

**NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday July 20, 2023**

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

BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Barrat, President
Corey Galloway, Vice President
Lucille Renwick, Secretary
Rhiannon Navin (absent in person – but “Zoom” present)
Beth Acocella (absent)
Tatiana Infante
Fela Cortes

ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Geoffino
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres
Elizabeth Joseph

WLS REPRESENTATIVE

Francis Okelo

OATH OF OFFICE:

President Whitney Barrat administered the Oath of Office to Tatiana Infante and Fela Cortes, elected in May 2023, to the Library Board of Trustees. The term of office for Tatiana and Fela will expire on June 30th 2028.

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING:

The June Monthly Meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Whitney Barrat moved that the minutes be approved as amended, seconded by Tatiana Infante and approved.

WLS REPORT:

WLS representative Francis Okelo made the following report.

The Mount Vernon Public Library continues to make good progress on the road to a satisfactory compliance with the New York State requirements with respect to the timely submission of its annual reports to the Division of Library Development (DLD), and addressing issues of financial management of the Library. The WLS Executive Director Terry Kirschner, with the encouragement of the WLS Board of Trustees, has been extremely helpful to the MVPL in this process. The MVPL board now has a full complement of five library trustees. The Library board approved its required policies and submitted them to DLD for a review. The required bylaws revisions were also sent to DLD. The board was able to identify the \$269,000 of miscellaneous expenses in the MVPL's 2020 which had been a major obstacle in reconciling its financial reports.

But the MVPL is not completely out of the woods yet. It continues to be ineligible to receive local and state funding because neither an approvable registration application nor approvable annual reports have been submitted to DLD by stipulated deadline of March 31, 2022. The failure to complete its registration and submission of the annual reports for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, has resulted in the loss of \$63,000 of its Local Library Services and the withholding of \$100,000 in State Aid for Public Library Construction, and will disqualify it from receiving its local school district tax levy in September this year. These local and state public funds will be restored to the library upon a successful completion of its registration and submission of approvable reports by September 1, 2023. Failure to meet this deadline may cause a denial or loss of registration which can result in the loss of system services, loss of public funds for the library and the revocation of the Library's charter. Executive Director Terry Kirschner, assured the WLS Board that WLS staff would continue to provide support to MVPL staff and board members during this critical period.

It was noted that an in-person meeting of the WLS Trustee Institute was held at the WLS premises on Thursday July 20, 2023 on the subject of "Understanding Mass Communication and Today's Challenges" The event was intended to discuss controversial issues and disruptive behavior, effective response to crisis and reputation management issues, and how to prepare for future challenges facing the libraries. It is hoped that a report of the event will soon be available.

The WLS Information Technology (IT) Services has received a significant boost with the recent recruitment of two qualified individuals who bring a strong blend of technology and people skills to the organization's IT department.

WLS Board has begun to review the implementation of the WLS strategic plan of action for 2022-2023, which it adopted last year. For up-to-date information on all other current and planned WLS activities one is encouraged to visit as regularly as possible the WLS website.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Whitney Barrat welcomed newly inaugurated Trustees Tatiana Infante and Fela Cortes to the Board and expressed her confidence that both women will make significant contributions to the library and the New Rochelle community during their respective terms of office. Whitney also highlighted the FY 2023/24 Committee assignments as detailed via email and documentation located in each Trustee's folder. She indicated that every effort was made to honor Trustee's requests regarding Committee work designations. Whitney articulated her enthusiasm regarding the current roster of Committee assignments and is excited to see the Committee move forward in their efforts.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Tom Geoffino reported on the following issues:

+ Busy Summer at NRPL: Our library is witnessing an extremely active summer as our Children's Summer Reading Challenge is proving to be extremely popular with our

children and teens. Programming for our youth is also generating considerable interest as are our traditional cultural programs geared for adults and families. In Summer 2023, the library is alive with energy and enthusiasm and has left the quiet moments of our post-pandemic world in the past.

