

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
October 25, 2022 – Approval Pending

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Karen Zevin, President, at 6:03 p.m. and held in-person at the WLS Headquarters in Elmsford. The quorum requirement was not met. The meeting was held as an information session with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Nishat Hydari, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, Francis Okelo, Edris Scherer, Diane Tabakman, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Andrea Bober, Cathy Draper, Wes Iwanski, Jennifer Kothari, Jonathan Marshall, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Joseph Puglia

Also present from WLS: Terry Kirchner, Rob Caluori, Patricia Brigham, Wilson Arana, Joe Maurantonio, Kate Meyer

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Yvonne Cech, Director, John C. Hart Memorial Library

Guest: Rob Cartolano, President, Eastchester Public Library, Matt Weiss, Trustee, Ossining Public Library

Ms. Zevin reviewed the public comment guidelines.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report for August and September 2022 was reviewed in detail. Mr. Caluori noted several items of importance from the financial statements. Also noted was the addition of the Income Statement with Projections to the report, which is presented to the Board at their meetings in the final quarter of the year.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Library Materials Discovery Tool: Mr. Arana, Director of Information Technology for WLS, reviewed the proposed special project budget allocation for the Aspen Discovery tool. He noted that the online public access catalog (OPAC) interface used by library patrons is based on a framework that will be obsolete. The Aspen Discovery tool will provide library users with a more robust and integrated discovery experience for both print and digital materials including those from Hoopla, Overdrive and Kanopy. It also provides opportunities for local customization, better relevancy in search results and a more refined interface than the current OPAC.

Ms. Zevin invited questions from the public as well as Board members in attendance. In response to a question raised regarding compatibility with the current WLS mobile app, Mr. Arana noted that the addition of Aspen Discovery will not impact the performance of the WLS mobile app, which will continue to be offered to patrons for the foreseeable future.

WLS 2023 Operating Budget: The WLS Budget Committee met on October 6th, October 12th, and October 17th to review a number of options in order to arrive at a budget proposal for the 2023 fiscal year. Mr. Caluori reviewed the budget, which was developed in alignment with WLS's strategic vision and to support WLS's mission to empower lives and communities by connecting people in Westchester County with the resources, services and programs available through WLS and the member libraries.

Revenues from all sources include approximately \$7.5 million, which is an increase of roughly \$893,800 over 2022. These revenues assume no increase in funding from New York State and a reduction in IT fees of approximately 2.4% less than 2022. Westchester County funding assumes a slight increase over 2022 for the same budget lines, but also includes an additional \$525,000 request for a special Digital Equity Community Engagement project. Mr. Caluori noted that should the project not be funded, the revenue and expenses are equal and isolated so they can be easily removed and have no impact on the bottom line of the budget.

Expenses exceed revenues by \$330,035 before depreciation, compared to \$547,900 in 2022. The budget allows for the continuation of current programs and services whose overarching goal is to focus on community engagement and outreach through partnerships with the member libraries, governmental agencies, service organizations community members and Westchester County. The Budget Committee recommends that WLS appropriate restricted and unrestricted assets to meet its projected deficit for 2023. A projection of depreciation for \$176,000 is included in the budget.

The proposed budget will be brought to the Board for approval at the November meeting. Ms. Zevin noted that Board members should review the budget materials and ask any questions to Mr. Caluori in advance of the vote at the November meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Zevin noted there have been a lot of absences related to illness. While understandable, Board members were asked to be mindful of the obligations and importance of meeting attendance. Ms. Zevin noted that she had been in contact with the New York State Committee on Open Government to inquire about the applicability of open meetings laws to WLS Board committee meetings. A discussion about the types of libraries and library systems in New York State and their respective obligations under these laws took place. Ms. Zevin will report back at the November meeting.

Ms. Zevin noted that the annual performance review for the Executive Director is now underway. All Board members should have received a survey which is due no later than Thanksgiving Day. This process will conclude at the January meeting during an Executive session to be called at that time.

Ms. Zevin discussed the possibility and potential benefits of holding meetings in locations other than at WLS headquarters which would include at member libraries. It was requested that Board members send Ms. Zevin any feedback or ideas they may have about this potential opportunity to her before the next meeting.

Ms. Zevin reported that she received a resignation letter from Jennifer Kothari who represented District 5 (Armonk, Bedford Village, Mount Pleasant, and Pound Ridge).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating and Board Education Committee: Ms. Kelley, Chair, announced that two candidates have been identified for the open seats representing District 9, which represents Bronxville, Eastchester, Pelham, and Tuckahoe as well as District 2, which represents Briarcliff Manor, Ossining, Tarrytown.

Ms. Kelley also acknowledged the need for a replacement for District 5, which represents Armonk, Bedford Village, Mount Pleasant and Pound Ridge.

Finance Committee: Ms. LeBlanc noted the committee did not meet in September or October in deference to the Budget committee meetings. The committee will be resuming activities in November.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Dr. Kirchner noted that the Mount Vernon Public Library has not yet provided all of the required documents to complete the registration review process or to complete the 2020 and 2021 New York State Annual Reports. Dr. Kirchner also noted that the New York State Board of Regents has scheduled a hearing on December 13th and that he will be in attendance and likely be called to testify.

PLDA LIAISON'S REPORT

Ms. Cech reported on the October PLDA meeting where the following was discussed:

- PLDA was satisfied with WLS's quick resolution and seamless transition in light of the unanticipated delivery service staffing issues incurred by the vendor.
- The Member Library Statistics report, published annually by WLS and based on the NYS annual report, is an essential tool used by libraries to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and collections. The report has not been able to be published since 2020 as NYS has not released final figures because of the failure of Mt. Vernon Public Library to submit their annual report.
- There was discussion about potential amnesty programs for library patron fines and fees. This discussion currently focuses on the viability of forgiving fines for lost book in addition to late fees. Amnesty programs are typically restricted to late fees.
- Wilson Arana's IT Report noted the ongoing progress on the transition to Crown Castle, the new ISP provider. The new network structure provides an individual network connection for each library that will allow each library to have its own firewall and static IP.
- Carolyn Reznik, Director, Ruth Keeler Memorial Library in North Salem, will be retiring soon. Jennifer Brown, Director, The Field Library in Peekskill, is currently seeking election to the position of Counselor-at-large for the American Library Association.
- Central Library Committee reported on their communications with Midwest Tape who operates the Hoopla service regarding their materials selection criteria. It was noted that their response states a more rigorous selection process will be employed.
- PLDA governance will be changing in 2023 which includes the elimination of the second vice president role, which has traditionally served as liaison to the WLS Board. The vice president

will now serve as liaison. Ms. Cech will be moving into that role for 2023 and remain the PLDA liaison to the WLS Board for the coming year. Greg Wirszyla, Director, Bronxville Public Library, will be taking the role of President. Their meetings are anticipated to remain virtual through 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:49 p.m. by consensus of the attendees. The November 29th WLS Board Meeting will take place in person at the WLS Headquarters immediately following the WLS Annual Meeting which begins at 6 p.m. All should be prepared to wear a mask if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Meyer
Recording Secretary