



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 2, 2024
New Rochelle Public Library: Main Library Ossie Davis Theater

NRPL Board President Whitney Barrat called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Barrat, President
Corey Galloway, Vice President
Lucille Renwick, Secretary
Rhiannon Navin
Beth Acocella
Tatiana Infante
Fela Cortes

ADMINISTRATION

Joslyn Bowling Dixon (via Zoom)
Jean Manning
Yesika Torres
David Mener, WLS representative

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

The minutes from the April 11th meeting and April 23rd special meeting minutes were reviewed by the Trustees. Lucille Renwick noted that the April 23rd minutes required a change noting that Tom Geoffino “retired” and did not “resign”.

Whitney Barrat moved to approve the April 11 minutes, seconded by Fela Cortes. Approved unanimously.

Whitney Barrat moved to approve the April 23 minutes with a noted correction to be made related to Tom Geoffino’s retirement. Seconded by Beth Acocella and approved unanimously.

REGULAR BUSINESS

WLS Report

- **WLS representative David Mener provided the following report** – WLS had a recent meeting to review the annual audit. The audit report was favorable, meaning that the balance sheet was consistent. The audit found a consistent use of assets. Cash flow is as anticipated. Audit report was formally approved.

President’s Report

- **Board President Whitney Barrat provided the following report:**
 - New interim library director has started work and will serve in the interim

- capacity until a permanent director is in place (for about 3-4 months).
 - *Joslyn Bowling Dixon, the interim director, joined via Zoom and was formally named and introduced herself to the board and public.*
- Whitney Barrat presented a resolution for board consideration and approval for Joslyn Bowling Dixon to act as Records Access Officer, as of May 1, 2024, to access emails, and other relevant information. etc Whitney made a motion for approval, which was seconded by Lucille Renwick and unanimously approved.
- Whitney Barrat presented a resolution for board consideration and approval for Joslyn Bowling Dixon to serve as “Authorized Signer” to sign claims and warrants in her capacity as interim director, beginning May 1, 2024 and running until the end of her contract. Whitney made the motion which was seconded by Rhiannon Navin and unanimously approved.
 - *Joslyn Bowling Dixon, via Zoom, acknowledged hearing the resolutions*
- The 2024-25 board meeting schedule was presented. The board agreed to review and vote on the meeting schedule at the June meeting.

Director’s Report — Presented by Whitney Barrat in her capacity as Board President

- ***Current Operational Status***
 - Fire Stopping Grant – Fire stopping project is substantially completed. There are two payment applications anticipated coming in the next week for work completed to date. Change order will be presented soon for approximately 20 additions to the original scope. These additional scope items are to be covered by the contingency allowances within the grant budget. Final inspection will be conducted by New Rochelle City Building inspector. The library maintenance department still has to sign off on all work to be completed after that.
 - Corey Galloway asked if maintenance manages that project once it’s handed over. Jean Manning, assistant to the director, responded affirmatively.
 - Huguenot Children’s Library (HCL) general construction grant – It is substantially completed. The outside chalk wall will be completed soon. There is one final payment remaining.
 - Noise abatement grant – It is essentially complete. Some areas were not reachable even with the lift on site. Unused panels will be placed in other areas yet to be determined.
 - Third Floor renovation grant – It is essentially complete per the original grant description. The preliminary budget figures show a significant savings in the construction of the conference and study rooms as well as the sound attenuation wall above the teen area. There will need to be a conversation as to other areas to be addressed or other areas to be purchased in order to use all funds granted. This will require an amendment to the original grant and filed with the state indicating changes to the scope of work and showing what we’re using the money for. There are limitations to what that funding can be

- used for.
- ARPA grant – Per the NRPL Foundation President Chris Selin, the foundation has not yet finalized an agreement with the City of New Rochelle for the funds, but it is in process. The foundation and the library will still need to sign an agreement, which allows the city to pass the funds to the library, which is typical protocol, given that the library cannot accept the funds directly. The grant is on hold until the agreements are completed. Concurrent with that is the underground water tank removal which will be a separate project. These are the solar powered tanks buried under the children’s pavilion in the 1970s. There will be an assessment done to make sure there is no contamination. Funds for this work will come directly from the library foundation.
- **Personnel Report**
 - Tom Geoffino retired as of April 15, 2024 as Library Director with a final annual salary of \$168,792.
 - Whitney Barrat made a motion to accept Tom Geoffino’s retirement. Seconded by Lucille Renwick and unanimously approved.
 - Elizabeth Joseph resigned as of April 30, 2024 as Assistant Library Director with a final annual salary of \$112,750
 - Whitney Barrat made a motion to accept Elizabeth Joseph’s resignation. Seconded by Corey Galloway and unanimously approved.
- Report received from Archivist David Rose
 - Before retiring, Tom Geoffino transferred several boxes of Library documents to the Archive for the NRPL Records. A 23-page finding guide describes the collection in some detail. The collection documents the entire history of the library from 1893 to 2020, a key asset of our archival and local history collections. Anyone who might take on the project of writing a history of our Library will need the contents of this essential collection.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget Committee – NRPL Trustee Corey Galloway presented the budget, and related explanations during the May 2nd special budget meeting held at 7 p.m. The budget was approved by the board at that meeting.

Buildings & Grounds/CROC Committee – Nothing to report, but the group will be meeting soon to discuss the ARPA grant and some facilities needs specifically re: HVAC system for the summer. More to report during the June meeting.

Community Relations Committee—NRPL Trustee Rhiannon Navin provided the following report of some past and upcoming programming.

