



Raritan Public Library

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April 21, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Raritan Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:00 pm by R. Rispoli, Board President. R. Rispoli read a statement that the meeting was duly publicized (including notices which were sent to the Courier News and the Star Ledger) and that the meeting was called pursuant to provisions from the Open Public Meeting Law.

MEMBERS PRESENT: R. Rispoli, B. Doorly, R. Zack, S. Forte, J. Boyle, K. Seifert-Ethier, A. Goetsch, A. M. Mead, Mayor Charles McMullin, and M. Paese, Library Director.

R. Rispoli led the flag salute.

At 7:02 pm, R. Zack made a motion to go into executive session to discuss salary increases for the Library staff. B. Doorly seconded the motion and the roll call was unanimous.

At 7:50 pm, the Board of Trustees returned to regular session. R. Rispoli reported that the discussion of annual pay increases for Library staff would be tabled until the May 19th, 2016 meeting.

MINUTES: Mayor McMullin asked to amend the minutes from the March 17th, 2016 Board Meeting (Old Business section) to reflect the following: The Mayor would recommend that the Borough take care of the Library's snow removal. The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the amendment. Anne Marie Mead made a motion to approve the March 17th minutes with amendment, R. Zack seconded and a roll call was taken. All approved with the exception of S. Forte and R. Zack who abstained.

TREASURER'S REPORT: A. M. Mead made a motion to approve the April bills, R. Zack seconded and the roll call was unanimous.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: The County installed the 8 new fixtures along the front walkway. Each fixture was placed in a concrete base. Some additional wiring and mulching of the beds will soon be done.

The Director contacted 3M as well as the President of the DLNJ (Digital Library of New Jersey) regarding joining their e-book consortium. The DLNJ will give our patrons the opportunity to borrow from a greater selection and quantity of e-books. A meeting on April 28th has been set with a representative of 3M to discuss their platform and answer any questions we may have. The Director invited the Trustees to attend.

In May, the Director will be attending the NJLA Conference in Atlantic City. There she will meet the President of the DLNJ.

Upcoming Programs/Events:

May 12th: Award winning tenor, Salvatore Chiarelli, will perform songs in Italian and English from his newly released CD.

May 26th: The Library is hosting a second adult coloring class by public request.

The Library's second Makers Day Event was a great success with over 175 people in attendance.

The Director reported that she was just made aware of a letter that the Mayor sent to 6 Trustees which she found quite disturbing. She explained that in February the Mayor requested Library metrics from her and she provided him with the statistics which she also sent to the New Jersey State Library in March. After the Mayor received the statistics, he then requested additional detailed information by an e-mailed OPRA request. The Director responded back that the Library's data software program is limited and does not have the functional capacity to produce responses to the specific information which he sought and that such records are not regularly kept at the Library. Finally, she read the letter which was sent by the Mayor to the 6 Trustees, but not mailed to the Director, Board President and Board Vice-President. The Mayor's letter questioned the Board and Library Leadership's motives, management, and abilities.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: R. Rispoli apologized to K. Seifert-Ethier and R. Zack for the fact that the Library's strategic plan has been put off track by other issues. The Library's Strategic Plan should be a priority.

R. Rispoli reported that when the Mayor took office he mentioned that the Library was one area which needed attention. R. Rispoli reminded the Board of Trustees that the Library is a semi-autonomous entity and should not be controlled by the Mayor nor the Borough Council. In the last 3 months, the Mayor has challenged the Library's budget and the Library's bookkeeping methods which have been approved by the Library's auditor. The Library's attorney recommended that the Trustees not meet with the Borough Council.

Continuation of President's Report:

Status of the Library Expansion Project: Bids were opened at the Borough on April 14th. Edge Property Maintenance had the lowest bid at \$211,110. The Architect and Town Engineer reviewed the bid. R. Rispoli recommended Van Cleef Associates as the construction consultant for the expansion project. The cost of their fee is \$16,560.00. A.M. Mead made a motion to hire Van Cleef, S. Forte seconded the motion and the roll call was unanimous.

Update Buy-A-Paver Program: Now is the time to promote selling pavers.

R. Zack asked about a groundbreaking ceremony and stated that pavers could be sold during this special occasion. She and S. Forte agreed to work on the ceremony.

Status of the Library's Electrical Issue: The Borough has agreed to pay for the electrical problem in the Library's basement. However, because the monies have to be appropriated from the Borough's capital account to pay for the unplanned expense, two Council Meetings have to take place including a public hearing before the problem can be resolved. For fear that this will drag on, R. Rispoli recommended that the Board vote to use Library funds to pay for the repair. The Trustees agreed that, if by the next Board Meeting, the electrical problem is not paid by the Borough, then the Board will vote to approve payment from the Library's funding.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: (Strategic Planning) K. Seifert-Ethier is hoping that the Board can still have an amicable meeting with the Borough Council. With regards to outreach and the ESL community, J. Boyle reported that JFK School kindergarteners and third graders are planning a visit to the Library along with a nighttime event where parents can come with their (ESL) children. Teacher volunteers will work along with the Library.

Mayor McMullin remarked that he was told by the JFK third grade teacher that the trip to the Library was cancelled. The Director stated that she had not been contacted by the third grade teacher and was not aware that a date was set. J. Boyle expressed his concern for the safety of the third graders, particularly because the back yard of the Library is under construction and is not conducive to holding large groupings of students. R. Rispoli stated he didn't want the Library to be placed in a

April 21st, 2016 Minutes continued:

liable situation. The Mayor suggested having R. Rispoli and the JFK third grade teacher look over the backyard area.

B. Doorly reported that the Library's e-newsletter is sent out every two weeks. Two volunteers have been trained to scan the old Raritan Valley Newspaper documents.

OLD BUSINESS: R. Rispoli handed the Mayor the amended agreement regarding snow removal. Going forward, the Borough will take care of this for the Library.

R. Rispoli stated that a committee in the future will need to be formed to work on the Library's Policy Manual and emergency closing procedures.

NEW BUSINESS: Raritan Relief Hose Company #2 will be holding a tricky tray and they are asking if the Library can make a donation. The Trustees agreed to donate individually.

The Mayor would like to expand the strategic goals and discuss this at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Several members of the public stated they found the Mayor's letter offensive and insulting. In addition, a public member spoke that the backyard is not safe for a school trip to the Library.

Councilman, Jim Foohey, remarked that at the May 10th Borough Council Meeting the Library's electrical issue should be resolved and funding should become available. There will be a "Friends" book sale on June 18th. Jim Foohey stated, in spite of the emergence of e-books, he doesn't believe books will disappear.

L. Harwood remarked that there are many active users that read at the Library and don't take materials out. Therefore, gauging user metrics is not necessarily a true evaluation of what is actually used in the Library. L. Harwood stated that she has no problem reaching books on the top shelves. She found the Mayor's actions to be against progress at the Library.

The Assistant Director, who performs most of the computer tasks at the Library, reported that he would have to go through hundreds of records to obtain the specific information the Mayor requested. With limited staff, this could take weeks to accomplish.

After public comments ended, Mayor McMullin apologized to his colleagues, the Director and staff.

R. Zack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 pm, S. Forte seconded and the roll call was unanimous.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19th, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

