

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
December 1, 2020 – Approved January 26, 2021

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Susan Morduch, President, at 6:10 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, Edris Scherer, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Joseph Puglia, Bernie Seiler

Also present from WLS were: Terry Kirchner, Wilson Arana, Patricia Brigham, Rob Caluori, Elise Burke, Joe Maurantonio, Dana Hysell-Alongi, Pam Hoffman

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

Guests: Chris Shoemaker, Director, Rye Free Reading Room & PLDA Central Library & eContent Committee Chair; Matthew Weiss, Hope Marabel, Timur Davis, Greg Wirszyła, Paul Schwarz, Judy Williams Davis

MINUTES

A correction to the submitted minutes of the meeting of October 27, 2020, was recommended to Page 2, 1st paragraph under President's Report as follows: ~~Rough estimates for the cost of~~ ~~the~~ ~~three IT audits is \$115,000~~ **cost \$114,943.**

The Board approved the minutes as amended above, along with correction to a typographical error on Page 4, on a motion by Ms. Draper and seconded by Ms. Scherer. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report through October 2020 was presented by Mr Caluori, who reviewed the balance sheet and revenue and expenses in detail. The board discussed the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan received by WLS and the overall financial impact of service changes due to COVID-19. The Board approved the September 2020 finances on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. Zevin. The motion passed unanimously. [Ms. LeBlanc not present for the vote.]

INFORMATION ITEM

WLS Bylaws Revision: At the October 27th meeting, a motion to appoint a candidate to fill the recent vacancy for District V (Armonk, Bedford Village, Mount Pleasant, Pound Ridge) was tabled to this meeting. At the time, the candidate was seeking employment at a WLS member library, and a question was raised whether employment at a WLS member library would pose a conflict of interest. The motion was withdrawn. The Nominating & Board Development and the Governance Committees met on November 17th to discuss general eligibility criteria for WLS trustees and potential conflicts of interest. There was a lack of general criteria for Trustees in the WLS Bylaws,

and the Committees recommended a revision to the WLS Bylaws, Article 1. Trustees, Section 3, as noted below. Text in ***bold italic*** is new.

Section 3. Trustees must be at least 18 years of age and residents of the WLS district they represent. No current employee of the System or any member library shall be eligible to serve as a Trustee. Trustees shall be limited to serving two consecutive five-year terms, excluding any partial term when a member is appointed to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term.

Per standard procedures, this amendment is being presented one meeting in advance as an Information Item, and official approval will be sought at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting, which will be held in January 2021.

In addition, a question came up whether a WLS trustee, who is also a trustee of a member library, has a conflict of interest. The Governance Committee is looking into the possibility of amending one of the other WLS policies and the Nominating & Board Development Committee is completing a Trustee Job Description that will further address potential conflicts of interest.

ACTION ITEMS

Capital Funding Request – VDI (Virtual Desktop Infrastructure) Improvements & Upgrades: Mr. Arana reported that this funding request is in response to feedback received from the three audits completed—to review overall operations, the network and VDI environment—that pointed out the need for a strong, reliable and affordable technology infrastructure as the key to the ongoing success of the member libraries and WLS. To ensure such an environment, the following recommendations were made:

Operating System: An upgrade for all virtual machines to Windows 10—currently, all virtual machines are running Windows 7, which is no longer supported by Microsoft.

Performance: A newer and more robust VDI infrastructure for WLS IT to install and run the latest version of the VMware Horizon software, maximizing the infrastructure's data speed and security needed to support the member libraries' services.

Reliability: Acquisition of new local access devices, providing a more robust hardware platform to run VDI locally at the libraries, allowing multiple platforms to be used, if needed, rather than just one.

Recommended Request: The new infrastructure would include 4 hosts and support a full Windows 10 desktop environment as well as optimal VDI performance for at least the next 3 years of VMware Horizon usage.

Costs: This request includes: New infrastructure equipment, Windows 10 upgrade, installation & support for a 3-year period (\$210,000) and local access devices (\$190,000) for a total of \$400,000.

Discussion included: clarification of what is included in this request and how it fits into the audit recommendations and overall strategic perspective for WLS and how this funding request fits into the WLS FY2020 and FY2021 Capital Fund budgets. A suggestion was made to hold a separate meeting in January prior to the next Regular Board Meeting to review Capital expenditures for 2021-22 in relation to a roadmap for the future direction and implementation of Capital projects.

The Board approved the submitted Capital funding request for VDI Improvements & Upgrades for a total of \$400,000 on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. Draper. The motion was approved unanimously.