+ 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. In late December, the checks for the Main (3rd Floor Renovation) and HCL (Air Conditioning) grants arrived. Relative to the 3rd floor Renovation Project, our various vendor orders are in place with Phase 1 calling for the removal of the 3rd floor carpet – and the installation of the new carpeting - now complete. Painting of the 3rd floor area is also complete. Work regarding the installation of the additional study rooms and conference rooms continue. The new Information Desk is now in place along with the installation of the new lower shelving units. Adult Services staff (thanks to hard work of our Page staff) is supervising a significant relocation of our various collections (fiction, graphic novels, large print, etc.) in order to provide a more intuitive arrangement of these collections. At this point in time, we are awaiting the architectural bid documents regarding the glass encapsulation of the 3rd floor Teen area. Pending this action, we will be unable to create the 2 mid-sized conference rooms slated for installation. Our goal continues to adhere to the expectation that this project will be complete by September 2023. The HCL Air Conditioning Project is now complete with the successful installation of the 3 ductless mini splits on the three floors. Staff and patrons are reacting positively to the enhanced cool air environment and the relative quiet of the operating units.

+ 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 completed the project documentation necessary for the successful completion of the project. Upon completion of the bidding process, 2 vendors emerged as viable options regarding the award of the contract with the award made to Gleason Powers (GP) per the architect's recommendation and approval of the Board. With the execution of the AIA contract, GP is working with the architect in order to create a project schedule and the appropriate submittal documents. The New Rochelle Building Department is now in possession of the permitting documentation with ongoing dialogue continuing to be in play between all

parties. We are hopeful the permits for this project will be issued by the end of July with work to begin in August.

+ 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. According to WLS, the New York State Library and DASNY staff have basically approved the recommended awards with confirmations likely to be announced in September 2023. If this timetable is accurate, it is estimated that the grant monies will be made available to our library in October/November 2023.

+ ARPA Grant: In May 2023, our Foundation, in partnership with library staff, submitted an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) \$275,000 grant application to the City of New Rochelle for funding to create an outdoor program space in the Children's Garden area. To date, no word regarding the status of this application has been made available to either the Foundation or library staff.

+ Adult Services Office Renovation: The project is now complete with a newly renovated, appealing and functional space available for full time and hourly Adult Services staff. Kudos to be shared with our custodial staff and Kira Aiello and her staff for this successful outcome.

+ Trustee Handbook Book Club 2023: The next Trustee Handbook Book Club of 2023 is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 5 PM. The topic of this session is Strategic Planning. "Live" participation of one of these sessions, counts as 1.5 hours of trustee training that is eligible to meet the 2 hour per year requirement for trustee education. Additional workshops are located below:

=**Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access & Justice** (Tuesday, October 17, 2023 | 5:00- 6:30 pm)

= **Financing & Managing Construction Projects** (Tuesday, December 19, 2023 | 5:00-6:30 pm)

+ 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. The next Friends Board meeting is scheduled for August 8th at 1 pm and will be in-person at the Main Library

+ NRPL Foundation: At its June 15th Annual Meeting, the Foundation awarded our Main Library \$131,033 and HCL \$31,300 in grant monies for FY 2023/24.

The Foundation has announced its meeting schedule for FY 2023/24. All meetings are scheduled for our Main Library Lobby Meeting Room except for the Annual Meeting. See details below:

2023

Monday, September 18th – 7:30 p.m.

Monday, November 20th – 7:30 p.m.

2024

Tuesday, January 16th – 7:30 p.m.

Monday, March 18th – 7:30 p.m.

Monday, May 20th – 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 18th – Annual Dinner Meeting

PERSONNEL REPORT:

Lucille Renwick made the motion, upon the recommendation of the Director, the Board of Trustees does hereby approve the appointments of:

Emma Farley and Cheryl Lin to the position of hourly Library Page (Children's Services - HCL), effective July 10, 2023 at a salary of \$15.00

Ti-Shawn Wellington to the position of hourly Library Page (Children's Services – Main), effective June 20, 2023 at a salary of \$15.00

Seconded by Whitney Barrat and approved.

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT:

Assistant Director Elizabeth Joseph made the following report:

NRPL is the place to be for children and teens this summer. There is a book and program for every type of reader and enthusiast. While kids and teens are Learning All Together Now, adults are witnessing new and exciting changes happening on the 3rd floor.

Below are reports from our public service departments...

