

Ramsey Free Public Library

Meeting of the Board of Trustees September 12, 2022

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, Mayor Dillon, Mrs. FitzPatrick, Mrs. Knauss, Mrs. McCaskey, Mrs. Ohnegian, Mrs. Rennie, and Mrs. Thorp, Trustees, Councilman Gutwetter, and Director Latham. Mrs. Palchisaca was absent. The minutes of the June 13, 2022 meeting were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, and passed. The minutes of the Executive Session (June 13, 2022) were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, and passed. Andrew Matteo will be added to the Library Board roster as Superintendent of Schools in January.

Correspondence: A note was received from Michael Regan, complimenting the Ramsey Library for its “re-invented vision.”

Library Board Members Comments: None

Treasurer’s Report: Mr. Bogaenko had forwarded the financial reports for June, July, and August which were reviewed. Director Latham will bring adjustments to the budget to an upcoming meeting. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, approval to pay the June, July, and August bills was unanimously passed. There was a question about staff reimbursements for purchases. Everyone is fully compensated in a timely fashion. A procurement (p-card) card is being looked into. The treasurer’s report was received and filed for audit.

Director’s Report: There were 103 high quality events during the summer with 2,271 people in attendance. The children’s room was transformed and decorated to be in line with “Oceans of Possibilities.” The prize baskets were very popular, resulting in 1,474 raffle entries; for every five items checked out of the Ramsey library, adult patrons received a raffle ticket for one of the baskets. In 2022, there were 180 participants who read 1,167 books, similar to the 2021 numbers but far removed from 2017 numbers, when there were 596 participants who read 6,444 books.

The August summer concert had about 125 attendees, but the other two concerts had smaller attendance numbers due to weather issues, extreme heat and predicted rain, as well as logistics. Director Latham delineated many of the stumbling blocks which impacted the success of the concerts. As a result, he and the staff will be determining whether it is feasible to continue the summer concerts as they currently exist.

Director Latham provided detailed information about a first amendment audit. It is a loosely organized social media campaign to “audit” government spaces and agencies, including public libraries, for alleged First Amendment violations. He has reviewed available information and will also be attending a webinar on first amendment audits through the joint insurance fund’s training sessions. During the August training day, he shared information with the staff about how to handle a first amendment audit situation should it arise. It may be necessary to update the library’s Code of Conduct, which prohibits the harassment of staff or patrons or interferes with the staff’s ability to perform their work functions.

The staff training day went well and included a presentation by the Alpine Learning Group about working with individuals with autism. Additional covered topics also included book challenges, first amendment audits, staff procedures, and new services.

The American Library Association’s National Banned Books Week is September 18th to 24th. The library’s display contains books that have been banned in the past as well as those which are currently being challenged.

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Much of the information presented in the library's display comes from the ALA and is contained in the library's collection development policy.

The fall events have been announced and include the Harvest Festival, Boo Bash Halloween celebration and haunted house, Sunday concerts, Fall Book Buzz, and monthly adult trivia nights. Based on feedback from the borough's seniors, more events will be offered during the day, including a genealogy series.

Some donated board games and puzzles, not applicable for loaning as part of the Library of Things, are now available for patrons to use while inside the library.

The weeding of the adult nonfiction collection is complete. Moving to the adult DVD collection, about one thousand items were removed. The library staff is now working to significantly downsize the music and audiobook collections as well. One result of the weeding is to free up space on the shelves, thereby improving patrons' ability to browse the collection.

Regarding the Strategic Plan, all community interviews and community surveys have been completed. Director Latham has begun work on the research portion of the planning process, including reviewing Ramsey demographics, analyzing the library's budgets/collections/staffing/statistics, and reviewing contemporary library trends. When those elements are completed, all of the data will be reviewed with the library's department heads and the library board executive committee and work will be done, drafting conclusions from the data and creating organizational goals and methods for measuring success. A draft of that report will be brought to the full library board for review, discussion, and any potential changes. A finalized plan will then be completed and adopted to use as a guide. Mrs. Martin proposed the establishment of various subcommittees, the Strategic Plan subcommittee being one. Mr. Bogaenko and Mrs. Knauss volunteered for that subcommittee.