Central Library Aid Budget FY2021-22: Dr. Kirchner introduced Chris Shoemaker, Director of the Rye Free Reading Room and Chair of the PLDA Central Library (CL)/eContent Committee. The Committee met on 7/31/2020 and 9/22/2020 and discussed system-wide e-content purchases that could be subscribed to via the CL Funds. A summary of the proposed budget was discussed at the 10/15/2020 and the 11/19/2020 PLDA general membership meetings. However, due to timing, the Central Library/Mount Vernon Public Library did not get to review the budget prior to the PLDA vote. As this did not follow the usual sequence, additional feedback from the CL will be considered.

Mr. Shoemaker reviewed the considerations made for this budget which included:

- Digital services -- which platforms are successful and which are not.
- Increased funding and number of credits for Hoopla and Kanopy -- endorsed by the directors to get patrons connected with these materials.
- Removal of RBdigital -- due to the merger of Overdrive and Recorded Books (RB), there is no need to keep two separate companies operating in the same digital sphere in terms of e-content
- Removal of Freegal – due to patrons adopting different platforms like Apple Music and Spotify.
- Substituting NoveList with Syndetics to provide book/album cover art and reviews for the online Evergreen catalog; removal of Job & Career Accelerator, which is being morphed into Learning Express and not a standalone product as before; and removal of Mergent Intellect Listings since many libraries still maintain papers subscriptions for stock information and patrons are not switching over to a digital platform.
- Using vendors who can supply statistics on a library level versus a system level to understand the cost effectiveness of each product.

The FY2021-2022 CLDA budget proposal includes Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) and Central Book Aid (CBA) funds set aside for Central Library services for the State’s fiscal period of April 1st through March 31st as follows:

| Resource | 2021-22 |
|--|------------------|
| Hoopla* | \$ 78,535 |
| Kanopy* | 50,000 |
| Learning Express Library 3.0 (includes Job Search & Occupational Practice Tests) | 49,565 |
| Lynda.com | 27,500 |
| Press Reader | 30,000 |
| Syndetics | <u>41,000</u> |
| Total Central Library Aid Budget: | \$276,600 |

**Also funded through other budgeted sources*

General topics of discussion included:

- Analytics and data available for usage and cost effectiveness of CL materials.
- Mission/purpose of the CL.
- Budget review process and timing needed for approval.
- Support of digital resources in light of sector of households that do not have access to computers and whether physical resources are included in this budget. WLS is involved in a new project to

address digital inclusion. Part of that goal is to assess how WLS can help get connection for those who need it.

- Based on a 20% cut in State funding, the CL budget can be reviewed if more funds become available and if the CL and PLDA jointly decided to spend the funds differently. Cut backs on Hoopla and Kanopy could be easily made, as these products are not subscription-based but usage-based.
- Suggestion was made to have budget items presented as information items one month prior to a vote—similar to how policy changes are done.

A motion was made to approve the CL budget as submitted and then withdrawn and revised to approve the FY2021-22 CL budget for Learning Express, Linda.com, Press Reader and Syndetics (those subscriptions beginning 1/1/2021) and to allow for continued discussion of this budget by the CL/Mount Vernon Public Library Board and PLDA.

The board approved the revised motion for the Central Library Budget FY 2021-2022 for all items except for Hoopla and Kanopy by Mr. Okelo and seconded by Ms. Matthews-Serra. The motion passed unanimously.

WLS Budget Fiscal Year 2021: The Budget Committee of the WLS Board of Trustees met on November 9th and November 23rd to review a number of options in order to arrive at a budget proposal for the 2021 fiscal year. Conservative estimates were taken into consideration for revenues, assuming a 20% cut from New York State, although the State has not yet released their 2021 budget. Member library fees were reduced down to the 2017 level. Expenses were cut as much as possible while still allowing for the continuation of existing programs. This budget includes \$450,000 in revenue and expenses for Project Hope, part of a \$100 million plus project funded through a FEMA grant to New York State. There is also a realignment of the Interlibrary Loan Department from Cataloging to Public Innovation & Engagement.

General topics of discussion included:

- Measures available to determine program success; what to collect and report; include in conversation with the WLS working groups and in light of the audits performed and tie into the WLS mission and strategic plan. Department presentations are planned for 2021.
- Clarification of the parameters used as a safety net, currently set at 90 days of average expenses in reserve, and whether this is enough.
- Concern about when and how the budget was originally presented and lack of communication received from the budget committee meetings. Mr. Caluori reviewed the budget package, line by line. Appreciation was shown for the work of the budget.
- Presumption of budget cuts, but this proposal includes increasing staff and salaries and many of the positions mentioned are not part of the current organizational chart. How do they fit in, and how is WLS working toward creating a more diverse organization.
- Lack of confidence in the assumptions built into this budget proposal. Due to COVID and so many unknowns, budget was compiled on the staff's best judgments, and WLS needs to remain flexible and understand that amendments can be made over the course of the coming year, especially since the NYS funding is still not confirmed. Adoption of a budget this month is important to ensure continuity of services.
- The budget needs to be a living document going forward, and the idea was raised of incorporating separate work sessions into next year's schedule.