Children:

Pre-K morning programs wrapped up with an average attendance of 44 people per program. The successful response to these spring programs propels us to have a more robust set of pre-K programs throughout the year. We weathered the criticism for hosting Drag Story Hour (DSH) on Saturday the 17th to celebrate Pride Month (we also received supportive comments from community members as well). Although there were a small number of protestors outside the library that Saturday morning, the participants inside the meeting room were supportive, positive, and had a great time with performer Kitty Kaboodlez. The mood was joyous as Kitty read stories and lip-synced empowering songs while kids danced with rainbow scarves and bubbles. There was even time set aside for kids to make drag paper bag puppets! The Summer Reading Kick-Off Party was held on Saturday the 24th. Unfortunately, the rain prevented us from hosting the Bubble Bus and the event outside in Ruby Dee Park. Despite the weather interference, spirits weren't dampened, and the crowd size remained large as the library welcomed around 500 people to the 2-hour event. We had over 200 children sign up for our Summer Reading Challenge, which is about a third of the total number of sign-ups from last year's

challenge. Families not only signed up for the summer reading challenge but also enjoyed crafts, received free books, and met kid lit superstars Elephant and Piggie. Both DSH, the Kick-Off Party, and the Summer Reading Challenge are made possible by the Friends of the New Rochelle Public Library. We would like to thank Friends President Amy Tietz and her volunteers for supporting these and other programs throughout the year and providing such a rich library experience for New Rochelle families. At Huguenot Children's Library, programs ended in late May, so June was a time of preparation for our big Summer Fun on the Patio. We hired staff and entertainers, and planned schedules. We also did a lot of weeding and cleaning up our spaces in anticipation of our usual summer crowds. Fortunately, in the meantime, we have many in-house activities for our patrons on both floors, creating a welcoming environment for the children and their caregivers. We started our summer reading program here on June 26th following the kick-off day at the main library the previous Saturday and were happy to note a number of patrons' eager to sign their children up.

Teens:

The Summer Reading Kickoff on Saturday, June 24 was a big success. Thirty-two teens registered that day, with an additional 21 registering the following week through our online summer reading logging system. Eighty participants dropped by and made our teen craft, an origami corner bookmark. Ann Spindel, who generously funded the books included in the Summer Reading Grab & Go Bag, attended the event and was very happy to see the excitement and effectiveness of her contribution. All the initial 30 Grab & Go Bags were given away on the day of the event. Another 18 Grab & Go Bags were made the following week and have been steadily given away. Speaking of Summer Reading, our first program was a Water Balloon Fight the following Friday, June 30. Eighteen teens participated, with about 3700 water balloons, around 45 minutes of mayhem, 15 minutes of a cleanup contest with chocolate prizes and ending with a popsicle for all participants. There are a variety of experiences planned for teens this summer. We cannot wait to share all that we have planned for them.

Adults:

The third-floor renovation project is also proceeding at a good pace without much disruption to our patrons. The carpet has been replaced, and the painting is complete. The new reference desk, print station furniture, and shelves have been assembled and installed. David is spearheading the third-floor Big Shift. . The Adult Services Office renovation was started and completed in June. A library construction project record!

The Help Center:

Patrons continue to seek assistance with their online help for government benefits, food support, recertification for housing, and passport/travel matters. New Rochelle library patrons are excited about the new devices available for checkout. In the month of June, 57 devices were checked out, with hotspots being the most popular.

Patron Engagement and Program Attendance:

We saw exciting growth when we reviewed the data on checkouts, transactions, and attendance from the past fiscal year. [Distributed to the Board were] ... comparison charts for many of our service and program areas.

Elizabeth Joseph provided an update relative to the library's current Strategic Plan as of June 2023. Each of the Plan's Goals (5 in total) were detailed and work accomplished in

FY 2022/23 as related to progress in achieving each goal (thanks to the work of the library staff) were highlighted.

Discussion ensued.

BUDGET COMMITTEE:

Corey Galloway posed a question about the current status of the Fund Balance. Answers were referenced in relation to the Financial Report as distributed at the Board meeting.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, FOUNDATION, FRIENDS AND HUGUENOT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE:

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

Highlights of BTOP Help & Learning Center May/June 2023

July 2023 BTOP Help & Learning Center Highlights

As the sizzling summer continues, patrons are seeking out assistance with their online help with government benefits, food support, recertification for housing and passport/travel matters. New Rochelle library patrons are excited about the new devices available for check out. The month of June saw 57 devices checked out, with hotspots being the most popular.

