

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday September 8, 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
Rgiannon Navin (absent)
Corey Galloway
Beth Acocella
Lucille Renwick

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres
Elizabeth Joseph

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

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

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

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo presented the following report:

“The WLS Board of Trustees is still in a Summer recess which will end on September 27 when it convenes its next Board meeting. Among the issues the Board will address are: First, a careful monitoring of cases of book banning which are reported to be taking place in parts of the country, and strategize on how to address the issue when it becomes necessary. Second, the desirability of forging a close working relations between the WLS Board and the WLS staff. It is planned to hold the first of such informal get-together with the staff as soon as it can be arranged.”

PRESIDENT’S REPORT:

President Whitney Barrat welcomed everyone back to “work” in the aftermath of Summer 2022. She characterized the new Board Committee assignments as relatively

minor in scope and encouraged Committee Chairs to connect with Committee members to consider future assignments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

- + 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. Given the challenging heat wave, our facilities continue to serve as a designated Cooling Center for resident seeking cool and comfortable spaces for relief. More information about our Summer programming activity levels in comparison to previous years will be shared in the Assistant Director's Report.
- + 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 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. Having obtained the Board's approval for the additional funds needed to complete this project, the project architect is moving forward with the completion of the project documents necessary for the successful completion of the project. Our goal is to start the project in the next few months with an updated status report to be provided to the Board at its October meeting.
- + 2022 Prospective NYS Library Construction Grant: The library is awaiting a final determination regarding the 2 NYS Library Construction Grant applications submitted 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. Due to the submission of numerous WLS member library grant applications overwhelming the total grants funds available, all member library grant submissions received cuts in award

amounts. We are currently in conversations with the WLS Grants Administrator in order to reconfigure our grant applications given the reduced funding award. We will share these revised grant awards with the Board at its October meeting.

+ 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 continue to be unavailable.

+ E-Rate Grant: Thanks to the work of IT Head Daniel Ogyiri, our library was awarded \$52,816.93 in E-Rate grant funds but we will need to match it with a commitment of \$13,204.23 from the Library Fund Balance. Whitney Barrat moved that \$13,204.23 be allocated from the Fund Balance in order to provide the match for the award of \$52,816.93 in E-Rate funding, seconded by Beth Acocela and approved.

+ New Rochelle School District (NRSD) Request: NRSD/ Library Treasurer Laura Del Principio requested that the Library Board pass a resolution “appointing” her as Library Treasurer and Gloria Iannucci as Deputy Treasurer as well as reauthorizing her ability to function as a signatory for our bank accounts and also providing Gloria with the same banking authorization. Much discussion ensued. It was the sense of the Board that Tom Geoffino should speak with the library attorney regarding these requests in order to determine the appropriate Board action. Tom was asked to reach out to the NRSD and discuss these requests with the Ms. Del Principio and her supervisor in order to gain context for these requests. Mr. Geoffino will report on the outcome of these discussions at the October Board meeting.

+ 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 continue to examine potential project opportunities and expect to reach out to Senator Myers office in the near future.

+ 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 next Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for September 19th and will be in-person at the Main Library.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT:

The summer reading clubs and programs are a major marker of the community's participation and engagement with the library. However, during Covid, the library saw a dramatic decline in program attendance and engagement. As we move into a post pandemic phase, we wanted to determine if patron behavior had changed. In an effort to make that determination, we reviewed and analyzed figures of summer program attendance and patron participation. What we found was encouraging and heartening.

Here are some of the highlights.

Prior to the pandemic, there were 600-700 children registering for the summer reading club. We saw a major drop in 2020 (181) and 2021(322). However, this year, we have reversed the downturn and registered over 600 participants. The number of live summer programs also rebounded resulting in phenomenal attendance. We welcomed over 7300 children in 2019 but we are not far behind this year. This year, we hosted over 180 programs and attracted over 6000 youngsters to our varied, educational and entertaining programs. Teens are traditionally not library users. We witnessed this during the 2018 and 2019 summer reading club programs. Their impression has changed as evidenced by the number of participants and attendees. We went from seven registering for the 2018 summer reading club to 35 students this year. We presented 9 programs with 57 students attending those programs in 2018 to having over 100 programs with almost 900 students attending this year. Adults are also back to attending programs in droves. Over 2500 people attended the wide ranging programs (45) we offered this year.

An eye opening comparison would be between 2018 and 2022. In 2018, there were a total of 453 programs with an attendance of 8,8650. This year, we received almost 9500 people who came to one or more of our 200 programs.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Whitney Barrat made the motion, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Board of Trustees does hereby approve the appointment of Madhu Panicker to the position of Hourly Library Clerk (Circulation Services), effective August 16, 2022 at a salary of \$20.66 per hour, seconded by Lucille Renwick 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 Highlights from the BTOP Help & Learning Center August/September 2022

The BTOP Help & Learning center saw many busy days helping patrons with using a device, job search help, completing online applications, expanding their benefits, setting up an email account and connecting to a variety of community resources.

