

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday December 8, 2022**

Whitney Barrat, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Barrat, President
Daniel Bonnet, Vice President (absent)
Sarah Langlois, Secretary (absent)
Rhiannon Navin
Corey Galloway
Beth Acocella (absent)
Lucille Renwick (absent)

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres
Elizabeth Joseph

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The November Meeting minutes were not voted upon as a Board quorum did not exist. The November minutes will be examined at the January meeting.

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo made the following report:

The WLS Board of Trustees held its last meeting for this year on Tuesday November 29, 2022. The meeting was preceded by a brief WLS annual meeting which approved the selection of three new trustees to replace the three whose terms end December 31, 2022. It also received with appreciation the annual report of the WLS Executive Director on the programs and activities of the organization for the past year. It is an excellent, brief and comprehensive report which is worth reading by the members of this Board. The Board of Trustees formally approved the WLS operating budget for FY2023. The budget has been developed to support the WLS mission to empower lives and communities by connecting people in the Westchester County with the resources, services and programs available through the WLS and the member libraries. The budget assumed no increase in funding from the State of New York and a reduction on IT fees of approximately 2.4% less than the previous year budget. The approved budget projects a revenue of approximately \$7.5 million from all sources: NY State, member libraries, Westchester County and other miscellaneous sources. The budgeted expenses exceed revenues by \$330,035 before depreciation, which is to come from an appropriation of the unrestricted assets (grants) earned in prior years.

After its review of the WLS Investment Account report, the Board approved an investment of about \$1.5million in short-term US treasury bills to take advantage of the current good interest rates.

Lastly, the board concluded its annual review of WLS policies by incorporating recent changes in the NY State law and the NY State Labor Law, including the WLS Collection Development Policy, Board Meetings Policy, Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, and the Workplace Violence Policy.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

No report was made.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

+ 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. After much delay, we were notified in September both grants had been approved by New York State. We are hopeful that the grant monies will be made available to our library in December 2022/January 2023.

+ 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. The bidding for the project has been extended in order to assist a bidder with an incomplete bid document. Once this task has been accomplished, the project architect will complete the descoping process and make a bid award recommendation to the Board for its consideration at its January meeting.

+ 2022 NYS Library Construction Grant: The library submitted 2 NYS Library Construction Grant applications in August 2022. The intention of the Main Library grant was to underwrite the installation of a series of sound absorbing acoustic reduction solutions throughout our noisy facility. The goal of the Huguenot Children's Library grant was to 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. Our grant applications were also given reduced funding amounts necessitating reconfiguration of both applications. On September 27, 2022, the WLS Board of Directors awarded the Main Library Noise Abatement Project \$175,591 in NY State Construction grant funds with a required library match of \$57,424 thus creating a total project cost of \$229,625. In addition, the WLS Board of Directors awarded the HCL Facility Improvement Project \$24,380 in NY State Construction grant funds with a required library match of \$24,380 thus creating a total project cost of \$48,760. Further analysis by New York State Library and DASNY staff will occur throughout the current fiscal year with confirmation hopefully obtained by June 2023. If this timetable is accurate, it is estimated that the grant monies will be made available to our library in October 2023.

+ 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, Wi-Fi 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. Unfortunately, the Foundation received notification that this grant application was not funded in the initial grant award group but future grant rounds may see the grant fully or partially funded. The Foundation continues to wait for the announcement of the next award cycle.

+ Friends of NRPL: The Friends Book Store continue to provide the community with open hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Donations will be accepted with 2 small boxes/bags allowed per individual. At the Friends Annual Board meeting on December 7th, the FY 2023 Library Budget was unanimously approved. This generous grant will allocate \$67,000 to be utilized by the library throughout the upcoming year by allowing the library to continue to provide programming for children, teens and adults.

+ NRPL Foundation: The next Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for January 17th and will be in-person at the Main Library. The next January 19th Cocktails & Conversation event will be remote and features the noted legal journalist Dahlia Lithwick. The event honoring the generous planned giving donation of Dr. Edward Pascuitti will take place at 3 pm on December 11th. The “Welcome to New Rochelle” program is scheduled for January 25th at 6:30 pm (and sponsored by the Foundation along with NRCA, NR BID, NR Fund for Educational Excellence organizations) and will focus on connecting with recently arrived downtown New Rochelle residents. The “Game On!” Foundation fundraiser is scheduled for March 10th and is still in the planning stages.

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Applications for the Social Media/Videographer position are now available. Staff are currently analyzing the candidate pool and expect to schedule initial interviews prior to the beginning of the holiday season.

The library is awaiting the Civil Service posting of 2 hourly Children’s Services positions, Library Assistant and Librarian I.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT:

The Children's Room celebrated Kindness Day and Children's Book Week with Rina and Risa Horiuchi, the author and illustrator duo of the picture book, K Is for Kindness. Each child in the audience received a personalized animal illustration courtesy of the illustrator. The event also featured bilingual singer Flor Bromley and the ever popular, Frog and Toad.

