

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday November 10, 2022**

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  
Rhiannon Navin  
Corey Galloway  
Beth Acocella  
Lucille Renwick (absent)

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino  
Jean Manning  
Yesika Torres  
Elizabeth Joseph

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo (absent)

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The October Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Whitney Barrat moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:34 pm, Whitney Barrat moved that the Library Board convene an Executive Session in order to discuss a personnel matter, seconded by Rhiannon Navin and approved.

At 7:40 pm, Whitney Barrat moved that the Library Board end its Executive Session, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo was unable to attend but sent this report:

*Our WLS Board last met on Tuesday October 25 and devoted mostly to the consideration of the WLS budget proposals for FY2022/23 which is scheduled for formally approval by the Board at it next meeting on Tuesday, November 29, 2022. The rest of the meeting time was spent on routine housekeeping matters.*

Tom summarized the contents of the WLS Service Level Agreement as submitted to our Library by WLS. Whitney Barrat moved that this WLS Service Level Agreement be endorsed and accepted, seconded by Beth Acocella and approved.

## 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 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. After much delay, we were notified in September both grants had been approved by New York State. It is hoped 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 architect's most recent report is detailed below:

*The investigative and construction documents phases are completed for the firewall restoration project, and the project is about to go out for competitive bidding. The bids were due by Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> and are being analyzed with the low bidder(s) descoped to ensure they have included the correct and complete scope of work. The descoping process should take two to three weeks. A contract should be expected to be entered by late November or early December. The Contractor will provide a schedule, ideally with mobilization starting in December followed by three to four months of construction.*

+ 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. No time frame for the next award cycle has been announced

+ Community Relations Office Upgrade Project: Given the recent reorganization of Community Relation staffing (and the tired, drab and unpleasant Community Relations Room “look”), our staff worked with a vendor and created a proposed new office configuration that will involve new furniture, LCD lighting, floor coverings and wall paint. Whitney Barrat moved that Community Relations Office Upgrade Project be approved at a cost of \$35,388.57 seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

+ Prospective Planned Giving Bequest: Thanks to the work of Foundation Board Member Rod Rollet and Foundation President Chris Selin, NRPL expects to receive a significant bequest from the estate of long-time resident and distinguished educator Dr. Edward Pascuitti. Dr. Pascuitti has dedicated his life to enhancing educational opportunities for children and teens in his career in the New Rochelle School District, particularly in his role as Head Guidance Counselor at New Rochelle High School. It is expected that our Teen Room will be renamed the The Pascuitti Teen Center upon receipt of the bequest. An event honoring Dr. Pascuitti is expected to be held at some point in December. As a corollary to this circumstance, the Board has resolved to create a “Naming” Policy via the efforts of the Policy Committee.

+ Thanksgiving Parade 2022: The Chamber of Commerce announced the City Thanksgiving Parade will be scheduled for Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. Library Board and staff, along with Foundation and Friends Board members, will march and uphold the library banner.

+ 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. The Friends have announced its perennially popular Holiday sale will take place on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Friends Annual Board meeting will be held on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The FY 2023 Library Budget will be voted upon

+ NRPL Foundation: The next Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for November 21st and will be in-person at the Main Library. The next Cocktails & Conversation featuring NYT best-selling Author Megan Abbott will take place on November 30<sup>th</sup> at Alvin & Friends Restaurant is underway with details to be shared once the event is in place. Other future events include an upcoming Special Donor Recognition program, Welcome to New Rochelle Downtown Residents and the fundraiser, Game/Miniature Golf Night at the Library.

#### PERSONNEL REPORT:

New Rochelle Civil Service has advertised the Social Media/Videographer position with a closing date of November 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT:

*The Children's room is the proven epicenter of the community. The elementary school visits have brought 400 children to the library with 100s more slated for November. Children get a tour, participate in a scavenger hunt, hear a story, receive a library card and check out books. We were excited to see this collaboration highlighted in the school district's weekly newsletter.*

*The Halloween parade drew scores of children and families. Bobby Simic, head of Children's represented the library wearing the Paddington Bear costume amusing children and adults alike.*

*The Huguenot Children's library's assorted offerings of fun and educational programming such as Yoga tots and Nature Tales attract so many children that they are often over-subscribed. The arts fest programs drew 75 children. They are exploring a collaboration with local girl's scouts.*

*We applied to be a part of a pilot program called STEM Tales, this exciting new project is designed to engage children, ages 4-8, and their families on STEM topics using various multimedia elements. If chosen, we will be a cohort of professional library staff members who will receive STEM programming training and resources. The program will also provide families stipends in order to remove barriers to participation.*

*The adult Services department received a certificate and commendation from the Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind youth and adults for hosting a young student as an intern this summer. The intern was supported and engaged in various small projects in the adult services department. We have also worked with Hallen School for several years providing their students various volunteer opportunities in the library.*

