

## WESTWOOD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

**MEETING DATE:** Monday, December 20, 2021

**CALLED TO ORDER:** at 7:00 p.m. by Vincent Fitzpatrick.

**PRESENT:** Dennis Farrell (DF), Suzanne Gorham (SG), Mike Violano (MV), Linda Phayre (LP), Martha Urbiel (MU), and Rob Biccocchi (RB).

**PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** Vincent Fitzpatrick (VP), Noeline Grefrath (NG), and Bev Karch (BK)

**SUNSHINE LAW:** Read by VF.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** No members of the public were present.

**MINUTES:** BK made a correction to the minutes of the November 22 meeting. “A motion to accept the bills list” under Treasurer’s Report should read “A motion to accept the treasurer’s report.” BK made a motion to accept the treasurer’s report with corrections; DF seconded. The motion carried.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** MV presented the treasurer's report and cash management fund. The total of the checking account, cash management fund, and capital account is \$130,978.22. A motion to accept the treasurer’s report was made by SG; seconded by NG. The report was unanimously accepted.

The current bills list (6975-6995) was reviewed. The final payment for the library lockers came from the capital account. A motion to accept the bills list was made by DF; seconded by SG. The motion carried.

MV shared that in December, the Library received \$39,135 that will appear on the January report, which includes the final transfer from the Borough for operating expenses. VF questioned the municipal funds on the profit and loss document, budget to actual. MV clarified that the total municipal funds received for the year is \$168,054.61, which is higher than what was originally anticipated. The positive difference is the lower salaries and benefits resulting from Janet Dunn’s retirement. VF questioned the State aid received for the year. MV clarified that the State aid received for the year is higher than what was budgeted and what was received the prior year.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Budget Committee.** MV shared that the budget committee did not formally meet in December. At the previous meeting, the committee discussed waiting to receive the allocations from the Borough for liability, workers comp, benefits, and pension prior to submitting the proposed budget. The estimated salary figures and staffing details are available, which can be used to calculate healthcare and social security.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** MU shared that the book lockers were received and installed, paid for with an American Rescue grant. They work well, except for a few electrical and Wifi repairs that will be completed. Two Wifi access points have stopped working. MU will get an extender to use temporarily until additional access points can be added.

The roof repairs are almost complete. The slate roof was removed and the gutters were replaced. A final inspection is still needed. The overhang on the ramp side and some cracks on the roof will be reviewed. The masonry work is delayed, pending a resolution by the Borough for a new contractor.

The Westwood Library kiosk, a gift from Westwood for All Ages, was successfully installed in the arts and crafts room at Westwood House. The ribbon cutting has been delayed until next year. The kiosk is managed from the Library. Outreach programs will begin in the new year that will show the residents how to use the kiosk.

The history grant application was completed. MU expects to hear back at the beginning of the year regarding the award, which will be used for a public access portal for history documents, starting with Westwood News. The Friends and the Westwood Preservation committee will also contribute.

IT repairs are required for the outdoor space, new lockers, and new garden area. The BCCLS equipment will be moved away from the circulation desk into the upstairs back offices as well as the IT equipment that is currently near the leak in the basement. MU hopes to restructure the circulation desk at some point in the future to create more space. MU will collect quotes, hoping to move all equipment at the same time.

MU interviewed several candidates for a new Adult Services Librarian to start in January. MU is prepared to make an offer to a candidate. Marilyn Katz will replace Maureen Lostumbo as new LVPV coordinator.

Several children's and adult programs ran in December. The Library held one indoor concert. The Junior Library Council has 26 active members who have been working on several outreach projects. The Library coordinated with Westwood for All Ages to distribute over 50 holiday cards to senior citizens at Westwood House. The Friends held a book sale on December 11.

VF questioned the Wifi failure. MU confirmed that two access points failed, weakening the Wifi coverage in the parking lot.

**TRUSTEE EDUCATION REPORT:** The trustees have met the yearly education requirement. Trustees did not attend any new education programs this month.

**OLD BUSINESS:** MU clarified that work on the Shy Touba Memorial Garden has been delayed, pending the masonry work.

VF questioned the electrical component of the handicapped access ramp. MU shared that it is being repaired. RB shared that the resolution for the masonry work should be approved tomorrow. RB will contact an electrician for the exposed outlet.

MU addressed the outdoor leak. The general contractor advised that the new gutters should help, but new landscaping would also benefit. The leak occurred after the new optic ring was installed. The contractor suggested using a scope for a better view underground through the gutters and leaders to help locate the source of the leak. RB will get more information about camera availability from the Borough.

Additional agenda items were previously addressed in the Director's Report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

MU shared that a lot of libraries have switched from MERV 8 to MERV 13 filters. MU received quotes to update the Library's filters to MERV 13 filters. Each filter change for maintenance would be \$500. RB suggested finding out if upgrading the filters would reduce the capacity of the air conditioning unit and inquiring about additional filter options. MU shared that an alternate option for cleaner air would be to install UV rays on the units, which would cost \$4,200. The only required maintenance would be to change the bulbs. Outdoor air currently circulates through the system. MU suggested that the air filters may better clean the air but may not have a great impact on viruses, so she will get more information. The building committee will discuss the options and if a change should be made.

MU presented the 2022 Board Meeting dates. BK suggested that the September 26 meeting should be moved to accommodate the Rosh Hashanah holiday. SG suggested that the meeting be moved to September 19. VF suggested we leave the meeting as is, unless a conflict arises. The meeting date will remain September 26, 2022 unless an objection arises as it gets closer.

VF questioned the budget committee submitting salary information to the Borough in order to receive further information from the Borough that will be used to finalize the budget.