APRIL/MAY PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Art Workshops/Gallery:

- **Gallery exhibit: NRAA Dermot Gale Award Show, Reception NRAA, 4/14**
- **Jazz Appreciation Art Workshop 4/17, 5 attendees**
- **Knitting Clubs April 19 - averaging 4-6 attendees**

- **Sewing Workshops begin 4/27, adults and children's classes for 3 sessions.** *At capacity with a long waitlist for both classes. 10 adults, 9 children*

Wellness: Yoga, Qi Gong and Feldenkrais Method

- **Chair Yoga**, Mondays and Wednesdays. Average attendance, *average of 18 participants/class*
- **Gentle Evening Yoga, April 29**, *average 6 attendees/session*
- **Qi gong, Fridays, April 12, 19, 26**, *average 18 attendees/session*
- **New! Well Minded Movement Classes (Feldenkrais Method) classes began, 4/18, 25 and continuing through May, 11 attendees,**

Lectures/Presentations/Concerts/Other:

- **Michael Powers Blues Heritage Concert, 4/12**, *125 attendees*
- **True Crime Film Series continues, 4/13**, *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid, 21 attendees*
- **New Rochelle Plays Hollywood, 4/14**, *The Candidate, 14 attendees*
- **Author Talk: Voices of a People's History of the United States in the 21st Century** , *4/18, 65 attendees*
- **Jared Pauley Jazz Concert, 4/21**, *77 attendees*

Virtual

- **Protecting New Rochelle's Extraordinary Past: A Primer & Guided Tour for Historic Preservation Month, 5/1**
- **Ready, Set, Summer, 5/21**
- **Travel to the US National Parks, 5/23**

Coming up in May

- Knitting May 3 & 17
- Friday Night Concert: Kenn Morr Band Concert 5/3
- Chair Yoga, Mondays and Wednesdays throughout May
- Cinco de Mayo Copland House concert, 5/5
- NEW! Well Minded Movement (Feldenkrais Method), 5/2, 9, 16 & 23
- Sewing workshop continues 5/4 & 11
- Chris Film Series, 5/11, *The Butler*
- Red Cross Blood Drive, 5/14
- Adult Art Workshop, 5/15
- Our Children Our Artists gallery exhibit May 3-11 (elem. school), reception 5/8
- Our Children Our Artists gallery exhibit May 17-31 (middle/high school) reception May 22
- Stephanie Chou Jazz Concert (AAPI celebration), 5/17
- New Ro Plays Hollywood, election film, *The Last Hurrah*, 5/19
- Photography iPhone Workshop, 5/28

- Qi-Gong, 5/31, 6/7
- White House Memories (or The Butler Did It), 6/1
- Silhouette Art workshop, 6/5
- Friday Night Concert: Firey String Sistas! Concert, 6/7
- Brown Bag Book Discussion 6/11

Program Marketing

- Supported promotion of 35 May programs through print and digital media, PR, targeted communications, and community outreach

Email highlights:

- Average open rate in April (through 4/23) was 61 %, which is 22 % higher than the industry average.
- Our email distribution list continues to grow. There were 797 net new contacts to date in April . Total distribution list is now at 10, 725

Community Relations

- Met with new Resident Services Officer at Clinton Park
 - NRPL hosting resident storytime on April 26
- Serving on planning committee for NRCCS Annual Breakfast

Miscellaneous

- Hearts and Homes for Refugees: NRPL to host summer tutoring program for new immigrant students, 3 weeks in summer. NRPL provided space last year for this well received program.
- AARP Tax Aide Program: The AARP Tax Advisor program ended on April 11. It was an extremely successful season. AARP volunteer coordinator shared this report: *“Our numbers have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. We submitted 798 returns. When we factor in the taxpayers we helped by answering their tax related questions, the returns we prepared that never got submitted and the married filing jointly returns (they count as two people), we helped over 1,200 people. This compares to the 1,200 people we helped in 2019 which was the last full year before COVID. Last Thursday was a record 60 returns. For those of you who like numbers, we used 20,000 sheets of printer paper. If they were placed end-to-end that’s almost 3.5 miles”*

Finance Committee – Nothing to report

Personnel Committee

- NRPL Trustee Lucille Renwick noted salary adjustments for Lisa Itzkowitz Communications & Marketing Coordinator and for Tobe Sevush, Programming Coordinator moving both to the union salary scale step system and bringing Lisa itzkowitz’s salary to a Step 3 salary for Librarian 2 to \$77,123, effective as of April

2024. For Ms. Sevush, it would bring her salary to be to bring her on to \$75,291 (which is Step 2 based on the union scale for 2024), and will be effective as of July 2024.

- Whitney Barrat noted that this requires a board approval because both Ms. Itzkowitz and Ms. Sevush are non-union employees and, as such, require separate board approval for salary adjustments.
- Lucille Renwick made a motion to approve the salary adjustments. Seconded by Corey Galloway and unanimously approved.

Policy Committee – Nothing to report

Special Projects Committee – Nothing to report

PUBLIC TO BE HEARD – The following members of the public signed up to speak at the meeting:

- Bruce Soloway
- Alisse Waterston
- Howard Horowitz
- Nancy Weinberger
- Noelle Elia

Following the public discussion Board President Whitney Barrat thanked the board trustees for all their time and work volunteering and their service to the community.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m., with a motion by Board President Whitney Barrat, seconded by Tatiana Infante and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucille Renwick
Secretary

A recording of the meeting can be found on the library's website: www.nrpl.org.