- *Library patrons continue to prepare with experienced Job Readiness Coach, Rebecca Mazin, who assists with online job applications, writing or editing resumes and job interview skills every Tuesday evenings from 5pm-7:45pm.*
- *Healthcare Navigator Elizabeth Blackwell continues to assist with open enrollment to purchase, change or renew coverage in a NYS qualified health plan on Wednesdays, 10:00am-2:00pm.*
- *The NRPL Lobby was host to a variety of community information resources including Project Hope, Urban Strategies HeadStart Program, United HealthCare and MVP Health Care.*
- *Outreach efforts continued this summer and the senior housing visits to 50 Sickles Ave. have been well received. Information about the happenings at the library, book giveaways, local history presentations and gentle sessions of chair yoga have been a big hit with the residents. Hoping to expand visits to 110 Lockwood Ave. senior housing in October.*
- *The month of September will see the return of the Notary Nights, with sessions on Thursdays @ 5:30 pm on 9/23, 10/20, 11/17 & 12/15 in the BTOP room.*
- *Virtual Civic/Citizenship classes continue with attorney Sonica Dixon. Zoom sessions are Thursdays @ 7pm. Register on the NRPL website/calendar. Classes will resume on 9/15. Two library patrons passed their interviews and became American citizens this summer.*
- *Digital Navigator efforts are in full swing at NRPL, assisting patrons in need with using a device, securing free or low-cost internet service, and digital literacy. Digital Navigator appointments will coincide with the launch of the NRPL Chromebook and Hotspot program at NRPL, coming soon!*

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

International Music and Dance Series

- *August 2, 2022 we presented The Irish Dance Company to a crowd of 115 people of all ages. The Irish Dance Company had 20 performers ranging in age from 4-25. August 9, 2022 we presented Aszmarara Sherry a dancer along with her band playing middle eastern music. Aszmarara has been here in the past and is known in this community. We had 97 in attendance. August 16, 2022 was our final performance for the International Music and Dance Series and was the final performance for our Calpulli Mexican Dance Workshop. This performance took place outside and the weather cooperated beautifully. The workshop, which took place weekly on Thursdays, had a 5-7year old group, an 8-13 year old group and a teen/adult group and all workshops were full. The final performance consisted of 50 dancers and we had 400 people in attendance. Channel 12 came to film and interview and we were on channel 12 that night.*

Party in the Park Series:

- *August 11, 2022 Pretzelstein (a children's band with Zev Haber) performed outside and we had a DJ playing music and running games both before and after the concert. In addition, we had a balloon twister, a spray tattoo artist and a contortionist performing on the grass. We had 325 attendees outside on this evening. August 25, 2022 we closed our Party in the Park Series with Fiesta with Flor. Flor Bromley is a bilingual children's*

performer and she had 2 of her musicians join for the performance. We also had a DJ before and after the concert, a spray tattoo artist and a stilt walker on the grass. We had 275 attendees outside for this evening.

The Lumen Gallery:

- August 22-August 31, 2022: We exhibited work in our gallery from Kiddie Kamp and Camp Joy which are 2 camps from the City of New Rochelle. The reception took place on August 30 and we welcomed 50 people to the Lumen Gallery to see their children's work. We will make this an annual show and next year will have more of the New Rochelle City camps participate.

Coming this Fall:

Friday Night Concert Series:

- September 9: Bill Steely and Where's Dave Band, a country & Americana style Music will perform.
- October 14: Counterpoint, an all-women's acapella Group will perform.
- November 4: Firey String Sistas!, an all-women's jazz band will perform
- December 2: The Harlem Blues and Jazz Band will perform.

Saturday Afternoon Film Series:

Chris Poggiali will present a monthly series 1 Saturday a month.

- September 17 we will be showing 2 Westerns from the 1950's: *Black Patch* and *No Name On the Bullet*.
- October 29 we will be showing 2 horror Films: *Halloween III* and *Race with the Devil*

Sunday Afternoon NYC Film Series:

Les Srager, Film Historian, will be presenting a NYC film series 1 Sunday a month.

- October 16: we will show *The Naked City*;
- November 13: we will show *Love with the Proper Stranger*;
- December 11: we will show *Edge of the City*;
- January 8 : we will show *Crossing Delancey*.

Westchester Sandbox Theater Workshop Series:

Beginning September 17 we will offer a 4 class series, meeting Saturday mornings, for children ages 7-11 years old focusing on Acting and Improvisation.

Art Workshop Series:

Beginning October 6 we will be offering a once a month Art Workshop for Adults consisting of Collage, Beading, 3D and recycled art. September 20 and 22 we are offering a drop in knitting workshop for knitters of all levels.

Hispanic Heritage Month:

- September 15: we are presenting a virtual program: *Celebrate Mexican Muralists*. This program will discuss the great Mexican muralists David Alfaro Siqueiros, Jose Clemente Orozco, and others who inspired Jackson Pollock. It will also include a virtual tour of the barn studio where Pollock made his famous drip paintings and Lee Krasner created her abstract art.
- September 24: Dialogos Duo will perform a contemporary Brazilian Music Concert
- October 7: Carlos Pavan will perform a guitar concert. Carlos combines Argentine tango & folklore rhythms with classical and jazz concepts.