Mr. Hofmann has working on new library promotions and ways to engage with the community. He has also prepared a big campaign for September's Library Card Sign Up Month. Additionally, he is testing a new NJ.com promotion service that lists events on several dozen online calendars and websites, creating monthly bookmarks and events calendar trifolds, creating a new digital display at the circulation desk that rotates through highlight events, all of which include a QR code that patrons can use to immediately register for that event, testing utilization of Spotify, and using Eventbrite and MeetUp to promote events.

Director Latham delineated all of the problems which occurred with the HVAC system over the summer. At first a Low Water error led to the shutdown of the boiler which led to a slow, but steady leak from pipes in the boiler room. It was eventually determined that the boiler needed some replacement parts, specifically a low water cutoff board and a low water cutoff probe. While waiting for those parts, it was also determined that the circulator pump was faulty and needed to be rebuilt and reinstalled. Since the boiler parts were very difficult to obtain from the supplier, the situation continued throughout much of the summer before the boiler was repaired and the pump was rebuilt and replaced. The total cost for both repairs will come to nearly \$7,000. Mr. Bogaenko and Mayor Dillon will be the HVAC subcommittee members.

Director Latham is working with Anthony Reganato to get the security system up and running. Additionally, Mr. Reganato can assist with an upgrade to the A/V equipment in the Community Room.

Regarding the awning, Director Latham has been talking with Tom Lanning of DPW and Borough Engineer D'Agostaro as well as a landscape architect. At this point, there probably is not sufficient time before winter

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to create a permanent solution. Instead, a temporary solution, perhaps a gutter system to route water away from the walkway so that ice does not form, is being looked into.

There were three dead trees on the library grounds which were removed, and an additional eleven trees were marked for removal.

The primary copier/printer for the staff is a model that is no longer being produced and parts are becoming hard to find which may put the library in a position where the copier breaks and cannot be repaired. Director Latham summarized the proposal which Ms. Patel was able to negotiate. The proposed new copier/printer comes in at a total cost of \$4,175, which includes removal of the old copier. The purchase and price come through one of NJ's purchasing cooperatives (OMNIA), so there is no need for additional quotes. Additionally, the per page cost significantly reduces the library's copy and print costs. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, the purchase of a new copier utilizing capital funds was unanimously approved.

Director Latham summarized updates to the HVAC, interior design, and landscape design capital projects. He has been working with the Goldstein Partnership to determine how best to replace the HVAC within the existing building structure. He shared the information from both Goldstein and Omdex Incorporated Consulting Engineers and recommended moving forward with their proposal. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, the proposal for professional services from the Goldstein Partnership was unanimously approved.

When Director Latham attended the NJLA annual conference, there was a workshop session on library interior design. A design firm, Soyka Smith Design Studios, specializes in schools, libraries, and government buildings. Director Latham will arrange an opportunity for them to make a presentation to the board. They are a state contractor which means there would be no need for bidding and quotes. Mrs. FitzPatrick, Mrs. McCaskey, and Mrs. Thorp will serve on the interior design subcommittee.

Director Latham met with Len DiTomaso, a Ramsey resident, who is a landscape architect. At no charge to the library, Mr. DiTomaso created a set of drawings and plans based upon discussions with Director Latham and Mrs. Martin. He would be available to discuss those plans which would be modified based upon what the board wants included in the project. Elements which have previously been discussed include repairing the existing structures such as the gazebo and the planters, increasing the amount of available outdoor storage space, creating an outdoor program space, improving the outdoor seating, and adding small amenities such as outdoor changing station. Ralph Venturini will be asked to take a look at the gazebo which was a 2004 Eagle Scout project. Mrs. Ohnegian and Mrs. Rennie are the members of the landscape design subcommittee.

At 7:55 p.m., the meeting moved into executive session on motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, and passed.

Consent Resolution: None

Public Comment: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: Due to the rescheduling of the October meeting from the second Monday to the third Monday, the meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

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At 9:04 p.m., the meeting was closed on motion by Mrs. McCaskey, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and passed.

