

**Watchung Library Advisory Board Minutes  
Wednesday, November 7, 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  
Tamara Benc, Member  
Stephen Black, Council Liaison  
Eileen Dicken, Treasurer  
Margaret (Peggy) Ellis, Vice President  
Maureen Greenbaum, Member  
Patricia Kean, Valley View Middle School Librarian  
Stephen K. Pote, Mayor  
Hannah Kerwin, Branch Manager, Watchung Library  
Daryl Eisenberg Knegten  
Cori Haveson  
Virginia Hartmann

Absent

Annette von Brandis, Secretary

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.

Regular Business

The minutes of the September 12th meeting were approved.

Council Liaison's Report

Council Liaison Steve Black reported that the Watchung Borough Council "wants to go through with" its plan to move the "library in full" to a new building which will stand on the current site of the Watchung Exempt Firemen's Hall. He said the Councilman Dave Mobus has in mind a 4,000-square-foot library, while he (Black) wants more "spaciousness."

Black also reported that an anonymous donor has donated \$500,000 for a "technology center."

According to Black, Borough Council wants to apply for matching funds under the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act of 2017.

Mayor Steve Pote said that it is not clear which library services will be moved to the new location. He said that what Black hopes for is not what the rest of the Council wants. Pote said we should be building a "super library," a "library of the future."

Maureen Greenbaum said that a one-page "Letter of Intent" from municipalities intending to apply for matching funds for library construction is due in January. Hannah Kerwin shared that SCLS's Director of Public Services Chris Korenowsky is circulating information about grant applications and is involved with helping the municipalities that are planning to apply. She affirmed that only the Borough can apply for matching funds; no other entity can apply. Black said he will contact Korenowsky.

Virginia Hartmann asked what a "technology center" entails. Greenbaum said that it would include things like a 3-D printer, a maker space, software, and so on, and that it would occupy a lot of space. Black said that the technology center would be in addition to the 4,000 square feet discussed for a library.

Virginia Hartmann said that when we apply for matching funds from the state, we should "aim high."

Amy Fiorilla recommended getting in touch with Nina Leach for fundraising for a new library building.

Steve Pote asked what the requirements are that we are shooting for in a new library. Pote said the WLAB

should talk about what is needed in a library/community center. Black requested that a list be put together.

Margaret Ellis observed that most of what the Council has proposed for a community center are things that are commonly parts of modern libraries, and that, since state matching funds will be available for library construction but not for construction of community centers, everything that can be considered part of a library should be moved into the library proper of our planned library/community center. Amy Fiorilla added that the children's reading center, proposed for the community center, belongs in the library. Fiorilla points out that making the children's reading center part of the library would mean that staffing for the reading room would be provided by SCLS; if it were part of the community center, SCLS would not provide staffing. Kerwin observed that everything proposed for the community center can be part of a library.

Fiorilla pointed out that that a meeting room with an external locking door can be used any time - for a community event as a warming station, and so on. She said observed that FEMA's requirements for a shelter are very stringent and detailed and might be prohibitive, but that requirements for a warming station would be more easily achieved.

Kerwin added that a kitchen can be part of a library, and that an Office of Emergency Management is the only thing proposed for the community center that could not feasibly be considered part of the library.

Fiorilla and Benc pointed out that the Council does not actually have an agreement with the Exempt Firemen yet.

Black said that he believes that the Exempt Firemen group "will work with us." He would like to see an agreement settled in December. Fiorilla asked if the Exempt Firemen group could use the planned meeting room for their meetings, with first priority on the room whenever they have a scheduled meeting. The entire building under the umbrella of 'library' means that it is staffed by SCLS staff, and could be put to more optimal usage for the community, with no isolated spaces for limited use.

Pote and Black remarked that the Council seems to be reinterpreting the April 19<sup>th</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup> resolutions to apply only to the current library building after library services are moved to a new building. Most of the WLAB found this implausible. Ellis asked if the Council can reverse the April 19<sup>th</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup> resolutions. Pote and Black want to "move forward."

Fiorilla said that she will start compiling a list of features for a new library.

Trisha Kean said that the maker spaces at Bayberry and Valley View Schools are about the size of a classroom. She added that a Lego wall and a green screen could be part of such a room and that they don't take up much space.

Black said that at this point, "anything is on the table" for the future of the current library building. He reported that he had obtained a couple of bids for painting the exterior of the building and that Bob Burns (head of the Department of Public Works) will get additional quotes.

Fiorilla pointed out that the "rebate money" (funds returned to the Borough to offset the costs of providing a library) have gone into the Borough's general funds and have not in the past been earmarked for library expenditure. It was suggested that these funds ought to be available for maintaining the building. Black said he told CFO Hance to find the rebate money so that it can be used to paint the exterior of the current library building. It was reiterated that WLAB funds are not to be tapped for use without the express vote and approval of the Watchung Library Advisory Board; it is the Board that is empowered with the expenditure of those funds.

Pote had some observations related to the town's school performance:

1. If we need more group study space in town, we should make that a requirement for the new library building.
2. School performance is connected to children with special needs, students for whom English is a second language, as well as our affordable housing obligation. We can create excellence in our schools by assisting students and parents after 3 o'clock at our library.

Fiorilla suggested that the Board consider buying more serviceable chairs for the Bicentennial Room, as what is there now are a random assortment of metal folding chairs that are difficult to open or close. The chairs would be a portable asset that could move into the new library building. Benc moved that we purchase 24 new chairs for the space, and approve expenditure of approximately \$1000 for the new chairs. Dicken seconded. Fiorilla and Dicken will research the chairs appropriate for the purpose, in consultation with Hannah Kerwin and with Bill Hance for procuring the purchase.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Eileen Dicken reported as follows:

Sept	Ending Balance	\$11,510.22	
Oct	Deposits	\$243.20	Fine money
		4.88	Fish Donations
	New Total	\$11,758.30	

Dicken reported that Kerwin has requested, and the board has approved, \$225 for a holiday party for staff and volunteers. With our new procedures that require all of our funds to go through the Borough, Dicken is not sure how she will get the money to Kerwin. She said that Chief Financial Office for the Borough, Bill Hance, told her to go through our liaison Steve Black. Black said he will talk to Hance.

Friends' Report

Fiorilla reported that the Friends of the Library have purchased the following for the children's area of the library, in order to appeal to our youngest patrons:

- a puppet theater/produce market
- a play kitchen with toy food and utensils
- a set of oversized cardboard play blocks

Other business

Dicken reported that it is difficult for the lone volunteer caring for the fish to keep up with the maintenance, and suggested it needs professional care. Fiorilla moved that we authorize Dicken to research and engage a company to maintain the fish tank and approve up to \$100 per month for this service. Ellis seconded.

Fiorilla expressed appreciation to Kean for attending and said she hoped she will be able to join us in the future.

Adjournment

On motion and unanimous agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret Ellis