Indigenous Peoples Week:

- *October 1: Barry Keegan will demonstrate early life and technology of Native Americans who lived along the Hudson River Valley. This is for ages 8+ and will have a hands-on component.*
- *October 8: Brooklyn Demme, filmmaker, actor (and son of Jonathan Demme) will present 2 short films on Indigenous People that he and his father made. He will follow the films with a q & a.*

ArtsFest:

- *October 20: Music from Copland House. They will present a salute to the city's rich musical legacy. Featuring the World Premiere of a new commission by award-winning composer Steven Snowden that musicalizes the algorithms of traffic signals at Center and Huguenot Avenues and explores New Rochelle's culture and history.*
- *October 21: Bridge Records Concert and Exhibit. Steven Beck will perform music by George Walker and more.*
- *October 22: TheaterWorksUSA will perform: Up In Arms, Tortoise and Hare's Race to Health. This is a children's Puppet Performance.*
- *October 23: Read650 will present: Coming of Age, a spoken word event. This is geared toward adults.*

Lumen Winter Gallery:

- *September 6-29: Magic in the World - From Fairy Tales to Nature. Reception September 25th Local artists explore the Idea of Magic through different media*
- *October 8-November 6: New Rochelle Art Association. Reception Sunday October 23 107th Open Juried Show: This show is open to members and non-members and consists of artwork in 9 categories: Acrylic/Oils, Graphics, Fine Crafts, Sculpture, Photography, Watercolor, Mixed Media, Digital Art and Pastels. This is part of ArtsFest.*

MARKETING/COMMUNITY RELATIONS MISC:

Marketing/Program Report to Board of Trustees, 9/8/22

Programs/Events

Chair Yoga (1x/week) continued one day/week through the end of August with consistent and strong following each session (10 - 16 participants.) Long time instructor Nora LeMorin moved on to a new full time job, so two new instructors, recommended by Nora, have been hired to continue the program this fall. Schedule will return to 2x/week. Mildred Gladwin and Erica Itzkowitz will take over Monday, and Wednesday classes, respectively.

Coming Up:

Yoga and Meditative Arts

This popular, in person program, led by Angela Taylor returns with 5 sessions, this fall

Virtual Programs

These programs, for the most part, are in partnership with other WLS Libraries. Costs are low, or free so present a great opportunity to offer a variety of programs to a broad range of constituents.

- *How the Heck Do You Buy a Used Car , 9/13/22
With Chaya Milchtein, Mechanic Shop Femme*
- *Discovery of a Masterpiece, 9/14/22*
- *Mexican Muralists, 9/15/22*

- *The Whys and Whens of Car Maintenance, 9/20/22*
- *Can Sustainable Food Systems Save the Climate?, 9/21/22*
- *Dialagos Duo, 9/24/22 (This program will be performed live in the theater and will also be available virtually.)*
- *César E. Chávez National Monument, 10/6/22*
- *The Films of Alfred Hitchcock, 10/13/22*

MARKETING/COMMUNITY RELATIONS MISC:

Robert Klein Dedication Event: Coordinated ceremony to honor Robert Klein, an NRPL employee for 12 years, who passed away in 2020. In his memory, his parents made a donation that was used to build 2 new study rooms, and revitalize outside murals. Post event press picked up by Patch.

Grant Application: Wrote and submitted a grant to Yiddish Book Center to host Yiddish Book Club. Decision due end of September

Community Engagement

Organized storytime at 1 Clinton Park, to introduce residents to the Library. Developing relationship with events manager, providing info about NRPL events. Creating a postcard for new residents introducing them to the Library.

Met with Eddie Castro, CSDNR Family Engagement, Nate Adams, MBK, and Bobby Simic to discuss how to strengthen CSDNR and NRPL relationship. CSDNR is working on a potential field trip for all Kindergarten classes to visit the Library - possibly as soon as October. We will continue to discuss ways to engage CSDNR students, as well as provide information about NRPL programs, and offer opportunities for CSDNR (they are currently using 2nd floor conference room to host drop in hours for families to meet with Eddie; potential for them to have a table at Family Fair, etc.)

New Website Calendar: New platform, Library Market, went live on the website, September 1. New calendar is much more robust than the previous platform. CR will be working to take full advantage of the platform's capabilities.

Strong PR coverage over summer: Media Alert resulted in News 12 coverage of International Music and Dance Finale Pick up of multiple NRPL events in Patch, ArtsWestchester Magazine, New Rochelle Review, City of NR eblast, etc

Email marketing: Open rates remain very strong, averaging 38% in recent weeks

Street Fair: Continue to plan NRPL presence for City of New Rochelle September Street Fair, September 18, 2022, Purchased new pop up banner for events with QR code to new nrpl.org calendar

Family Fair: Continue to work on plans and promotion for Family Fair 2.0, October 2, 2022.

Updating 10 Amazing Things brochure

Compiled/edited subtitles for video tour of the library being created by volunteer Michael Petrone.

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

Whitney Barrat indicated that the newly constituted Policy Committee will be seeking to establish a Naming Policy in the near future.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PUBLIC TO BE HEARD:

No member of the public asked to speak.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Langlois
Secretary