

Agenda  
11/8/18

**Watchung Library Advisory Board Minutes  
Wednesday, September 12, 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 3:40 PM.

In Attendance

- Amy Fiorilla, President
- Margaret (Peggy) Ellis, Vice President
- Eileen Dicken, Treasurer
- Maureen Greenbaum, Member
- Tamara Benc, Member
- Annette von Brandis, Secretary
- Hannah Kerwin, Branch Manager, Watchung Library
- Amy Behr-Shields, youth services department supervisor SCLS

Absent

Stephen Black, Council Liaison

Visitors

Phyllis Juette, Nina Jeach, Virginia Hartmann, Daryl Knegten, Joan Di Fluri, Hans Juette, Lynda Goldschein, Tom Franklin, Allison Baitel, Rhonda Sanderson

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.

Amy Behr-Shields, youth services department supervisor for SCLSNJ's Warren and Watchung library branches introduced herself. She will be six hours per week in Watchung, and primarily working in Warren Youth Services.

On October 18 the summer reading awards will be presented at the Borough Council meeting. Mrs. Behr-Shields will also attend the "Back to School" nights and plans to coordinate her work with teachers as part of her outreach program to the school system. She will try to get announcements of the library programs to be included in the schools' newsletters.

Review of Minutes of July 11, 2018 Meeting

The minutes of the July 11 meeting were approved.

Q: M+L, TEA

### Treasurer's Report

Eileen Dicken informed the Board of the following:

Beginning Balance	\$10,775.46	
July Deposits	\$189.38	finer
	\$6.06	fish donations
New Balance	\$10,970.90	
August Deposits	\$258.88	finer
	\$6.37	fish donations
New Balance	\$11,236.15	
Sept Deposits	\$269.92	finer
	\$4.15	fish donations
New Balance	\$11,510.22	

The Treasurer's report was followed by a discussion about the fish. Two fish died and the state of the tank is sad, it is not being cleaned often enough. Perhaps it is a burden for volunteers to clean the fish regularly without a backup volunteer. We discussed keeping regular records of the feeding and cleaning of the fish tank, in order to address this problem.

The board has agreed to supply funds for a modest holiday party for library volunteers, in the bicentennial room, at a cost of \$200-\$225, preferably using a business located in Watchung.

Bill Hance has not replied to Eileen Dicken's inquiries about the procedure for obtaining funds for this cost. Tom Atkins is out on medical leave. So at present the process is uncertain. This will be decided by our next meeting of November 7.

Steve Black had said he would come to today's meeting and explain the Council's actions on pending library closure. Before the start of the meeting Mr. Black called Margaret (Peggy) Ellis to let her know that he would not be able to attend. He asked Ms. Ellis to relay these points:

- Painting the current building—Bill Hance will find the money to have the building painted. He mentioned locating some \$11,000.00 in an account somewhere. We speculated if this might be the funds returned to the borough as a rebate from the SCLS in return for hosting a library building (typically \$6,800 per year), but we have no answer to that. Mr. Black expressed that he wants to get the building painted before winter. It was also noted that the board balance is somewhere in the \$11,000 range, but no one has discussed the board paying for painting the building, and that money is administered by the board and only the board; also it was noted the painting and maintenance is the responsibility of the town, not the Library Advisory Board.
- Bids for painting will go to Steve Black and Michelle DeRocco—Hans Juette mentioned that anything above \$2000.00 will have to be approved by Council.
- Building and grounds funds will be used for the community center.
- The Borough wants to look into applying for the state grant of matching funds.
- The plans for a Community Center are moving forward, they are favoring a new building.

Virginia Hartmann wants to make sure that we expressed that we do not want a Community Center at the sacrifice of a library.

These questions surfaced during our discussion:  
Where is the money for the Community Center coming from?

How is that saving tax dollars?

Will the building be sitting empty, because access will be hard. Who will pay for staffing?

What is all that going to cost.

Amy Fiorilla referred to an article quoting a council statement that many residents of Watchung are already visiting and using the Warren library. The statistics were examined. They covered a time period when Watchung Library was closed for extended periods of time for various reasons: a March storm that left the parking lot inaccessible; an extended power outage. During these periods of closure patrons not only visited Warren but also had their collections holds sent there for later pickup, unsure of when to anticipate Watchung could reopen. The more that Watchung is unavailable, the more that branch use is impacted in a negative way, and the less our residents are served.

Also a few people in attendance who are well versed in statistics were baffled by the data, which they said was manipulated to create a certain outcome. The statistics of the visitor count of Watchung residents in the Warren library vs Watchung branch did not reflect the actual number of visits, it just tracked unique cardholders—not how many times they visited, nor how many materials they borrowed or programs attended. This statistic is questionable and spreading misinformation. The Watchung Library serves more than 3000 visitors per month and in excess of 50,000 items circulated per year. The fact that Watchung residents make use of the both libraries speak to the benefit of the shared services that are the Somerset County Library System.

#### Library Manager's Report

Hannah Kerwin suggested ripping out the carpet in the Bicentennial Room and placing an area rug on the floor instead of the dirty carpet. There were concerns about the state of the wood floor underneath the carpet, we decided to discuss this further in November.

The next meeting of the Watchung Library Advisory Board will be at 3:30 pm Wednesday, November 7th.

#### Adjournment

On motion and unanimous agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Annette von Brandis