



THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
 5 Washington Street • P.O. Box 630 • Newark, NJ 07101-0630
 www.npl.org

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 5:00pm via Zoom

Board members: Timothy Crist, Nicole Johnson, Anasa Maat, Domingo Morel, Antoinette Richardson, Miguel Rodriguez, Rosemary Steinbaum, Lauren Wells
Staff Present: Joslyn Bowling Dixon

- I. Call to Order - L. Wells called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.
- II. Roll Call – L. Wells called the roll. Timothy Crist, Nicole Johnson, Anasa Maat, Domingo Morel, Antoinette Richardson, Miguel Rodriguez are all present
- III. Approval of Public Session Minutes from July 22, 2020 – L. Wells solicited comments and corrections to the minutes, on the motion of T. Crist seconded by N. Johnson, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Approval of minutes from August 19th Special Meeting on construction of Philip Roth Reading Room (L. Wells) – Minutes were approved on the motion of R. Steinbaum and seconded by D. Morel

- IV. President’s Report (L. Wells) – L. Wells welcomes Director Dixon to her first official Board of Trustees meeting on her 53rd day of being Director. The Newark Public Library has officially opened and will also be partnering with the City of Newark and will have a “Learning Pod” which will allow approximately 10 students to have a safe space to do school work. There will be two Assistant Teachers to aid the students.
- V. Treasurer’s Report (T. Crist)

BILL SHEET #1302: the following invoices for BOOKS, BINDING, INCIDENTALS AND PAYROLL, in the amount of \$2,037,642.44 were certified as correct by the Library Director and were presented to the Board of Trustees for their examination and approval:

Gross Payroll Activity	
July 10 th , 2020	\$ 248,783.48
July 24 th , 2020	\$ 234,854.62
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 1,480,233. 45
Grant Account	\$ 73,770.89
Endowment Account	\$
Total Disbursement for July 2020	\$ 2,037,642.44

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BILL SHEET #1303: the following invoices for BOOKS, BINDING, INCIDENTALS AND PAYROLL, in the amount of \$ 844,586.56, were certified as correct by the Library Director and were presented to the Board of Trustees for their examination and approval:

Gross Payroll Activity	
August 7 th , 2020	\$ 213,545.16
August 21 st , 2020	\$ 223,447.24
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 272,571.26
Grant Account	\$ 135,022.90
Endowment Account	\$ 00
Total Disbursement for August 2020	\$ 844,586.56

T. Crist made the motion for approval of bill sheet #1302 for July 2020 and Bill sheet #1303 for August 2020, L. Wells called vote to approve bill sheet #1302 and Bill sheet #1303, seconded by R. Steinbaum and approved unanimously by the board.

VI. Development Committee Report (R. Steinbaum)

R. Steinbaum mentions the upcoming Philip Roth Lecture scheduled to take place via Zoom on September 30th, 2020. The lecturer will be Tracy K. Smith, who served as the 22nd Poet Laureate of the United States from 2017 to 2019. Update was provided on the Virtual Gala which will take place on December 3rd. The Gala is a significant fundraising event and because of the current environment will take place virtually. Various fundraising opportunities were discussed and the goal is to get support needed for the Newark Public Library. R. Steinbaum acknowledges K. Giardi and the Development Staff on their hard work to get everything in place for a successful virtual gala.

VII. Facilities Committee Report (T. Crist)

That committee consisting of A. Richardson, L. Wells, T. Crist, J. Dixon, and G. Williams met on September 9th. Several items, including reopening was discussed, and will be covered further in the Director's report. The work on the Philip Roth room is progressing as planned and permits were issued to ensure the continuation of the work even though there was a bit of a delay in getting the permits initially. The delay was due to Covid-19 causing closures and slow response times from City Hall. There was an automobile crash at the Springfield branch, which did not damage the building, but caused some damage to the fence around the property. The insurance of the responsible party will pay for repairs. There will be follow up done on the reported sale of 34 Commerce Street. There was also a general discussion about the status of

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the Roseville branch that has been closed for at least 10 years and what should be done with that location. John Rice of Legacy engineers to review the ventilation and the air filtering in the library and various recommendations were provided. The results of the State Construction Bond submission will be announced in October 2020.

VIII. Finance Committee (D. Morel)

NPL started 2020 with a budget deficit, with the assistance of Federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP) able to reduce that deficit somewhat. There is still work to be done to bring down that deficit. The first step is to get a better understanding of the source of the deficit. D. Morel also address the following items: 2017 and 2018 audits, P-Card/Business Credit Card discussions are ongoing and bank signatures were updated. The budget deficit is an ongoing process which will require much transparency as NPL attempts to resolve the deficit. With this in mind NPL will go to a monthly Finance meeting instead of bi-monthly. Bank signatories were updated and put in place.

