

## Ramsey Free Public Library

### Meeting of the Board of Trustees March 13, 2023

The March meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. Martin with the reading of the public meeting law. Also present were Mayor Dillon, Mrs. Knauss, Mrs. McCaskey, Mrs. Palchisaca, Mrs. Rennie, Mrs. Thorp, Trustees, Councilman Gutwetter, and Director Latham. Mr. Bogaenko, Mrs. FitzPatrick, and Mrs. Ohnegian were absent. The minutes of the February 13, 2023 meeting were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, and passed. The minutes of the Executive Session (February 13, 2023) were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. Palchisaca, and passed.

**Correspondence:** None

**Library Board Members Comments:** None

**Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Bogaenko had forwarded the financial reports for February. Since he was not in attendance, there was no review of the reports. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, approval to pay the February bills was unanimously passed.

**Director's Report:** Assistant Director Kathy Elwell had announced that she was retiring from the Ramsey Free Public Library as of April 1<sup>st</sup> after twenty-three years. In recognition of her years of service, she was given flowers and a proclamation, which was read by Mrs. Martin. The staff will be celebrating with Mrs. Elwell on Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. According to state law, she can return to the library in some capacity after six months.

Winterfest was offered for the second time, even bigger than the first, and the biggest event during the tenure of Director Latham. It is estimated that at least 450 people attended, necessitating bringing in six staff members and seven volunteers to help with all of the facets of the event. The event featured fire pits, making s'mores, hot pretzels, hot cider, a hot chocolate bar, outdoor games, and music. The parking lot at the Lutheran Church was used and a crossing guard was on duty to help people cross the street. The Knights of Columbus donated the hot pretzel warmer.

Brought back for the second time after the pandemic, the Tween Zone program, a program geared toward fourth and fifth graders, featured food, games, video games, and other activities. Mr. Hofmann, Ms. Suarez, and the rest of the staff worked closely with Dater School and the other schools to promote the event which brings more children into the library. The latest session had 105 participants.

There were sixty attendees for the Sunday concert featuring Forever Young, a cover band from the area that plays oldies and classic rock. However, it appeared that only two of the sixty were from Ramsey; the other fifty-eight were band "groupies."

There were forty-six online views of the adult crafting YouTube demonstration of the Rolled Book Page Heart.

Baby Storytime, Pre-School Storytime, and Playtime with Ms. Galda continue to be very popular, with 111 participants over eight sessions in February.

In preparation for Assistant Director Elwell's retirement, Director Latham has distributed tasks to several staff members with Ms. Burnette taking on the majority of Ms. Elwell's duties. The Teen and Tech Services Librarian position has been advertised and interviews will be conducted soon.

Director Latham is working on several end-of-year reports, including the annual report to the library board, the annual report to the community, and the State Aid Report. He reviewed the highlights of the 2022 Annual Report, including fourteen 2023 goals. There are still remnants of the pandemic which are impacting various aspects of the library programs such as visits to the library. Additionally, the reading challenge portion is not as well supported as it once was. However, circulation has gone up.

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Several basic but functional shelving units were purchased to increase the available space for the Library of Things collection. Pickleball equipment has been added.

The Young Writers Contest for fourth and fifth graders which was begun in 2021 by Ms. Suarez is underway again in 2023. The eighty-six submissions were collected in February and are being read and evaluated by various staff members and volunteers from the Friends of the Ramsey Library in March and April. The winners will be announced in May; the top three winners will get prizes. The top submission will be bound and added to the library's collection.

NJ Makers Day is scheduled for Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 3 p.m.

A Glow in the Dark Egg Hunt will take place on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is a 300-participant limit. Kerry Conklin is the Easter bunny for the Recreation Commission and Fire Department activities earlier in the day; she may also visit the library.

The Ramsey LibraryCon is scheduled for Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 3 p.m.

Director Latham will meet with Soyka Smith in March to get more specific cost estimates for each element of the interior design project. He will bring those numbers back to the library board for consideration.

Regarding the landscape redesign project, estimates for the full project as well as pieces of the project should be available soon. At that point, the committee will meet again to discuss the new information.

Four bids for the HVAC project were received and were opened at borough hall on Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. The bidding is closed. The bids are ACP Contracting-\$597,000, First Goal Heating & Cooling-\$640,000, Environmental Climate Control-\$659,400, and TMB Service-\$679,000. All of those estimates are significantly higher than expected. While the library does have the funds to cover the costs of this project in reserve, this project would significantly deplete those reserves. There is \$683,000 in the Bequest/Capital Reserve Account. Reiner and Armistead did not bid on the project since they believe that the problem has been fixed although the design has always been problematic. Their annual contracts total \$10,000 with an additional \$17,500 spent on repairs, for a total of approximately \$27,500. Director Latham presented some options, including borough bonding, grant funding, establishment of a foundation, and project fundraising. By the end of March, it had been hoped that the bids would have been reviewed by the borough, borough attorney, architect, and engineers, and a contractor selected. At that time there would be a better idea of the expected dates for work completion. Then Director Latham and the staff could begin planning how to provide services, programs, and collection access during the construction process. Following discussion, it was decided to move ahead with the HVAC project with ACP Contracting, the lowest bidder who has a good reputation. The borough has reviewed the information from ACP Contracting, and the architect is currently reviewing.

Upon motion by Mayor Dillon, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, and approved unanimously, the bid for the HVAC project will be awarded to ACP Contracting, contingent upon the architect's approval.

At 8:24 p.m., the meeting moved into executive session on motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, and passed.

**Consent Resolutions:** Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, Consent Resolution 2023-2, the changing of Debbie Burnette's title to Head of Adult Services and increasing her salary by \$5,000 to \$63,714.26, effective Saturday, April 1, 2023, was unanimously approved.

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**Public Comment:** None

**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:** None

At 8:35 p.m., the meeting was closed on motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, and passed.