*The department is embarking on a new roster for our technology classes. A survey was released and we are now evaluating responses to determine new classes and hours that will benefit patrons with different interests and schedules.*

*The brown bag book club was relaunched and their first post Covid selection was "Z": a Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald by Therese Fowler. It attracted 8 members who will return in December for the next discussion of Dr. Zhivago.*

*The teens continue to be active users and are energized by various gaming, VR experiences, craft and food programs. The most popular program this month was Halloween candy sushi-making.*

*Our library card holders are increasing every month. In October, we added over 700 new card holders - 529 coming from class visits. The circulation team has new items to check out - video games and ukeles. This is a small collection but with growing interest. Next are wonderbooks, books with mini MP3 players.*

*Last but not least, is our favorite 2022 book campaign to close out the year. We are asking staff to share a photo of them with their favorite book. The images will be made into a video and the books will be a list to be shared in our newsletter. We look forward to sharing the books that took us to other worlds, taught us something, made us laugh or just bought us some moments of respite.*

#### BUDGET COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

#### BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

Chair Sarah Langlois indicated that a Committee meeting will be scheduled in early January 2023.

#### COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair Rhiannon Navin met with Community Relations staff in order to initiate a conversation regards to gaining the assistance of the Committee (and the Library Board) in relation to its work. The dialogue was positive and included suggestions that involve Committee/Board members using their e-mail contacts and social media platforms to highlight library services, programs and events as well as encouraging community e-newsletter signups and facilitating the enrollment of volunteers for various library initiatives.

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

#### ***Highlights of BTOP Help & Learning Center October/November 2022***

*Digital Navigator efforts are in full swing at NRPL, assisting patrons to use critical online services that provide guidance with food support, rent assistance, education, employment, childcare, government benefits. Many patrons have been seeking election poll worker training and are getting assistance with creating accounts and online assessment. Chromebook coaching and smartphone tips are on the top of the list for digital learning questions. GED learners are signing up for the GED academy for online learning and practice tests. Many patrons are tapping into our community partner services; free legal advice from Hudson Valley Justice Center, who offers direct representation and advice to low income residents of the*

*Hudson Valley. The NRPL Social Security portal allows patrons to easily access many online services including viewing Medicare benefits, requesting a replacement Social Security card or printing a benefit verification letter.*

- *Civic/Citizenship classes continue with two more in-person sessions left in 2022. Patrons signed up for Zoom sessions and came in person to prepare for the Citizenship interview, with Sonica Dixon. One more student has attended their Oath Ceremony for US Naturalization this November.*
- *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 robust.*
- *Healthcare Navigator Elizabeth Blackwell is assisting with open enrollment to purchase, change or renew coverage in a NYS qualified health plan, every Wednesday afternoon.*
- *Senior Benefits Medicare Walk-in counseling continues at NRPL during open enrollment on Thursday, 11/10/22.*
- *Community Outreach: Food Pantry visit 11/9 at IEYMS. Senior visit to 50 Sickles Ave on 11/29 will include a virtual tour of the library. Cell phone tips for seniors will be the topic of discussion on 11/16 at the senior living at 40 Willow Dr.*
- *Notary Nights at the library is the third Thursday of the month. Many patrons have taken advantage of this service for free.*
- *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.*
- *In-person English as a Second Language classes at NRPL. Westchester Community College offers courses for beginners four mornings a week through December 2022.*
- *November is Diabetes Month and representatives from Montefiore Diabetes Education Center will be in the lobby in November to provide information about, and answer questions related to, the Montefiore Diabetes Education program.*

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

### Marketing/Program Report to Board of Trustees, 11/10/22

#### **Programs/Events: October/November**

##### General

- *Friday Night Concert Series, 9/9 - Counterpoint A Cappella Group performed (10/14); 41 attendees*
- *NRPL Film Series, 10/29: Screened 2 horror films 15 attendees*
- *New Rochelle Plays Hollywood Films Series. 10/16. We showed The Naked City. 17 attendees.*
- *Knitting Workshops, 10/11 & 25: 9&4 attendees respectively.*
- *Yoga and Meditative Arts, 10/6 13 attendees, 10/24 12 attendees*
- *Adult Art Workshop: Themed Collage, 11/4 is 2nd of art workshops for adults; 3 attendees*

