

Ramsey Free Public Library

Meeting of the Board of Trustees April 12, 2021

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the April meeting was held via Zoom. The April meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. Martin with the reading of the public meeting law. Also present were Mr. Bogaenko, Mayor Dillon, Mrs. FitzPatrick, Mrs. Knauss, Mrs. McCaskey, Mrs. Ohnegian, Mrs. Rennie, Mrs. Thompson, and Mrs. Thorp, Trustees, Councilman Gutwetter, and Director Latham. The minutes of the March 8, 2021 meeting were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. FitzPatrick, and passed.

Correspondence: None

Library Board Members Comments: None

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Bogaenko had forwarded the March financial reports which were reviewed. He noted that BCCLS has been paid in full. Payment in the amount of \$6,000 for the annual audit also was made. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. FitzPatrick, approval to pay the March bills was unanimously passed. The treasurer's report was received and filed for audit.

Director's Report: Director Latham began his report with a statistical summary of item circulation. Physical checkouts numbered 9,635 in February and 10,848 in March, an increase of 1,213. Digital checkouts were down 145 with 5,334 checkouts in February and 5,189 in March. The total checkouts of 16,037 is close to pre-COVID numbers.

Director Latham highlighted the March programs with the highest participation including Mr. Jeff's live storytimes with 644 views in five sessions, a children's concert with 244 views, and a jazz concert for adults with 657 views. The Take-Home Crafts are available twice a month; one hundred craft bags are available until they run out. There was a Maker Day craft opportunity with three different crafts taken by 102 people. In summary, 2,770 people participated in sixty-three events in March, up from 2,355 people and ninety-two events in February.

Ms. Suarez is coordinating the Spring "Kindness Bags," including a pack of flower seeds, bird seed, a journal, promotional bookmarks, and jellybeans. To receive one, a patron must check out at least three Ramsey Library items.

Sheila Harold, former Library Director, passed away on March 28th. The family asked that donations should be made to the library. She retired in March, 1996 after working at the library for over twenty years.

Pat Elkas retired on Wednesday, March 31st, after working more than twenty years at the library. Director Latham highlighted Ms. Elkas' many contributions to the library.

Director Latham redesigned the employee review process and paperwork as well as the library's distribution of duties and created goals for all staff in 2021. All staff interviews should be completed and adjustments implemented by the end of April.

The staff training day, along with the surprise celebration of Ms. Elkas' retirement, on Friday, March 26th, went well. Director Latham summarized the topics which were covered. All of the food was supplied by Morano's.

Mr. Hofmann continues to work on the browsability of the Library of Things. New signs have been added, along with titles and photos of the materials. Twenty-eight board and card games have been added to the collection. Next will be a focus on backyard games, unique items, and tools. All of the new items should be ready to circulate in the next few weeks.

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Since the quiet study room is currently closed to the public, the magazine collection has been relocated on portable shelves near the reference desk area.

Some new video recording equipment, including a DSLR camera for streaming, an above-view camera for recording crafts, lighting, and other accessories, has been purchased. When in-person programming does return, there will still be a market for virtual programming. Mr. Hofmann and Ms. Newton are learning how to use the new equipment.

Assistant Director Elwell organized all of the library's microfilm (thirty-nine rolls of film) and sixty-one Ramsey High School yearbooks to prepare for digitization. She shipped all of these materials to Advantage Preservation, and they are about halfway done with the digitization; the microfilm portion of the project is complete. Director Latham demonstrated the product which should be available to the public within the next two months.

Director Latham shared his thoughts about how the library will reopen. He did not have any concrete recommendations but does anticipate bringing proposals to the Library Board regarding the easing of restrictions and making adjustments as needed including such things as indoor seating, indoor capacity, time limits, item quarantine, Saturday hours, indoor events and meetings, use of the quiet study room and the community room, and mask requirements. He anticipates that during the summer there will be programs outdoors, virtually, and in take-home format. There was some discussion about allowing students to study in the library at the end of the school year.

Director Latham and Ms. Suarez are investigating the purchase of two 10x20 tents for outdoor programs. The planned location for the tents is directly in front of the shed at the back of the parking lot. In addition to the tents, Director Latham is considering the purchase of additional benches and tables to be placed in the reading area/gazebo section of the library's grounds. There should be availability at Finch Park for summer concerts. Director Latham will reach out to Borough Administrator Vozeh regarding that possibility.

Director Latham has spoken with several architectural firms (Arcari & Iovino, The Goldstein Group, NK Architects) regarding a building assessment as well as a review and assessment of several individual projects, including a building expansion. For this initial assessment work, at least three quotes for services would be needed to compare and choose from. The three aforementioned firms have extensive New Jersey library experience and were listed in the State Library's list of architects as part of the New Jersey Construction Bond process. He has also reached out to libraries that have worked with each of the firms listed and have received positive feedback from their Directors. He has received two proposals and is waiting for the third, from NK Architects. Director Latham would like to have three proposals soon so that the executive committee can review those proposals and then bring them to the library board. If there is upward expansion, an elevator would be needed.

As part of the library's organizational review, Director Latham determined that an area of need for the library is marketing and public relations. Currently the marketing and promotional efforts are spread out among six or more staff members. To organize the overall effort, he is proposing a new part-time Public Relations position at twenty hours per week at \$20 per hour. He shared the information which he had developed about the position. One person with a marketing background would be hired to organize the library's message. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, and approved unanimously, the Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator position will be posted immediately.

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Consent Resolution: None

Public Comment: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: Mayor Dillon asked about the recent article in *The Record* regarding the \$3.9 million for libraries. Director Latham shared further information about the program. Specific details about the grant will be forthcoming. There also is \$165,000 available from the CARES Act in the form of mini-grants from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

At 8:24 p.m., the meeting was closed on motion by Mrs. Rennie, seconded by Mayor Dillon, and passed