- *Book Donation- the Help & Learning Center facilitated in supplying 40 books to the Opportunity Youth Part (OYP) initiative mentor book club. This year's selection is "Jump: My Secret Journey from the Streets to the Boardroom" by Larry Miller. Ann Spindell, a NR community champion, made this generous donation possible.*
- *Bilingual Medicare Advisor, Mercedes Stagnaro, will be available to answer questions about the basics of Medicare coverage options, in the BTOP Help & Learning Center on Mondays from 10am-12pm, August 7 & 14- 8/7 & 8/14*
- *Digital Learning sessions at 50 Sickles senior housing continued in July, with up to 8 residents each class. Topics include email basics, navigating a website, smartphone tips, web browsers, and Ten Things to do with your NRPL card. All participants received their NRPL cards and goodies.*
- *Notary Public services continues this summer with sessions on Thursdays evenings @ 6:30 pm, 7/20, 8/17 in the Help & Learning Center- 2nd floor.*
- *Job Search Coach Rebecca Mazin continues to assist individuals looking for a new or improved job by helping with writing resumes, cover letters, completing online job applications, searching for jobs on the Internet, networking, and honing interview skills and completing follow-ups. Tuesdays @ 5:00 pm.*

- *Healthcare Navigator Elizabeth Blackwell assists with open enrollment to purchase, change or renew coverage in a NYS qualified health plan on Wednesdays, 10am-1pm in the Help & Learning center.*
- *Outreach tabling by our community partners in our lobby included the Alzheimer's Association, Adopt Clean Energy, Onward Recovery and Westchester-Putnam Career Center Network.*
- *Summer ESL classes with Westchester Community College will continue in July and August 2023, with morning classes 9:15-12:15.*
- *The New Rochelle Public Library continues to play a vital role in providing digital literacy tools and information to our community and has been selected by the Public Library Association (PLA) to host the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive. The workshops are supported by the online digital literacy courses, created by PLA in collaboration with AT&T, through DigitalLearn.org. More information to come.*

Rhiannon also shared the report as created by Marketing, Communications and Programming staff members Lisa Itzkowitz and Tobe Sevush.

Marketing/Program Report to Board of Trustees, 7/20/23

JUNE/JULY PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Art Workshops/Gallery:

- ***Juneteenth Quilt Workshop, June 8th, 8 attendees***
- ***Pride Art Workshop, June 12th, 11 attendees***
- ***Juneteenth Gallery Exhibit, June 5-23. very well attended.***
- ***Voting Rights Exhibit, June 12-July 7th. Many patrons enjoyed the exhibit.***
- ***Independent Sewing Workshop: 9 students created a new piece with guidance from the instructor. This series of workshops was a big success. We will be running another program on Saturdays in the fall.***

Films:

- ***NRPL Film Series with Film Librarian, Chris Pogialli presents BROS, 6/13, as part of Pride Month. 5 attendees***

Yoga:

- ***Gentle Evening Yoga, weekly, Mondays through August 28, average attendance, 15***
- ***Chair Yoga, Wednesdays only through August. Classes are averaging 10-14 +attendees /session.***

Children's:

- ***Pride Drag Story Hour - June 17th - 35 attendees***
- ***Summer Reading Kickoff Party- June 24th - 500 + attendees***
- ***Pre-School Fun and Fitness in collaboration with Montefiore WIC program, July 6, 14 attendees***
- ***Calpulli summer workshops: 6 weeks beginning July 6th.***
- ***Calpulli Mexican Dance Workshops for Children, Teens and Adults***
- ***Thursdays, July 6, 13, 20 and 27***
- ***1:30 - 2:30 pm, Ages 5 -7***
- ***2:45 - 4:00 pm, Ages 8-13***

- **4:15 - 5:30 pm, Teens/adults**
- **Participants will learn traditional Mexican dance movements and choreographies in this fully interactive workshop series. Participants will also gain a deeper understanding of Mexican culture as a caring teaching artist describes the history and background of all dances.**
- **This summer workshop ends in a lively culminating performance where participants have the opportunity to share what they learned. Location: Meeting Room/Ossie Davis Theater**

<i>Attendees</i>	<i>week 1</i>	<i>week 2</i>
<i>5-7 year olds</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>8-13 year olds</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Adults/Teens</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>