MV shared that the budget committee did not reach a consensus on submitting a final budget, but discussed the additional option of submitting an estimated budget at the end of December, following past practice, while awaiting final numbers from the Borough.

DF questioned RB about the benefit of receiving an estimated budget. RB suggested that an estimated Library budget would be helpful for the Borough to have as the Borough Administrator, Durene, works on the full budget. MV confirmed that the committee has the  $\frac{1}{3}$  mil numbers, but the health insurance, workers compensation, liability insurance, and pension figures have not been received and would need to be estimated.

NG agreed with submitting an estimated budget that can be adjusted later once the final figures are received. VF suggested that we are holding up Durene's work by not submitting our figures to her. Since the  $\frac{1}{3}$  mil rate is fixed, VF suggested that we submit the salary information to her so that she can advise the health insurance, workers compensation, liability insurance, and pension figures, in order for MU to submit the most accurate budget proposal possible.

MU stated that she prepared a full budget that would properly run the Library. If the Borough advises that additional costs will be incurred for insurance and pension, then the budget proposal will be updated and revised to reflect the new information. VF questioned the 5% estimated benefits increase and suggested that MU instead provides salary information to Durene in order to obtain more accurate information, rather than assume the percentage increase.

MV stated that based on the salary and staffing information we have, the insurance and pension figures should be able to be calculated, in order to avoid the confusion with the change made last year to the workers comp and liability figures. If it is reasonable to use the final workers comp and liability figures from last year, then 2022 figures should be able to be estimated based on 2021 final numbers. The balance of the figures can be estimated from the salary information.

RB stated that what MU put together can be submitted to Durene, who can suggest adjustments. BK asked RB what the other departments have done. RB shared that other departments assign estimated figures that are adjusted when the final figures are received. VF stated that it is important to know what has been done in the past, while also considering a discussion earlier in the year in which Durene stated that she would supply the figures after the Library submitted salary information.

NG suggested that MU should submit the budget that she prepared, following past practice, rather than altering the process this year. Upon Durene's review, the budget can be revised. It is advisable to maintain our amicable relationship with the Borough. VF does not believe that requesting additional information from Durene is overstepping boundaries with the Borough, as it was discussed earlier in the year.

MV stated that the Board of Trustees is responsible for the budget process for the Library and is within their bounds to discuss and make a decision regarding the best way to submit the budget.

NG concurred that the Board is involved in the budget process and should also respect MU's position as Director by allowing her to submit the budget she has prepared.

RB reiterated that the budget proposal that MU has prepared is not a final budget, but a proposal that can be adjusted and updated as needed prior to being finalized. Submitting a preliminary budget submitted soon will aid Durene in the process and allow her to respond accordingly. BK shared the concern that worker's compensation may increase substantially due to Covid, causing a disparity between last year's and this year's figures. RB stated that changes can be made until the Board and Borough adopt the final budget, in order to accommodate for any changes that become necessary.

VF reiterated that there is no adversarial relationship between the Board and Borough administrator and that the alternate plan he has suggested is based on a conversation regarding the process from earlier in the year. VF suggested that the 5% increase that MU will account for in the estimated budget may actually be significantly higher in actuality and reiterated his request to first submit salary information to Durene in order to get more accurate figures.

BK suggested that the tentative budget proposal be submitted with the caveat that it is subject to revision. MU suggested that a budget request be submitted as soon as possible, knowing that the figures may need to be revised based on new information. VF agreed to submit the budget request with estimated numbers.

MU clarified that the budget that she prepared includes a request for \$826k, which includes a staffing level of four full-time employees, reduced from six full-time employees. Four full-time employees meet the minimum state requirements. A request is included for two additional part-time employees. The salary increase is minimal due to the reduction in full-time employees. The benefit numbers are estimates, and are included with the caveat that the total budget request could increase if the benefit numbers increase. The operating budget is \$238k, which allows for collections, building maintenance, and increases in utilities and service contracts.

MV shared that last year the Library spent \$61k on materials out of a \$750k total budget, spending less than 10% of the budget on resources provided to the public. This budget item will increase to \$88k in the budget proposal, in order to meet the needs of our patrons. Additionally, BCCLS is reducing the amount of money they are providing to eBCCLS. MU also addressed the need to increase the space inside the Library and allow for mobility to accommodate the changing needs of the public and programming.

VF clarified that he does not have private conversations with Durene. VF reiterated his concern with the 5% increase MU will include in the budget request. MU suggested that the budget request be submitted the way she prepared it, with the caveat that it is subject to increase if the benefit figures increase.

DF made a motion to submit the preliminary budget, with an asterisk to explain that the budget is preliminary and the numbers are fluid based on forthcoming information; NG seconded the motion; BK abstained; no members opposed. The motion carried.

MU shared that Marilyn Katz is the new LVPV coordinator. MV questioned if the assistant coordinator will be replaced. MU explained that Marilyn will hire a new assistant.

MU shared a new initiative, NJ Health Connect @ Your Library, which gives the Library iPads for patrons to use for telehealth visits with their healthcare providers. BK questioned the program, as its website states that it is an electronic medical sharing non-profit. DF shared the concern that the program may be a HIPPA violation. MU stated that she registered, as it is a State library program. BK suggested that it is a breach of privacy, and is opposed to participating in the program; DF concurred. MU suggested meeting with BK to discuss the program with the possibility of unsubscribing to the program prior to formally introducing it to patrons. The policy committee will meet to discuss.

MU shared that the Library will reopen for ESL tutors, on a limited basis, and group meetings in the conference room. Indoor children's programs will be reinstated on a limited basis, and will pick up in the spring. MU anticipates reinstating Sunday hours in January.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** A motion to adjourn was made by DF; seconded by LP. The meeting was adjourned by VF at 8:14 p.m.