

Agenda  
10/4/18

**Watchung Library Advisory Board Minutes  
Wednesday, July 11, 2018**

Mission Statement

The mission of the Watchung Library Advisory Board is to advise, support and promote the interests of the Watchung Borough Public Library.

A meeting of the Library Advisory Board was held this day in the Bicentennial Room of the Watchung Library, 12 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069.

Call to Order

President Amy Fiorilla opened the meeting and called the meeting to order at 3:34 PM.

**In Attendance**

- Amy Fiorilla, President
- Margaret (Peggy) Ellis, Vice President
- Eileen Dicken, Treasurer
- Maureen Greenbaum, Member
- Tamara Benc, Member
- Annette von Brandis, Secretary
- Stephen K. Pote, Mayor
- Hannah Kerwin, Branch Manager, Watchung Library
- Virginia Hartmann

**Absent**

- Michael Vignola, Principal Bayberry School
- Stephen Black, Council Liaison

Introduction

This is a meeting of the Library Advisory Board of the Borough of Watchung. This and all other meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Review of Minutes of May 2, 2018 Meeting

The minutes of the May 2 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Eileen Dicken informed the Board of the following:

Beginning Balance	\$10,350.37	
April Debits	\$50.00	Aqua Services for monthly maintenance
New Balance	\$10,300.37	

May	Deposits	\$115.82	finer
		\$4.62	fish donations
	New Balance	\$10,419.81	
June	Deposits	\$379.70	finer
		\$5.07	fish donations
	Debits	\$29.12	Reimbursement of supplies for the maintenance of the fish— now done by Boy Scout volunteer Grant Miller
	June Balance	\$10,775.46	

The Treasurer's report was followed by a discussion about the process of getting reimbursed for the fish supplies—which is complicated and the process takes time. After that the volunteer would be paid by Borough CFO Bill Hance. We feel that it would be nice to simplify this for volunteers, since the fish require more or less the same supplies every month. Perhaps there could be prefilled forms?

Amy Fiorilla brought up that the Council minutes from May 3 have changed—the question came up if one can change minutes without keeping the original. Hannah Kerwin stated that minutes should stay the same and any revision should be noted.

The redacted minutes said: *Mr. Cruz said the Library Board was exceeding its authority, and the amount collected and expenditures must now be coordinated with CFO Bill Hance.*

Eileen Dicken, our Treasurer, stated that we take in more than we spend and that our spending is mainly to maintain the fish.

It was decided to send a note that we do not feel comfortable with the way the minutes were written, we will ask to strike the first part of the sentence so that it reads:

*Mr. Cruz said the amount collected and expenditures must now be coordinated with CFO Bill Hance.*

Hannah Kerwin reported that a little girl was "caught" reading to the fish, SCLS Marketing posted this on their Facebook.

Amy Fiorilla shared a draft for a letter to Borough Council to encourage a referendum on the November ballot so all voters could decide whether or not Watchung should keep a library. Discussion amongst the members of the board indicated that all were committed to the idea of a fair and representative referendum. If Watchung acts fast we can still apply for the grant to have 50% or renovations paid for by the state grant. The majority of Watchung voters voted for this grant in 2017. Money from this grant are likely to be awarded to Warren and neighboring towns for their improvement projects. WLAB voted to send this letter with a few revisions. Dissolving the services of a library just by Council without public discussion and a public referendum flies in the face of state law. The alternative that was suggested by Council is to convert the fireman's exempt hall into only a public meeting space, which would not be eligible for those state grants, and all expenses would be 100% paid by the borough. In a library, all staff, programming, support, materials and technical equipment, computers and phone are provided by the Somerset County Library System--the value of which is estimated by Watchung Library Branch Manager Hannah Kerwin to be in excess of \$1 million each year. The letter was edited with the input of the Board and Margaret Ellis moved to send the letter, Eileen Dicken seconded. In summary Virginia Hartmann stated that it is actually more cost effective to build the library, which will include meeting spaces and state of the art technology provided by SCLS because right now Watchung could apply for the state grant and get 50% of construction monies that

way. This will also support strong resale value of all of our homes.

Virginia Hartmann gave a report on the efforts of some Watchung citizens to organize a nonpartisan debate among the candidates for Mayor and Council. Possible venues are one of the auditoriums at the high school or the courtroom. Date will probably be a Thursday in October.

#### Library Manager's Report

Hannah Kerwin reported that the Youth Services Librarian Sharon Orlando has brought in a wheel and prizes for Spin-the-Wheel Wednesdays, a promotion to attract children and teens to the library as part of the summer reading program. The wheel and prizes have been paid for by the Friends of the Library.

Amy Fiorilla handed out a sheet listing programs, both recurring and one-time programs, scheduled for this summer at the library. She asked Hannah if fewer programs are scheduled for this summer than for previous summers. Hannah replied that because this is her third summer as manager of Watchung Library and she was out on medical leave for both of the previous two summers, she does not know. She did share that Brian Auger, Director of SCLS, has told the branches that he wants them to schedule fewer paid programs and do more programs that are presented by staff members.

Amy Fiorilla brought up a concern about emergency exits from the Seniors' Room. The door that faces north does not open. Previously, it had a "NOT AN EXIT" sign on it, but that sign is gone. Hannah will see that the sign gets replaced. There are two functional exits, both on the western side of the building.

Margaret Ellis questioned whether WLAB meetings have been properly publicized, complying with the Open Public Meetings Act, considering there is a legal complaint alleging that Borough Council meetings have not been properly publicized. We were assured that we are in compliance; notice of WLAB meetings appear on the Watchung.gov website well in advance of meetings, and notice is provided to the borough clerk for proper publication of notice.

The next meeting of the Watchung Library Advisory Board is scheduled for 3:30 pm Wednesday, September 12th.

#### Adjournment

On motion and unanimous agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Annette von Brandis  
Margaret Ellis