

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
September 24, 2024 –Approved October 29, 2024

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Susan Morduch at 6:36 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board members present: Anthony Amiano, Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Patricia Phelan, Diane Tabakman, Barbara Tepper, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Alice Joselow

Also present from WLS: Terry Kirchner, Wilson Arana, Rob Caluori, Pat Brigham, Kate Meyer, Allison Midgley, Dana Hysell

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Jennifer Coulter, Director, Pound Ridge Library District

Guest: Jonathan Davis, Mt. Vernon

MINUTES

The minutes of the June 25, 2024, Board Meeting were approved as submitted on a motion by Ms. Zevin and seconded by Ms. Tepper. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Caluori presented the financial reports noting significant balances and activity. He spoke to the increase in cash-on-hand due to payments from Westchester County, New York State and the member libraries over the period of June through August. The payment register, which includes check and electronic payments from May through August 2024 were distributed. He also reviewed the schedule of Temporarily Restricted Net Assets and end of year projections for revenues and expenses. The Board accepted the financial report for August on a motion by Ms. Phelan and seconded by Ms. Mills-Worthey. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

State Aid for Public Library Construction \$44 Million Program FY2024-2025: A total of \$44 Million was approved for the Public Library Construction Aid Program in the FY2024-2025 State Budget. For Westchester Library System, the allocation of aid available is based on population and totals \$2,077,279.

A total of 10 applications were received for this grant cycle. All the applications were found to meet the criteria established for the Public Library Construction Aid as required by New York State Commissioner's Regulations [Section 90.12], which include more effective library service; more efficient utilization of the library building; improved access to and use of building services; and provision of library services in communities which are geographically isolated or economically

disadvantaged. The Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Public Library Construction Aid Committee reviewed the applications based on the nature of the projects and aid previously received. Dana Hysell, Outreach Services Specialist manages the program on behalf of WLS with no reimbursement from New York State. The Board approved the State Aid for Public Library Construction on a motion by Ms. Zevin and seconded by Ms. Bober. The motion was approved unanimously.

Strategic Data Planning and Repository Design: Data are critical to WLS’s mission, daily decisions, and short- and long-term strategic planning. Currently, WLS compiles statistics from each member library each year. WLS has also recently developed a data dashboard to facilitate regular analysis of member library statistics. Additionally, WLS and member libraries gather additional data to inform their strategy and planning to fulfill their missions, of which a large part is understanding the diverse strengths and needs of all Westchester residents, and providing inclusive, equitable, and cost-effective approaches for a variety of programs and services.

Aequa Strategies has developed a multi-pronged approach to help WLS and member library staff understand the data available and how that can be leveraged to provide insights to improve programs, services, and development. This is considered a capital project, producing an asset that would serve WLS and the member libraries for at least the next five years. The Board approved the allocation of \$65,000 to fund the Strategic Data Planning and Repository Design project on a motion by Ms. Zevin and seconded by Mr. Cartolano. The motion was approved unanimously.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Ms. Morduch reminded the Board that there are resources available to them on the WLS website, including but not limited to, Westchester Library System Board of Trustees Job Responsibilities. Ms. Morduch also encouraged the Board to sit in on other committee meetings to further understand roles and responsibilities.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee: Ms. LeBlanc, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the first of three Budget meetings was held on September 17, 2024, and discussed the WLS Information Technology Budget for 2025. She noted that there are two upcoming meetings planned for October 8th and October 15th and encouraged all to attend.

Nominating Committee: Ms. Kelley, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that there are 3 seats up for re-election in January 2025; District 7: Harrison, Purchase, District 11: White Plains, and District 15: Yonkers.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

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

Dr. Kirchner noted that throughout the summer months there have been several libraries who had questions regarding staffing, library planning and Board retreats. He reports hearing increasingly often that finances are getting strained, and the question remains if libraires should maintain the status quo or should they seek other, more stable routes to secure funding.

Dr. Kirchner noted that WLS has streamlined HR and Finance, with the addition of Bill.com which has allowed WLS to implement a paperless accounts payable and electronic payment process. Mr. Caluori expanded that the change has allowed for faster processing of payment, stronger enforcement of internal control processes and integrated the Treasurer into the approval process earlier so they have insight. He also noted that the change to electronic payments will allow WLS to better secure its bank accounts to protect against fraudulent activity.

Ms. Brigham discussed the addition of a WLS Library Fundraising newsletter and website. She also noted that there are two workshops scheduled for October 9th: Top 8 Tips for a Successful Annual Appeal, and October 16th: Raising Money for Your Library - Newsletters, Online and Direct Mail. In addition, there will be an Annual Appeal review on October 23rd where professionals will review libraries' Annual Appeal and make recommendations.

PLDA LIASON'S REPORT

Ms. Coulter reported on the September 2024 PLDA meeting where the following was discussed:

- Terry Kirchner from WLS noted that a representative from Hoopla may be visiting the region in mid-November and is looking into hosting a breakfast meeting at WLS to discuss the product's features, how it is currently being used by Westchester residents, and potential future directions.
- The PLDA executive board will appoint a nominating committee that will submit a slate of proposed PLDA officers for the coming year.
- PLDA approved the recommendation to move from the Capira app to the Aspen LiDA app.
- There was considerable discussion regarding online renewals using a third-party vendor. PLDA voted to authorize WLS to continue exploring instituting automatic renewals, and will present information regarding cost at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Davis thanked the Board for allowing him to sit in at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:58 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Kelley and seconded by Mr. Amiano that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Anthony Amiano

Anthony Amiano
Secretary