

## **Watchung Library Advisory Committee Minutes, July 20, 2022 – FINAL**

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Watchung Library Advisory Board (WLAB) is to advise, support, and promote the interests of the Watchung Borough Free Public Library.

The meeting of the WLAB was held through an audio and video call. Please go to the Watchung Borough web site to view the video. The meeting was also held in person in the Bicentennial Room of the Watchung Library.

Please be advised that, pursuant to a Borough policy, all committee meetings will be recorded; at 5:59 PM all participants were alerted that recording had begun.

President Tamara Benc posted the agenda (which had been emailed in advance to all members), then opened and called the meeting to order at 5:59 PM. The WLAB meetings usually start at 5:30 PM but the meeting was delayed due to technical difficulties connecting to the internet so that the meeting could also be viewed via Zoom.

### **Attendance:**

Tamara Benc, President – present  
Margaret Ellis, Vice President – present  
Stella Couchells, Treasurer – present  
Virginia Hartmann, Secretary – present  
Bradford Leigh, WLAB member – absent  
Gail Bennett-Tafaro, WLAB member -- present  
Wendy Robinson, Borough Council Member, Library Liaison – present  
George Alexis, School Superintendent – absent  
Hannah Kerwin, Watchung Library Branch Manager – present  
Patricia Keane, Valley View Librarian – absent  
Keith Balla, Mayor, Watchung Borough – absent

Minutes of the May 18, 2022 meeting were e-mailed to members in advance of the meeting for review. Dr. Couchells moved that the minutes be approved. Ms. Ellis seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dr. Couchells gave the following treasurer's report:

"Per our last meeting, I emailed Bill Hance when the New Legacy Books box was installed, to confirm that its proceeds would be deposited in our WLAB account. Mr. Hance did confirm this, stating that all proceeds would be deposited in our account with a monthly minimum of \$40.00.

My last report on May 18, 2022, showed an overall balance of \$25,641.33 in the WLAB's Escrow account. The Aquarium account comprised \$4,407.01 of that total balance with \$21,234.32 in general funds.

The only payments that have been withdrawn since that last meeting have been made to REEFCO for the library's aquarium maintenance. One payment of \$183.92 was made to REEFCO on May 26, 2022, for their final service visit to replenish our aquarium with the 8 new glofish that now inhabit it. Another \$80.00 payment was made on July 8th for their June service visit.

I had to straighten out some billing and payment issues with Brian Dunleavy in the months following the additional maintenance required by the death of the original goldfish. I took that opportunity to thank him for REEFCO's prompt and thorough attention to our library's aquarium in May.

The escrow account now totals \$25, 377.41. \$4,143.09 of that total is in the Aquarium Fund and \$21, 234.32 resides in general funds.

Although the Polywood chairs we voted to purchase in our last meeting were ordered and delivered, that invoice, totaling \$1,534.00 has not yet been withdrawn from our account. It should appear in the next finance report.

I just want to reiterate as the WLAB goes forward making additional expenditures, some of which we will discuss today, that as treasurer I am the only member designated by our bylaws to place any orders with Mr. Hance. In my absence, Tammy Benc, our president is authorized to place orders and if she is unable to do so, Peggy Ellis, our VP, is the next in line. I clarified this with Bill Hance in an email last month. All withdrawals from our account have to be documented in this way, so please put any order requests in an email to me."

#### **Friends of the Watchung Library Report:**

The New Legacy Books box has been installed. The Friends of the Watchung Library are still accepting books in good condition for sale in their book store in the Bicentennial Room.

#### **Watchung Library Branch Manager Report:**

Ms. Kerwin reports that the library now has a cleaner. She comes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings for three hours each time. Everyone is very pleased with her work.

Volunteers removed a lot of junk from the library basement. The basement ceiling, which had been opened up to repair a plumbing problem, has been repaired.

Two Girl Scouts, working on their Silver Award, are planning to plant a hummingbird garden in the front of the library.

Elaine Stringer, a beloved long-time circulation supervisor, has retired. She will still lead book discussions as a volunteer. Elaine's position will not be replaced. A part time library technician may be hired.

#### **Borough Council Liaison Report:**

Ms. Robinson reports that there will be no second Legacy Book drop in Watchung Square Mall. The site plan would have to be amended, and a lawyer for the Board of Adjustments would have to be retained. This was deemed to be too much trouble and expense.

#### **Ad Hoc Committee Report:**

Ms. Bennett-Tafaro reports that Scheme C of the past library plans are being considered for a renovation of the current library. The committee also spoke of putting an elevator inside the current library instead of abutting the outside of the library. It has been determined that no lead paint is in the library. Ms. Bennett-Tafaro says that PSE&G may help pay for our HVAC improvements. She will check further into this possibility. The next Ad Hoc Committee meeting will be on July 28.

#### **New Business:**

President Benc informed the WLAB that suggested submissions to the Watchung Borough newsletter are due to our president by August 15.

The WLAB decided on the final details of the new sign we are purchasing for the rear of the library. The only words on the sign will be: Watchung Library. It will measure 3' X 10' with a scrolled edge in royal blue. It will cost approximately \$3, 675.00. Ms. Ellis moved to approve these decisions, Ms. Bennett-Tafaro seconded, and the sign project was passed.

Ms. Hartmann and Dr. Couchells will obtain an official quote from the Quarry Tex sign company in time for the August 18 Borough Council meeting. Then, the Council can approve the expenditure of WLAB funds and have a check for the down payment ready to give to the sign makers the next day. With a down payment, work can begin immediately on making the sign. Installation will be provided by the Borough of Watchung.

Other new business included the WLAB's desire to improve the driveway from the foot bridge to the barn and replace the crumbling patio. Ms. Ellis moved to send a letter with these wishes to the mayor, the Borough Council and Mr. Damato. Ms. Bennett-Tafaro seconded the motion. The motion was passed. It was further decided to read the letter to the Council at the next Council meeting.

Dr. Couchells suggested that the WLAB should buy a smart TV for the library. She moved that a 50" smart TV be purchased and Ms. Bennett-Tafaro seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The Borough of Watchung is going to have scarecrows displayed in the village green this autumn. The scarecrow committee asked that the Watchung Library sponsor a scarecrow. Ms. Hartmann moved that the WLAB sponsor a scarecrow. Ms. Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Virginia Hartmann

Secretary, Watchung Library Advisory Board