Wonderbooks, print books embedded with audio were added to the collection. The 78 titles include picture books, easy readers, first chapter books and nonfiction. We are eager to provide this new format to our New Rochelle Public Library card holders as another way to promote and encourage reading.

NRPL was one of 21 libraries awarded a grant to present a series of programs geared towards 4-8 year-olds called STEM Tales, whose aim is to introduce children to a wide variety of STEM careers through engaging activities and media read-alouds from thrilling places such as the International Space Station, mountains, forests, and the sea. The staff will be mentored and tasked with presenting four workshops in the fall of 2024. We will have a small budget for programs, snacks and stipends for participants. The children's room staff were recipients of much high praise for their work this month.

“She was hoping I could tell her the title of the book that the librarian had read since her son could not stop talking about it. She went on to say that this child, unlike her others, had not been interested in books or reading but came home from his library visit absolutely excited about books.” *From a mother of a Webster kindergartener.*
“My 5-year-old had attended the pop-up program on Saturday organized by Susan and had such a BLAST, I had to write and share. She loved the arts and crafts pop-up and it was a great way to get out of the house in the afternoon on a cold day. We hope the programming continues and can't wait to see what else they create! Ms. Fischel who attended a program at HCL.

The library is now registered as a Climate Resilience Hub. Climate Resilience Hubs are community institutions that help educate residents about extreme weather preparedness and impacts of climate change. This program comes from a New England based organization, Better Future Project which works to build a grassroots movement to address climate change in our society. They are just branching into New York and we are one of the first hubs in the area (state and county). Lisa, our communications and marketing coordinator has also met with Healthy Yards New Rochelle and Sustainable Westchester to discuss program collaborations.

Study rooms have always been in demand and generally reserved by phone or in person when space is available. We are now about to launch online reservations of our study rooms through our calendar system. This new service offers room photos, capacity and a user-friendly interface.

Our 2022 staff favorites cross collaboration initiative resulted in an eclectic response of titles and genres. This wonderful display can be found opposite the new books. There will be a social media campaign featuring photos, posts and videos released throughout

the month. We are hopeful that our followers will be inspired and share their own favorites.

In reviewing circulation activity and program attendance, we see the proof of our need and success. It's evident in the phenomenal increase in checkouts of new adult books, children's materials and teen books when compared to last year. We are also recording a rise in informational transactions at all our public service desks. Children attending programs are almost at pre pandemic levels. The New Rochelle Public Library has now gone from having the ninth highest circulation of Overdrive materials to the seventh. The great level of activity we see at the library is a testament to who we are and what we provide the community.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

Budget Committee Chair Whitney Barrat reported that the Committee will likely meet in mid-January in order to begin the creation of the FY 2023/24 budget

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Committee member Whitney Barrat indicated that the Committee will meet in January to consider meeting once again with DRI, a project management firm, for additional conversations regarding assessing capital needs, etc.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair Rhiannon Navin commended the Community Relations staff for their successes in the previous month. She shared the following staff reports.

Rhiannon shared the community activities report as created by Community Outreach Coordinator Denise Link:

Highlights of BTOP Help & Learning Center November/December 2022

Goodbye November and hello December. There are so many things to look forward to in December at NRPL. The BTOP Help & Learning Center continues to be busy assisting patrons with online community services including food support, seasonal employment, government benefits and shopping for the holidays. News is spreading about the NRPL's Chromebook and Hotspots, with 47 devices having been checked out since the roll out of Chromebooks and Hotspots in mid- September. During the month of November, 23 devices have been borrowed: 8 Hotspots & 15 Chromebooks. Some of our patrons are comfortable with checking out devices once they have had an introduction to the Chromebook or Hotspot. Four patrons have received Chromebook coaching in November, where the basics of Google email, privacy, and learning about Google tools and apps are reviewed. One library patron found having a Hotspot device very helpful during his Covid recovery and it allowed him to have virtual telehealth appointments with his doctor.

- *Job Search Coach Rebecca Mazin continues to assist individuals who are 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 are rising.*
- *Healthcare Navigator Elizabeth Blackwell is assisting with open enrollment to purchase, change or renew coverage in a NYS qualified health plan, Wednesday mornings 10-1pm.*
- *Community Outreach for December: Food Pantry visits continue at Isaac Young Middle school on 12/21. Senior Housing visits will resume in January 2023.*
- *Notary Nights at the library is the third Thursday of the month. Next date is 12/15 @ 5:30-7:30pm. Many patrons have taken advantage of this free service.*
- *English Conversation Class is a volunteer-led program that offers English learners a chance to practice their English through chatting and conversation, on Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30pm through December. The class is very popular and is seeking volunteers to help lead classes in January 2023.*
- *In-person English as a Second Language classes at NRPL are winding down this December. Information on Westchester Community College ESL courses for beginners for Winter/Spring 2023 is now available on our website.*
- *NRPL is hosting a WLS event on 12/8 @ 6:00pm. Community Conversations (conversations.westchesterlibraries.org) is a project of the Westchester Library System that fosters dialogue and action on topics of importance to communities throughout Westchester County.*
- *The NRPL Lobby was host to a variety of community information partners including Project Hope, Urban Strategies HeadStart Program, AgeWell Healthcare and MVP Health Care.*