R. Jefferson provided a two-year summary on the source of this shortfall. R. Jefferson noted that towards the end of 2018 there were anomalies with respect to the expenses, but it isn't unusual to have a slight deficit waiting for funds from the city which usually takes about 90 days. Also there was an increase in spending primarily from the director's office, and when the expenses reached the Finance Department they were already approved and payment needed to be made to various vendors. The goal was to make the library's presence known in the City with increased programming which comes with a cost. For example, the Friday Night Dance parties though they started off small it grew to the point that the cost reached approximately \$20,000 a week with an audience of about 2000 people. The feeling was that there was no way to push back without some sort of repercussion on the part of the person who questioned the spending. As discussed at the end of 2019, the budget included an increase of \$600,000 from the city in the budget which was spent ahead of actually getting the additional funding.

J. Dixon discussed the idea of creating budgets for each department and the idea is that this may be put in place in January 2021. There also needs to be a discussion with finance prior to purchasing items and there needs to be more accountability on the items purchased. There needs to be more discussion and transparency which will prevent a recurrence of the current situation.

IX. Philip Roth Committee

No report at this time, meeting will take place on September 29th.

X. Director's Report (J. Dixon)

J. Dixon highlighted the National Library Engagement Recognition to highlight some staff who have been recognized and how NPL is making our footprint in the professional world. Thyson Haley

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was featured on the cover of *New Jersey Monthly*. He was recognized because of the sign language class that he does online which attracted a lot of views. Updates on the statistics were presented and the rise in online programming was highlighted as well. The library's curbside service numbers were low, but this was due to limited hours. Discussions with the reopening committee resulted in being able to open at a 25% capacity. The library opens for an hour and closes for half an hour four times a day for cleaning. The library is invested in keeping staff and patrons safe. NPL is following New Jersey governor's order for reopening, keeping the number of people below 25%, and can only have 48 at main and the branches maybe 10 at any hour. The learning pod for the kids also started and we are excited that we are able to do that. J. Dixon also provided update on her meetings with the community's cultural partners to hopefully make it more robust.

XI. New Business

There are also several policies that NPL would like to add the employee's handbook; Mask wearing, Telework Policy, and Covid-19 Quarantine. J. Dixon recapped each policy and presented the highlights to the Board for their approval. T. Crist points out that for future reference that resolutions should be received prior to meetings in order to bring the policy forth. A combined resolution was adopted:

So, whereas the New York Public Library is committed to the health and wellbeing of its employees and patrons, The Newark Public Library Board of Trustees resolves to approve the Mask Wearing Policy, the Telework Policy and the Covid-19 Quarantine policy.

L. Wells made motion to approve, moved by D. Morel and seconded by M. Rodriguez, and unanimously approved.

Nominating Committee for 2021 Officers was formed, and will consist of Antoinette Richardson, Domingo Morel and Nicole Johnson.

XII Public Comments

Comments made by J. Rodriguez

XIII Resolution to Move into Executive Session

Motion made by M. Rodriguez and seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved that the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees will meet in Executive Session to consider personnel and other sensitive matters in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act which exempts such matters from discussion at public meetings, matters discussed in Executive Session will be entered into public record. Unanimously approved.

XII. Passage of Resolutions discussed during Executive Session

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On a motion by T. Crist, seconded by D. Morel, the Board ratified the following appointments and personnel actions recommended by the Director:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Base Salary</u>	<u>Date</u>
Card, Maisy	Librarian 2 (temp)	Resignation (Teen Room)	\$57,974	8/15/20
Mbagwu, Ugochi	Monitor	Resignation (Springfield)	\$15/hr.	9/9/20
Lazzari, Susan	Librarian 2	Resignation (Van Buren)	\$60,252	9/11/20
Tsekenis, Gus	Librarian 1	Resignation (Reference)	\$56,741	9/11/20
Fletcher, Keegan	Library Associate	New Hire (Springfield)	\$41,781	9/28/20
Saurs, Laura	Librarian 4	Promotion / Salary Increase (Catalog)	\$76,812	9/28/20
Burse, James	Supervising Library Assistant	Retirement (Circulation)	\$47,665	10/1/20

XIII. Adjournment

- a. Next Meeting scheduled for November 18, 2020

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