- *Chair Yoga, Mondays & Wednesdays. Classes are averaging 10-14 attendees*
- *Brown Bag Book Club, 10/18: Librarian Annick Rodriguez said people were excited to be back in person for this book club. We had 9 attendees and we are expecting more for our December 20th meeting, when Dr. Zhivago will be discussed.*
- *Red Cross Blood Drive, 11/1*
- *Firey String Sistas!, 11/4. An all-women's jazz band; Third performance in new Friday night concert series.*
- *ArtsFest at NRPL*
- *Music from Copland House, 10/20: 52 attendees*
- *Bridge Records Concert and Exhibit, 10/21: 20 attendees*
- *TheaterWorksUSA, 10/22: Up in Arms, Tortoise and Hare's Race to Health. A children's Puppet Performance. 62 attendees.*
- *Rock and Roll with New Rochelle Art Association, 10/22 (at HCL)*
- *NRAA Rocks! Scavenger Hunt, 10/23. 7 attendees.*
- Read650: Coming of Age, 10/23: A spoken word event followed by a reception. 33 attendees.*
- *New Rochelle Art Association 107th Open Juried Show, Exhibit, 10/8 - 11/6; Reception, 10/23: 30 attendees*
- *Day of the Dead Celebrations*
- *Altar Build took place 10/26 & 27 and remained up through November 3rd.*
- *Calpulli Mexican Dance Troupe Performance, 11/2, 85 attendees.*

### Virtual Programs,

*(Note: Precise NRPL attendance numbers are difficult to determine, given programs are a joint effort of multiple libraries.)*

- *The Films of Alfred Hitchcock, 10/13, 20 total attendees, 5 from NR*
- *College Admissions Planning, 10/20, 21 attendees*
- *WCC Information Session, 10/27, 9 attendees*
- *Another Red Moon, 11/1, 36 attendees*
- *Books & Bridles: The Story of the Horseback Librarians , 11/2, 42 total attendees, 7 from NR*

### **Coming Up....**

- *2nd film in New Rochelle Plays Hollywood Films Series, Sunday, 11/13 We are screening Love with the Proper Stranger. Les Srager, will introduce the film and lead post screening discussion. Series will run one Sunday/month, through January, 2023*
- *"Sing Your Heart Out" Performance, Sunday, 11/20: Rehearsals for this adult singing group, a beloved NRPL program, began in early October. Practices take place 2x/week at NRPL.*
- *The Wayne Henderson Sextet: Saturday, 11/12: The Wayne Henderson Sextet brings together some of the tri-states' most accomplished and talented independent musicians on piano, bass and brass.*
- *Kids' Books and Kindness A Celebration: Saturday, 1/12 In celebration of World Kindness Day and Children's Book Week we are presenting author/illustrator sisters Rina and Risa Horiuchi and their book K is for Kindness. We will also have a performance by singer/songwriter Flor Bromley and a meet and greet with Frog and*

Toad.

- *NRPL Film Series: Librarian Chris Poggiali will be showing 2 mockumentaries by Christopher Guest: Best in Show and A Mighty Wind.*
- *Knitting Workshops: November 15 & 29*

### ***Upcoming Virtual Programs***

- *Women and Money Roundtable, 11/9*
- *Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks: The Grandmasters of American Comedy, 11/17*

### **Marketing/Community Relations Misc:**

*Marketing support - managed promotion of 25 programs in October and 23 programs in November, including print, digital and press communications*

- o *AARP Tax Aide Program Coordinating with AARP Tax Aide contact to find bilingual volunteers for the tax aide program. Program will return to NRPL this spring. Historically, this is one of the most (if not the most) popular programs at NRPL. The program assists hundreds of community members.*
- o *Coordinating with NRPL for Meet and Greet for Downtown Residents, January 2023*

### **Community Relationship Building:**

- *Represented Library at TreatsFest (part of Children's Costume Parade organized by NRBID.) Close to 1000 children/adults visited the Library table. Used raffle prizes to drive people into the library (raffle tickets had to be deposited in a box in the Children's Room ) and collect email addresses (137 collected.)*
- *Connected with Jorge Ventura, Department of Development, City of New Rochelle to establish relationship with Department of Development and facilitate communications about planned events.*
- *Representing NRPL for Rudolph Day Festival, December 4. Collaborative effort of Parks & Rec, City of NR, NRBID, and NR Local History*
- *Reaching out to local buildings. Visited Stella and connected with the concierge.*
- *Working with NRBID to identify and coordinate programs for collaboration.*
- *Video Tour of Library - working with volunteer to finalize video tour of library*
- *Email marketing: Open rates regularly around 40%, with a recent high of 44%. Continue to grow the email list. Current distribution, 8997*
- *Social Media/Graphic Designer Position: Managing social media, graphic design and website maintenance in absence of Social Media Coordinator. Job posted with applications due by November 28.*

### **FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:**

Chair Corey Galloway is seeking to create linkage between the Finance Committee and the Budget Committee in relation to the formulation of the proposed FY 2023/24 Library Budget request.

### **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 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Langlois  
Secretary