

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
May 26, 2020 – Approved June 30, 2020

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Susan Morduch, President, at 6:17 p.m. via a virtual meeting. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Cathy Draper, Wes Iwanski, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, Jonathan Marshall, Denise Matthews-Serra, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Francis Okelo, Joseph Puglia, Sean Ryan, Edris Scherer, Bernie Seiler, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: None

Also present from WLS were: Terry Kirchner, Patricia Brigham, Francine Feuerman, Wilson Arana, Rob Caluori, Elise Burke

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Jennifer Brown, Director, The Field Library/Peekskill

Guests: Matthew Weiss, President, Ossining Public Library; Elena Falcone, Joe Maurantonio, Allison Midgley

Dr. Morduch reminded all of the guidelines that would be followed for a virtual meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of May 5, 2020, were approved with the following correction to Page 2 under Committee Reports-Nominating & Board Development: “There is currently no chair for this committee, but Ms. Zevin ~~will consider taking~~ is willing to take on this responsibility and will discuss with Dr. Morduch.” on a motion by Mr. Puglia and seconded by Ms. Scherer. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report through April 2020 was presented by Mr. Caluori and approved by the Board on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. Zevin. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Feuerman noted that WLS received \$565,000 via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is a Federal forgivable loan program put in place as a result of the Coronavirus. WLS did not lay off any staff due to COVID-19 but filed for funds due to the uncertain status of both the State and County funds for 2020. Seventy-five percent of the funds received have to be used for payroll-related expenses, which also include payments for benefit insurance, and the balance can be used for other costs such as rent, internet, etc. A question was raised whether WLS had to prove a hardship in order to receive these funds; and a hardship is assumed for requests under \$2 million. At the time of submission, the possibility existed of a 20% cut in State funds; and since WLS did not lay off any staff, covering payroll for an extended period of time could cause a hardship, so the application for the PPP funds was submitted. The Board approved its appreciation for the PPP application filing on a motion by Mr. Okelo and seconded by Mr. Marshall. The motion was approved unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Extension of Current Borrowing Facility: WLS has an existing Line of Credit with TD (Toronto Dominion) Bank. The current facility is due to expire on June 30, 2020, and allows WLS to borrow up to \$500,000 unsecured for a period of one year with neither facility fees nor covenants for this loan agreement. There have been no borrowings under this facility in prior years. At this time, there are no expectations to borrow for the coming year, although it is unclear when State funds will be released in light of COVID-19; therefore, the extension of the borrowing agreement for one year is being recommended to allow for financial flexibility.

The Board approved the extension of the borrowing facility with TD Bank for an additional year on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. Draper. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Mills-Worthey raised an issue regarding the fact that the board was asked to approve the extension of borrowing when no need is foreseen while WLS secured government funds based on the premise of an expected hardship that other community entities facing hardship were unable to secure. In the early stages of the pandemic and at the time the PPP application was submitted, WLS felt there was a need to be very cautious in moving forward as the possibility existed of severe cuts from both State and County funding and the length of time the pandemic would last was unknown.

Member Library IT Fees: During the Coronavirus pandemic, WLS had open positions in the Information Technology (IT) Department that had not yet been filled; library closures caused delays in upgrading computer equipment; and certain network services were not used. Member libraries expressed concern that they may also face financial hardships for the remainder of this year and going into next year. The 2020 IT Finance Model was under review but postponed due to the pandemic; and PLDA and WLS agreed to continue use the 2019 version to generate the January 1-June 30, 2020 invoices while issues with the 2020 version of the model were being resolved.

For the July 1-December 31, 2020 invoices for member library IT fees, WLS suggested reducing the amount generated on the 2019 IT Finance Model's *WLS Device Support & Maintenance* column by 50% for those libraries whose balances are not past due. A discussion followed regarding past due balances and whether that criteria should prevent exclusion from this offer. In addition, the billing process was reviewed in general, and a request was made to have future discussion to understand the status of libraries with past due balances. The motion was amended to remove the past due criteria.

The Board approved that the total amount of the July-December 2020 invoices would be reduced from \$1,402,305.40 to \$1,267,984.48 through application of a (50%) credit on the 2019 IT Finance Model's *WLS Device Support & Maintenance* bringing a total reduction in fees for this period to \$134,320.92 on a motion by Ms. Mills-Worthey and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion passed with 9 votes in favor, 4 against [Ms. Scherer, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Seiler], 1 abstention [Ms. Matthews-Serra]. [Ms. Kelley was not present for the vote.]

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morduch noted that at the last board meeting, there was a request to discuss the Board Reserve Fund further. This discussion was postponed, and trustees were encouraged to think about how this

Fund money can be used and what process should be implemented to develop a strategy for its use. Another possibility would be to save the money and develop a guideline for future use. Anyone with ideas should send them to Dr. Morduch.

Once in-person meetings are resumed, Dr. Morduch suggested having a five-minute presentation from all library board presidents, on a rotational basis, about their library in order to be more in touch with the libraries and create a better connection with the boards.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Governance Committee: Ms. Draper, Chair, noted that the next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2nd.