Lectures/Presentations/Concerts:

- **Juneteenth Drumming workshop and Performance with Kazi Oliver - June 15th, 12 workshop attendees and 35 performance attendees**
- **Juneteenth Jazz Concert: Global Jazz Community All Star Women Band - June 17th, 95 attendees.**
- **Brown Bag Book Meeting: Manhattan Transfer - 1 attendee**
- **Sing Your Heart Out concert: July 15th - 85 attendees**
- **International Music and Dance Series: 6 Tuesday evenings**
 - **July 11 - Bokandeye - 85 attendees**
- **International Music and Dance: July 18 (Israeli Dance), July 25 (Indian Dance), August 1 (Middle Eastern Dance) August 8 (Japanese Dance) and Final Calpulli performance, August 15**

Virtual Programs, June/July

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

- **Women and Money Roundtable, June 14, 2 NRPL registrants**
- **Safe Haven: Gay Life in 1950's Cherry Grove, June 14, 5 NRPL attendees**
- **National Gallery Virtual Tour, American Art, July 11, 32 NRPL registrants**
- **J.C. Leyendecker, July 13, 22 NRPL attendees**
- **Author Talk, July 20**
- **Bird Friendly Gardens (in collaboration with Healthy Yards New Rochelle), July 24**

Coming Up....

- **Village Light Opera Group Performance: Cabaret of songs from Musical Theatre, Opera and Operettas, August 5.**
- **New Rochelle Art Association and Riverdale Art Association: Collaborative exhibit in the gallery**
- **New Rochelle Parks and Recreation Camp Art Exhibit**
- **Bubble Bus Pop Up (rescheduled from Summer Reading Kickoff party due to inclement weather), August 24**
- **Closing of Summer Reading Challenge End of Summer Celebration - Touch a Truck Day, August 26**

MARKETING/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Email highlights: Continue to grow list by adding event registrants on a regular basis, AND purge email addresses of individuals who have not opened any NRPL communications in the past year. Average open rate in June was 51%, up from an average of 49% in May.

Social Media Highlights

- We updated our username on Instagram so now all social channels (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) have username NRPublicLibrary
- NRPL acquired 77 new Instagram followers and 12 new likes on Facebook in June
- Summer Reading Kickoff, Drag Story Hour, and our Mystery book donation posts had the highest engagement (approx. 3500/post)

ArtsFest: Attended ArtsFest kickoff meeting. Finalizing plans for ArtsFest programming at NRPL to include one adult chamber music concert, potential bilingual children's program about Frida Kahlo, potential Children's Symphony program, writer's workshop, and Friday night concert.

Website: Meeting with two firms (Library Market and Communico) who specialize in digital services for libraries, about a new website.

Learn to Sew @NRPL - Researching process, policies and procedures for creating open sewing time at NRPL, and putting sewing machines in circulation.

Downtown Building Outreach:

- Created "Welcome to Your New Chapter" postcards for downtown buildings to distribute to new residents.

Community Relationship Building:

- Met with Sustainable Westchester to continue discussion about opportunities to collaborate
- Potential Teen "gaming" program
- Identified outreach opportunities at City of New Rochelle "signature" event as part of the Summer Sizzle Concerts in Ruby Dee Park
- Pride Fair, June 10, 30 visitors
- Bastille Day, July 15, 30 visitors

Organizing NRPL presence at:

- City of New Rochelle Taste of Union event on 7/22
- Chamber of Commerce/City of New Rochelle Street Fair, 9/10
- City of New Rochelle Latin Heritage Festival, 9/23
- City of New Rochelle Concert Series Final program TBD, 9/30
- Met with staff from YMCA (Weyman Avenue) about collaboration opportunities
- Potential Library visit by Pre-K HeadStart class
- Potential tabling about free Senior Wellness programs

FINANCE, TREASURY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:

No report was made.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:

President Whitney Barrat introduced Nominations Committee Lucille Renwick in relation to the presentation of the proposed slate of Board officers for FY 2023/2024.

Nominations Committee Chair Lucille Renwick moved to adopt the following slate of officers for FY 2023/2024: Whitney Barrat as President, Corey Galloway as Vice President and Lucille Renwick as Secretary, seconded by Corey Galloway and approved.

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 spoke at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucille Renwick
Secretary