assistance to educate residents of all ages, and information about Library and community programs/services – to communities throughout New Rochelle. Details regarding the time frame for the award announcements and the delivery of the grant award have yet to be announced.

+ Senator Mayer Grant Opportunity: Senator Shelley Mayer's office approached our library with the idea of Senator Mayer sponsoring legislation that would obtaining state funding to support projects that of benefit our library and the New Rochelle community. We are currently examining potential project opportunities.

+ Legislative Breakfast Series: WLS has initiated a series of legislative breakfast meetings in order to thank our Westchester state legislative delegation for their tireless support of libraries. These meetings will be held in Croton, Somers, Yonkers and Harrison. Tom Geoffino will attend the session to be held at the Harrison Public Library on August 10<sup>th</sup> and encouraged Board members to participate as well.

+ 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 June 20<sup>th</sup> Foundation Board meeting witnessed the adoption of the largest (to date) Annual Foundation Grant allocation. This \$248,000 grant will provide financial support (but not limited to) the following projects:

- Third Floor Renovation Project matching grant monies for the pending NY State Construction Grant award.

- Hardware and software upgrades including a new high performance server.
- Tech for Teens including 3D pens and Twitch Streaming Equipment.
- Main and HCL Children's programs, classes and assorted technology and furniture.
- Additional Main 2<sup>nd</sup> floor furniture - and an enhanced music scores collection.
- Museum Pass Program providing free entry into many metropolitan area museums and outdoor spaces.

The next Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup> and will be in-person at the Main Library.

#### PERSONNEL REPORT:

Whitney Barrat made the motion, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Board of Trustees does hereby approve the appointment of Elizabeth Joseph to the position of full time Assistant Director, effective July 18, 2022 at a salary of \$110,000 per year, seconded by Sarah Langlois and approved.

Rhiannon Navin made the motion, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Board of Trustees does hereby approve the appointment of Ashley Bressingham to the position of full time Librarian II (Children's Services), effective June 16, 2022 at a salary of \$67,879 per year, seconded by Sarah Langlois and approved.

Whitney Barrat made the motion, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Board of Trustees does hereby approve the appointment of:

- + Michaela Rogers to the position of hourly Library Page (Children's Services - HCL), effective July 11, 2022 at a salary of \$15.00 per hour.
  - + Emma Farley to the position of hourly Library Page (Children's Services - HCL), effective July 11, 2022 at a salary of \$15.00 per hour.
- seconded by Whitney Barrat and approved.

#### BUDGET COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

#### BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

#### 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:

#### **JUNE/JULY 2022 HIGHLIGHTS: BTOP HELP & LEARNING CENTER**

*The BTOP Help & Learning Center continues to help patrons with completing on-line applications, finding social services, setting up a basic email account, Chromebook coaching*

*and connecting to community resources.*

- *As the summer continues, many patrons are seeking assistance with social security concerns, creating accounts with NYS benefits, including SNAP, unemployment claims and credit reports.*
- *Healthcare Navigator Elizabeth Blackwell continues to assist with open enrollment to purchase, change or renew coverage in a NYS qualified health plan.*
- *Job Search Coach Rebecca Mazin continues to assist individuals looking for a new or improved job by helping with writing resumes and cover letters, completing online job applications, searching for jobs on the Internet, networking, and honing interview skills and completing follow ups. Attendance and sessions per month have been steady.*
- *Summer Civic/Citizenship classes 2022 continue with attorney Sonica Dixon: Zoom sessions on Thursdays, 7/7 & 7/21 @ 7pm. Register on the NRPL website/calendar. Classes will resume in the fall.*
- *Outreach tabling by other organizations in our lobby includes Urban Strategies Headstart, People USA/Project Hope, United Healthcare and MVP Healthcare.*
- *Notary Public services continues this summer with sessions on Thursdays @ 5:30pm 7/21 & 8/18.*
- *Summer 2022 ESL in-person classes continue at NRPL. Sessions are full and attendance is robust. Fall session times to be posted soon.*
- *A chance to make community connections continues with NRPL outreach and informational sessions that are scheduled for the 7/16- Taste of Union Event and NRPD National Night Out, 8/2. Other members of our staff are participating as well.*
- *A library information session has been scheduled for the senior residence at 50 Sickles Ave. and plans for a lending library are in the works.*
- *The NRPL Help & Learning Center has been invited to participate in the training with the Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley program, which is funded as part of an ARPA grant, aimed at advancing digital inclusion in collaboration with public library systems; Digital Navigators address the whole digital inclusion process- home connectivity, devices, and digital skills — with community members through repeated interactions. Organizations that fulfill the obligations of the program will be compensated for their time. The grant will fund the payment of \$900 to NRPL once these expectations are met.*

