

Ramsey Free Public Library

Meeting of the Board of Trustees September 11, 2023

The September 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, Mrs. FitzPatrick, Mrs. McCaskey, Mrs. Ohnegian, Mrs. Palchisaca, Mrs. Rennie, Mrs. Thorp, Trustees, Councilman Gutwetter, and Director Latham. Mayor Dillon and Mrs. Knauss were absent. The minutes of the August 14, 2023 meeting were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. Thorp, and passed.

Correspondence: None

Library Board Members Comments: Mr. Bogaenko noted that, due to the cost of the HVAC project, it would be prudent to trim expenses as much as possible. Perhaps the contracts could be looked at. Director Latham observed that approximately seventy-five percent of the budget goes to staff salaries and benefits. He suggested looking into fundraising and grants.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Bogaenko sent the June, July, and August reports and everything is tracking. Line 410 is the money for the Kass estate. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, approval to pay the August bills was unanimously passed.

Director's Report: Director Latham provided a summary of summer reading in 2023. His statistical summary illustrated outstanding numbers for 2023, including 468 Reading Challenge Participants, 353,220 minutes read, and 3,192 books read, considerable increases over 2022. He attributed those results to the efforts of the staff in restructuring the summer reading program and spreading the word effectively. Ms. McAlear put together wonderfully themed prize baskets, which were expanded to children as well as adults.

August highlights included the End of Summer Reading Party, the Therapy Mini-Horse visit, the Dino Adventure, Art in the Dark, a Summer Concert featuring the Kootz Band, and New Teacher Orientation. The library has now been included as an official stop on the local tour of resources for new teachers to Ramsey Schools; twenty new teachers got a tour of the library and an overview of its resources.

Director Latham thanked the library board for its approval of the staff training day which was very productive and included training on circulation and bookkeeping procedures, introduction of the new laptop lending program, installation and introduction to the poster printer, JIF insurance virtual training, Library of Things updates and new items, introduction to planned fall events, general library updates, and a staff-wide meeting.

Director Latham shared information about the purchase of a poster printer which will be used by the library staff as well as patrons. Ms. Carroll was the key staff member for the development and execution of this project. In August, a 24" Full Color Poster Printer was purchased from Precision Printing in Midland Park, the same company that supplied the Wyckoff Library's printer and also works with dozens of libraries across New Jersey. The policy recommendation for the use of the printer was discussed. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Thorp, a trial period of one month for the proposed policy was unanimously approved, with a revisited policy in October and then again in January. Ms. Carroll will be the main operator of the printer, with Mr. Hofmann and Director Latham as alternates. The total cost for the printer, installation, and initial supplies of ink and different paper formats is about \$4,000.

Director Latham has set up the laptop lending program and has it ready to go, with guidance of the library's Sunday Librarian, Danielle Cesena, who has set up a similar program at the Livingston Public Library. During the summer, new Windows-based laptops were purchased, along with cases and mice for each laptop. Norton anti-virus software on discount from TechSoup as well as DeepFreeze, which is a security software that deletes all history and information after each use, were also purchased. The plan is to begin lending laptops as was done pre-pandemic, namely for in-house use only. Lending the laptops will be targeted to teens and tweens who use the library. These new laptops should limit friction between adult and tween patrons all using the public computers at the same time. This purchase, along with the poster printer, were capital projects earmarked for this year utilizing the library's capital reserves.

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The Tech Assistance program started during the summer months. While the program has not been heavily used, it has worked as intended, providing high value one-on-one assistance for those with technological needs. There are multiple appointment opportunities scheduled for each month through the end of 2023.

Ms. Carroll has created new services, programs, and collections for the teen department. She restructured and greatly expanded the summer teen volunteer program and also created a structure for an all-year teen volunteer program. There currently are eight teens who will be volunteering during the fall. She added some new teen events, including a Bad Movie Night, a Teen Advisory Board, a Pokemon Club, and a college application guidance presentation and Q&A. She is also responsible for the purchasing of the Manga collection. And finally, she will be working to identify all series books in the library's teen collection, to re-format them so the cataloging matches the library's scheme for adult fiction, and then to move these to the new wall space just outside the teen room. This work should make browsing much easier and expand the collection of popular teen series materials.

There was extremely high use of the wireless hotspots this summer, more than in previous years. Ms. Carroll has researched other libraries and T-Mobile and has identified a replacement plan so that the library will receive all new devices to replace the current ones. The new devices will be only slightly more expensive but will have no data limits and will all be 5G network devices. The plan is to purchase ten devices. T-Mobile will be providing a new contract for the switch. The new devices should be in place sometime in the fall.

For a variety of reasons, the library will be eliminating its notary service as of September 15, 2023. Patrons will be provided with guidance as to the variety of local options that already exist for notary services, including borough hall, banks, and the FedEx Store.

Director Latham provided an update on the HVAC replacement project. He finally was able to schedule an in-person meeting with the contractor for the project, ACP Services. The meeting also included the project manager from the Goldstein Partnership (architects), Mrs. Martin, and Borough Administrator Vozeh. The rough start date for the project is Monday, November 13th since the library is used as a polling location on Election Day, Tuesday, November 7th. The HVAC units themselves will not be delivered until sometime in December. Construction is now slated to expand into January, with inspections and the like continuing into February. The Friends of the Ramsey Library will not be having its fall used book sale. However, Boo Bash will be moved back into the library in October. Sunday concerts will be held in both September and October. The library staff is not expecting to have use of the community room through January. Lunar New Year will most likely be held at the Community Center.