The Board approved the WLS 2021 budget as presented on a motion by Ms. Draper and seconded by Ms. Scherer. The motion passed with 10 votes in favor and 1 against (Ms. Mills-Worthey). [Ms. Kelley was not present for the vote.]

WLS Capital Budget FY2021: Based upon the discussion from the previous Action Items, the Board approved tabling the proposed WLS Capital Budget for FY2021 to a special meeting in January.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morduch read a complaint that was received from the Ossining Public Library:

RESOLVED, that for the past three years the WLS Board of Trustees has neglected to uphold and honor its responsibilities to the Ossining Public Library Board of Trustees as stipulated in Article One, Section Two of the WLS Bylaws, which reads in part:

"Section 2. The principal responsibilities of the Trustees shall be to ...act as liaisons between the System and their respective library districts and shall become well-informed about the issues and concerns of their respective libraries by remaining in contact with the local Board(s) of Trustees and Director(s)."

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Trustees of the Ossining Public Library registers a formal complaint that the WLS Board of Trustees that three years without contact with our WLS Representative is unacceptable there needs to be compliance with the WLS Bylaws.

Dr. Morduch spoke with Ossining Public Library Board President Matt Weiss, and he made it clear that this was not a specific issue with the current District Representative. The issue is more focused on how WLS as a board of trustees communicates in general with the trustees of all the individual member library boards. Dr. Morduch drafted a questionnaire to send out to member library boards in order to find out whether other libraries are satisfied or not. Anyone interested in volunteering to help follow up on the survey in order to share the results with the Executive Board should let Dr. Morduch know. Mr. Marshall, Dr. Kirchner and Dr. Morduch will also attend Ossining's next board meeting. In addition, this also ties into defining the role of a Trustee that Ms. Zevin and the Nominating & Board Development Committee has been developing. Mr. Weiss commented that trustees are advocates of the library and are always looking forward to opportunities to participate and that is the gist of the resolution. If appropriate or beneficial, Mr. Weiss offered to help in following up with the questionnaire sent to trustees to show that there is a unified front in an effort to create better communications.

Ms. Zevin noted the need to have a work session on how the WLS Board sees our role and how to define it, along with the conflict of interest issue and the communication role. The Nominating & Board Development Committee started a trustee job description, and this conversation needs to be broadened to a larger working group.

The executive director evaluation questionnaire has been delayed but will be sent out shortly. Starting in January, Dr. Morduch will work with Dr. Kirchner on the goals for 2021 so that there could be a more cohesive process, rather than using a general questionnaire.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Governance Committee: Chair Draper noted that most was covered during the information item. In the next calendar year, the Committee will do the typical review of all WLS policies.

Nominating & Board Development Committee: Robert Huerster graciously withdrew his nomination for the vacancy for District 5 (Armonk, Bedford, Mount Pleasant, Pound Ridge), so the Committee will need to recruit a new candidate for the vacancy. The Committee is also working on a revised job description that can be used to help potential candidates better understand the roles and responsibilities associated with being a trustee on the WLS Board.

Budget Committee: Ms. Scherer noted that the Committee's work has finished for the year and reminded trustees that the Financial Audit Committee does not have a chair. Dr. Morduch would like to initiate work with the Strategic Direction Committee and is looking for volunteers for that Committee; and anyone who is interested should email Dr. Morduch.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Dr. Kirchner noted that WLS will need to institute a pandemic health emergency plan for next year. Dr. Kirchner will share information with Ms. Draper for the Governance Committee to initiate. The goal would be to have the new policy drafted as an information item in January to be voted on at the February board meeting.

OTHER

Ms. Brigham reported on the *Giving Tuesday* initiative going on today. Although at its end, one can give any day of the week. WLS is part of the global *Giving Tuesday* movement, and so far, \$2,000 has been raised. This year's campaign focused on promoting digital access/digital equity, and the funds raised will go toward providing families or individuals with a laptop, Chromebook or tablet with a hotspot that has a six-month subscription. WLS has been gathering data to understand the needs in the communities. A community chat was held last week with the libraries, and Ms. Brigham has been talking with other nonprofits regarding the digital divide to assess the level of need. The link to *Giving Tuesday* is on the WLS website. Ms. Brigham thanked those board members and staff who have already given; and Dr. Kirchner reminded the Board of the importance of having 100% board participation and the difference this makes in WLS's ability to raise future funds.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 9:52 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Matthews-Serra and seconded by Ms. Draper that passed unanimously. [Ms. Kelley, Ms. LeBlanc not present for vote.]

Respectfully submitted,



Elise Burke
Recording Secretary