Audit Committee: Mr. Ryan, Chair, noted that the committee activity was done for the year.

Budget Committee: Ms. Scherer, Chair, noted that the committee's work has not yet started.

Nominating & Board Development: Ms. Zevin, Chair, has been working on a WLS Handbook and reviewing it over the next couple of weeks. There are three trustees whose terms are ending 12/31/2020. Two have agreed to serve another term, and the Chair is waiting to hear back from Mr. Ryan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A copy of the Executive Director's Report was mailed in advance of the meeting.

Dr. Kirchner noted that the biggest change has been with the re-opening sequence that Governor Cuomo had put in place. In early May, it was anticipated that libraries would probably be in Phase 4, with the potential of being Phase 2 for curbside delivery. Last week, it was declared that libraries are in a pre-phase, in which they can basically start right away. That changed some of the energy patterns; but there has been a lot of planning underway, both by WLS and with the member libraries.

At the 5/21 PLDA Meeting, several target timelines were put in place which will not limit or prohibit a library from taking action at any point in time but will move forward countywide services as much as possible with the understanding that every community is different. Some examples include:

- By June 1st, all libraries will aim to have their book drops open, if they haven't already;
- By June 8th, libraries will aim to do some piloting of curbside delivery, if they haven't already;
- In addition to the smaller group already underway, by June 15th, countywide curbside delivery will begin, if a library is ready.

Each library will need to base their decisions on their staffing levels and community needs. WLS's goal is to set a pattern for the potential flow of movement going forward.

The libraries will be doing local holds only initially, which means that a patron from a library can place a hold for an item at that library, and pick up that item at that library; but they would not be able to get materials from other libraries right away. From June 1-14, WLS's delivery system will reroute materials back to their home so that they can be quarantined. Most libraries plan to use a three-day period before they make materials available to the public. It will also help libraries get a better sense

of what items they currently have in stock and what they need to be ordering. PLDA has been very strategic and are definitely trying to work together as a cohesive group as much as possible.

WLS has been moving forward on the System Headquarter's Re-opening Plan as well as updating our disaster recovery and business continuity plans in light of what has been learned through this pandemic experience with regard to social distancing requirements, health screening and other elements.

Census 2020 is still moving forward. Overall, Westchester County has approximately a 61% self-assessment or self-fulfillment rate, which is a little higher than the state average. However, there has been a kind of plateauing at the moment. Those who are going to complete the census online and those who have received it in the mail are basically done. The next effort is how to move forward with more ground work. At the most recent Complete Count Committee for the County, plans are underway to have volunteers from neighborhoods who would be willing to put a flyers on doorknobs saying, *Have you completed the census?* Other non-invasive types of marketing being considered are putting up lawn placards or hosting some fun community competitions to get their response rates up. It is unclear when the Census enumerators will get started. WLS is distributing more census-related books to the libraries—especially the *We Count!* books in English and Spanish—and connecting with the Head Starts and other family agencies for assistance. The self-assessment phase deadline was moved to October 31st. There has been a very good response from the member libraries in terms of the ongoing Zoom meetings related to the Census. Dana Hysell-Alongi and Joe Maurantonio, who are leading the Census effort, have had very robust discussions and engagement with the member libraries, who are looking at partnering with non-profits and church groups and others in their community more effectively.

The IT operations audit has been completed. The network services and the VDI services audit are being finished, and Dr. Kirchner and Mr. Arana met with the company completing those two audits on May 22nd. The company had experienced some challenges related to COVID-19, but the project is now back on track; and the completion of these two audits is expected by the end of June.

When all three are completed, Dr. Kirchner suggested that a working group of a few members could be comprised to review all audits from a comprehensive perspective and discuss what future services could look like, based on some of the things that have been learned. The timing for this working group was discussed. The goal is to have a plan for the 2021 budget developed for approval at the September Board Meeting, with informational presentations for the libraries and trustees to take place in July either in person or via online.

PLDA LIAISON'S REPORT

Ms. Brown reported the following from PLDA that was not already covered. Mainly, the libraries are focused on how to offer what is being called contact-less services. For some libraries, it is curbside and for others it is in-lobby service, depending on how the library is set up. A lot is dependent on the local community. Even within Westchester, some areas were hit much harder than others by the pandemic, and some areas have different population groups to be concerned about. So it was difficult for all to agree on a single start date because it really did vary by community. However, there was consensus around the June 15th date, with local service and not countywide-borrowing to help avoid people traveling to and from different communities.

One of the issues in moving forward was the lack of clarity on how libraries fit into the State’s re-opening plans. There is a general assumption that a public library is a public library, even though organizationally libraries may be chartered differently (municipal, association, school district, special legislative district). These unclear directives created a tension to make decisions between the need to do things individually because of the library’s type versus doing things together and following a more unified approach—all in a very short timeframe. One area where a unified message was discussed was with regard to having a common language for the re-opening of library buildings and resumption of services.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:05 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Mr. Seiler that passed unanimously. WLS staff was asked to explore other online meeting products.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Bernie Seiler

Bernie Seiler
Secretary