Estimates for impacts from the contractor were much better for the library than initially envisioned. The bathrooms for the public might only need to be closed for a few days, rather than a few weeks. Options could be considered. Although the contractor has indicated that the community room might be available periodically, Director Latham recommends that the staff consider the room not available. Only one of the closets in the community room will need to be cleaned out. The staff area may not need to be closed at all during construction, perhaps only a day or two. Regarding heating, at least some heat will be available with just the library's existing system. The baseboard heating will be about fifty percent of the library's normal heating capacity. If needed, the contractor will provide temporary heating sources for the building. The children's room will only need to be closed for a few days for the construction that will take place in that space. Only portions of the back parking lot will need to be utilized during the construction period, meaning that staff can still utilize the back parking lot during this time. While it may be possible to have public parking in the back lot, it may be best to limit the back parking lot to only staff for the duration of the construction period and possibly during special events like Boo Bash.

Director Latham noted that DPW should be able to open the building at 7 a.m. The construction company has a large sign which indicates the project that is underway, which is not something that the trustees would like to use. Payments for the project will be made monthly. The contractor will submit invoices to the library and the project manager

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from Goldstein. They will sign off on the invoices, ensuring that the work listed has been completed. Submissions will be made on the 25th of each month so that Goldstein can review and then the library board can review at its monthly meeting. Information about the project will be put on a special website page with regular updates along with utilization of social media, outdoor signs, posters in the library, and the Constant Contact e-mail newsletter. The schools will also be contacted, and information will be sent out through the borough.

During the summer, a meeting was held with Soyka Smith to discuss further options for the renovation of the children's room. Director Latham shared some of the key elements which had been discussed. Another meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 8th, to discuss Soyka Smith's initial sketches and plans prior to an official proposal which will be shared with the trustees.

The HVAC project is estimated to cost about \$597,000, not including any remaining funds owed to The Goldstein Partnership for project management and other project work. Director Latham recommended at least \$650,000 be available in operating/checking in order to make payments quickly for the project. As of Thursday, September 7th, a total of \$1,594,918 (TD Checking Account (operating): \$723,094; NJ Cash Management: \$128,529; NJ Cash Management-Bequest: \$697,185; NJ Cash Management: Kass: \$46,110) was available. He further delineated pertinent aspects of the library's financial picture, leading to his recommendation that roughly \$400,000 be transferred from other accounts into the operating account which would provide a cushion for operating expenses and enough to cover payments for the HVAC project. Upon motion by Mr. Bogaenko, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and approved unanimously, adequate funds will be transferred into the operating account before November, 2023 to cover the usual operating expenses and the payments for the HVAC project.

On Thursday, August 31st, the library experienced a backup in its drainage system, causing water to begin to back up from drains in the bathrooms and HVAC room onto the floors. Since the library cannot be open without available bathrooms, the library was closed, and the staff was sent home. Mister Rooter was able to provide emergency service to clean out the library's drains that day. The library's regular cleaning company fully cleaned the floors that evening, including sanitizing everything. The library reopened the next day as normal.

A special maintenance call for the generator was made since the staff believed an alarm was going off, indicating an error. However, the issue was actually with a broken battery backup for Director Latham's office computer rather than the generator. The battery backup was removed and replaced. As part of the maintenance visit, a check was made of all systems. Some minor maintenance was completed as a precaution.

Reiner was brought into make some minor repairs to the HVAC. The boiler was repeatedly turning off several days in a row. Reiner made repairs to address the error and the system is functioning once again.

The 2023 fire inspection was completed this year with no notices being given to the library, the first time since Director Latham began at the library.

Director Latham spoke with Anthony Reganato about the security system project which should be finished shortly.

Several policies were presented for consideration by the Library Board. The Internet Use Policy as presented and discussed is fairly boilerplate and attorney approved. Upon motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. FitzPatrick, the Internet Use Policy, as presented, was unanimously approved.

The laptop lending policy covers the laptops which are available to check out and use inside the library. A parent must sign the Laptop Borrower Agreement Form. The form will remain on file for a year. A charge of \$400 will be applied for damaged laptops. Director Latham can turn off a laptop remotely. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mr. Bogaenko, the 2023 Laptop Lending Policy, as drafted, was unanimously approved.

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Director Latham also presented the VHS Conversion Policy update which was discussed. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. FitzPatrick, the VHS Conversion Policy, as presented, was unanimously approved.

And finally, Director Latham shared his recommendation for an update to the Library of Things Policy which was discussed. He noted that the Library of Things is not funded by the library but depends upon donations. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Thorp, the updated Library of Things Policy, as presented, was unanimously approved.

Consent Resolution: Upon motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. Ohnegian, Consent Resolution 2023-4, the hiring of Aahna Katya Sasson as Library Page, at a rate of \$14.13 per hour (2023)/\$15.00 per hour (2024), for up to ten hours per week, beginning as soon as she is available after beginning the new school year, was unanimously approved.

At 8:50 p.m., the meeting moved into executive session on motion by Mrs, Martin, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, and passed.

Public Comment: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

At 9:11 p.m., the meeting was closed on motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, and passed.