Daniel Bonnet also shared the Marketing, Communications and Programming report as created by Lisa Itzkowitz and Tobe Sevush:

### ***JUNE/JULY 2022 HIGHLIGHTS: BTOP HELP & LEARNING CENTER***

*NRPL was part of the larger City of New Rochelle Juneteenth Celebration, June 4 - June 24. The following programs/events took place at the Library:*

- ***Juneteenth Kid's Art Workshop***, June 9 - "trial run" for program taking place on June 19, **10 attendees**
- ***Crossword Coach (Virtual)***, June 14, Continuation of successful interactive solving of NYT crossword puzzle. Small, but loyal following. **8 participants**
- ***Gospel Choir performance***, June 17 (Friday evening), **135+ attendees**
- ***Bokandeye African Dance Troupe workshop and performance***, June 20  
*Workshop: 17 participants; Performance: 70 attendees*

- **Lincoln Avenue Corridor Exhibit**, “A Retrospective of the Lincoln Avenue Corridor - 1900’s - 1960’s”, June 4 - 24
- **Summer Reading Kick Off Party**, June 25 Collaborated with NRBID to sign up children for Reading Challenge and host family-friendly activities in Ruby Dee Park, **400 + attendees. Over 170 summer reading signups (Signups reached over 400 as of first week of July)**
- **International Music and Dance Festival, Red Hawk Native American Dancers**, Tuesday, July 12, **20 participants**
- **Calpulli Mexican Dance Workshops**, 6-week program culminating in outdoor performance on August 16 by participants and Calpulli professionals. Workshops are offered for 3 age groups - 5-7 yrs., 8-13 yrs., teens/adults. All age groups are running, and are well attended. July 7 workshop: **42 participants**; July 14 workshop, **52 participants**
- **Party in the Park**, Thursday evening, July 14, **City Winds Trio, 65 participants**
- **Meet the Presidents (Virtual)**, presented by New York Historical Society, July 6, in partnership with local libraries, 13 New Rochelle registrants, **5 attendees**
- **The Golden Age of Television (Virtual)**, Presented by Fordham Professor Emeritus, Brian Rose, July 14, in partnership with local 4 other libraries, Total attendees across all libraries, 42; **New Ro attendees, 4**
- **Sing Your Heart Out Performance**, July 16 - culmination of Sing Your Heart out workshops with Robert Puleo, **38 attendees**
- **Chair Yoga (1x/week)** continues one day/week this summer and continues to have consistent and strong following each session (10 - 16 participants.)
- **International Music and Dance Festival: Bokandeye African Dance Troupe** Tuesday July 19, **56 participants**

#### **Coming Up:**

- **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.
- **International Music and Dance Festival continues:** Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company July 26, The Irish Dance Company, August 2, Middle Eastern Dance, August 9 and Calpulli culminating performance, August 16.
- **Party in the Park continues:** Magic Evan, July 28, Pretzelstein, August 11 and Fiesta with Flor, August 25.

#### **ART GALLERY**

**New Rochelle Art Association** exhibits, July/August

- Jules Bauer Award Show June 25-July 23
- 2-week Themed Show July 30 - August 20

**City of New Rochelle Camps**

- Presentation of camper’s artwork from the summer Aug 22-Aug 31

#### **MARKETING/COMMUNITY RELATIONS MISC:**

- **NRPL Table at Taste of Union Fair, July 16** - Over 300 people visited NRPL table, engaged with librarians. Generated 18 card applications.
- **NRPL Table at Summer Sounds Concert, July 20** - distributed program materials to attendees, particularly for Picnic Party in the Park and International Music and Dance Festival
- **Sewing Machine Grant** - Awarded \$48,500 from Strypemonde Foundation to create and administer a sewing program, including purchase of machines for in-house use and circulation.
- **Worked with NRPLF to research Library on Wheels for ARPA grant** (submitted by NRPLF, July 18)
- **Exploring New Programs including Life Talk, Mobile Mental Health service, Financial Wellness for Women**
- **Email marketing:** Open rates are trending higher, averaging 36 - 40% in recent weeks
- **Street Fair:** Planning NRPL presence for City of New Rochelle September Street Fair, September 18, 2022

#### FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

#### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

#### POLICY COMMITTEE:

Whitney Barrat reaffirmed all Trustees have agreed to the Library Board Conflict of Interest Policy and its importance as a guide for Board conduct and behavior. She indicated that the reconstituted Policy Committee will be working, in FY 2022/23, on the creation of additional policies including a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy for our organization.

#### SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

#### PUBLIC TO BE HEARD:

Damon Maher 10 LeCount Place, New Rochelle

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Langlois  
Secretary