Rhiannon also shared the Marketing, Communications and Programming reports as created by Lisa Itzkowitz and Tobe Sevush:

Marketing/Program Report to Board of Trustees, 12/8/22

Programs/Events: November/December

General

- **Day of the Dead, 11/1** Calpulli Mexican Dance Company performed - 85 attendees
- **Adult Art Workshop, 11/3** - 3 attendees
- **Friday Night Concert Series, 11/4** - **Firey String Sistas** performed - 69 attendees
- **Kids' Books and Kindness A Celebration : Saturday, 11/12** - 70 attendees
- **Saturday evening concert, 11/12** -Wayne Henderson Sextet performed - 93 attendees
- **New Rochelle Plays Hollywood, 11/13** - Love with the Proper Stranger - 25 attendees
- **Sing Your Heart Out Concert, 11/20,** 65 attendees
- **NRPL Film Series, 11/26:** Screened 2 mockumentaries 13 in attendees
- **Knitting Workshops, 11/14 & 29:** 6 & 8 attendees respectively.
- **Yoga and Meditative Arts, 11/14** 16 attendees & 12/1 10 attendees
- **Chair Yoga, Mondays & Wednesdays.** Classes are averaging 10-14 attendees/class

- *Adult Art Workshop, 12/1 - Holiday Pop Up Cards 12 attendees*
- *Pop Up Children's Art Workshop, 12/1 - Rudolph Pop Up Cards, 12 attendees*
- *Friday night concert, Harlem Blues & Jazz Band, 12/2. This was the final Friday night concert. 95 attendees*
-

Virtual Programs, November

- *Women and Money Roundtable, 11/9, 16 registrants*
- *Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks: The Grandmasters of American Comedy, 11/17, 17 attendees*
- *Local History Program: New Rochelle's Amazing Holiday Connections, Presented by Barbara Davis, 11/27, 27 attendees*

Coming Up....

- *3rd film in New Rochelle Plays Hollywood Films Series, Sunday, 12/11 We are screening Edge of the City. Les Srager, will introduce the film and lead post screening discussion. Series will run one Sunday/month, through January, 2023.*
- *Rudolph Rocs New Ro, 12/4. Joint program of New Rochelle Parks & Rec, City of New Rochelle, New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce, and New Rochelle BID. New Rochelle Walk of Fame will be inducting Robert May, creator of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. NRPL will administer a "Make a Gift, Give a Gift" activity, and distribute Library program info and giveaways. New Ro Chamber Holiday Lighting will follow at 5:00 pm at Memorial Plaza. (11/27 Local History Program and 12/1 Children's Pop Up Card program developed as lead up to this event.)*
- *NRPL Film Series: Librarian Chris Poggiali will be showing 2 Ida Lupino films, Outrage & Hard, Fast and Beautiful!*
- *Knitting Workshops: December 6 & 13*
- *Children's Magic with Joseph Fields, 12/14 - 1/2 day for CSDNR*
- *Brown Bag Book Club, 12/20 - Dr.Zhivago*
- *December school break, 12/29 - Music with Zev!*

Upcoming Virtual Programs

- *It's a Wonderful Life, 12/22*

MARKETING/COMMUNITY RELATIONS MISC:

Marketing support Managed promotion of 23 programs in November and 23 in December, including print, digital and press communications. Programs and events regularly picked up by local print publications, including Arts Westchester and New Rochelle Review.

Developing relationships with local concierges and building managers, providing marketing materials to buildings each month. Will continue to reach out to buildings on a regular basis with NRPL program info.

Representing NRPL for Meet and Greet for Downtown Residents, January 25, 2023

Representing NRPL for NRPLF Fundraiser, Game On, March 10/11, 2023

Community Relationship Building:

Representing NRPL for Rudolph Day Festival, December 4. First multi-agency collaborative effort (since pandemic) for NRPL with Parks & Rec, City of NR, NRBID, and New Rochelle Walk of Fame

Continue to work with NRBID to identify and coordinate programs for collaboration. Targeting December vacation week, and Black History month programs.

Green/Sustainability Program Development: Met with Healthy Yards New Rochelle and Sustainable Westchester to discuss program collaborations.

Libby and Kanopy Tutorials

Working with volunteer to finalize tutorials for website

Email marketing: Open rates continue to increase averaging around 43%, with a recent high of 47%, a new record!. Continue to grow the email list. Current distribution, 8997

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

POLICY COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

PUBLIC TO BE HEARD:

No member of the public asked to speak.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Langlois

Secretary