

Glen Ridge Public Library
 Board of Trustees Minutes
 Regular Minutes
 Date: Wednesday November 9, 2022

Carol Harpster called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. Carol read the following statement: “Adequate notice of the date and time of this meeting has been given in accordance of the Open Public Meeting Act. Notice has been transmitted to the Glen Ridge Paper and the Glen Ridge Voice and has been posted in the Glen Ridge Municipal Building and the Glen Ridge Public Library. A list of meeting dates for the Glen Ridge Free Public Library Board of Trustees is also on file with the Glen Ridge Borough Clerk.”

Roll Call:

P	Bernice Bonnett	p	Deanna Pagano
P	Geoffrey Darby	P	Jeanna Velechko
P	Carol Harpster	P	Harry Rush
P	David Lefkovits	P	Linda Seyffarth
absent	Matthew Murphy	P	Tina Marie Doody

Pledge of Allegiance

Correspondence: A letter received from Citizens Defending Education. The Director’s response to Requests for Evaluation on six books by eight individuals were delivered this week.

Public Portion:

- **Fran Deacon 27 Oakwood Ave. Glen Ridge**
 Citizens Defending Education are concerned with transparency and accountability in Glen Ridge schools and public institutions. They have coalesced about 6 books that are available in the Library. Eight of their members have filed complaints, per the protocol provided by the Library, on some or all of these books.
- **Mary Ellen Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
 They want responses to each individual complaint made about each specific book. They felt that some content in the books is dangerous to our children and they plan to appeal the decision rendered by the Library Director.
- **Dr. Frances Mielach 33 Willow Street Glen Ridge**
 Reiterated comments of previous speakers and spoke about Kirkus which was used as a reference in the responses that have been provided to each Request for Evaluation that was filed. Kirkus is a marketing service company used by libraries.

- **David Deacon 27 Oakwood Ave. Glen Ridge**
He provided examples of some of the specifics in these books that he finds offensive and said there is no educational or artistic purpose for these books.
- **Vincent Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
After reading portions of the response provided by the Library Director, he asked whether Board members have read these books and emphasized Board members responsibility for what is in the Library.
- **Gabriel Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
Draws distinction between obscenity and free speech. Says obscenity has never been free speech.
- **Mary Ellen Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
Said they are taxpayers and their interests have to be taken seriously. Says these books take advantage of a vulnerable population.

Minutes:

A motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of the October 12, 2022 meeting was made by Linda Seyffarth and seconded by Deanna Pagano. There were 7 Ayes and 1 abstention; the Motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Bonnett
Aye	Geoffrey Darby
Aye	Carol Harpster
abstain	David Lefkovits
	Matthew Murphy

Aye	Deanna Pagano
Aye	Jeanna Velechko
Aye	Harry Rush
Aye	Linda Seyffarth

Library Trends and Topics

At the last BCCLS System Council meeting a white paper was presented on circulation patterns. Juvenile circulation has returned to pre-pandemic levels, but adult circulation has not. Media usage has declined significantly.

E-content is still very popular, but not going up as much as it has been. We now have our cost per circ model available. Our delivery patterns are shifting. They have looked to see what percent of users are essentially only digital users. For our library it is about 17% (317) which is about the average of the Libraries.

We have a door counter so we know how many people enter the Library regardless of what they do in the Library. It helps us know usage by day and time.

Finance:

After review, a motion to approve the October 2022 Bills Lists was made by David Lefkovits and seconded by Linda Seyffarth. All voted in favor and the motion passed. (Attachment #1)

Aye	Bernice Bonnett	Aye	Deanna Pagano
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	Jeanna Velechko
Aye	Carol Harpster	Aye	Harry Rush
Aye	David Lefkovits	Aye	Linda Seyffarth
	Matthew Murphy		

The most unusual item is the amount of \$3196 for the book bike. This was purchased by a grant. We have lots of plans for events we will take it to.

After review a motion was made by David Lefkovits to accept the October Treasurer’s Report. It was seconded by Deanna Pagano. All voted in favor and the motion passed. (Attachment #2)

Aye	Bernice Bonnett	Aye	Deanna Pagano
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	Jeanna Velechko
Aye	Carol Harpster	Aye	Harry Rush
Aye	David Lefkovits	Aye	Linda Seyffarth
	Matthew Murphy		

We have spent 78% of the budget through Oct., vs. an expected run rate of 83%. Personnel (74% of budget) and materials expense (78% of budget) are under budget.

Draft Budget 2023 At the Finance Committee meeting last week Tina presented a draft budget which fit within the 3.5% increase in the appropriation. The borough has not completed their negotiations with the CWA so we don’t know what borough salary and wage increases will be. The Library usually follows the borough salary and wage increases. That increase will impact the shared service agreement since it is a pass through. Assuming we get the salary numbers from the borough, a final budget will be reviewed and voted on at the December meeting.

We were not able to approve the request that had been made to have Saturday morning hours in the summer. With the increases in other expenses, there was no additional money to address this in a budget neutral way as requested.

Personnel:

- Combined Personnel Manual - This combined manual has been reviewed by Personnel and has now been sent to the full Board for review and comments by

Dec. 1. Personnel will review any comments and send a revised draft to the Board for approval. It will then go to legal for review.

- Director's Evaluation – Input due Nov. 23

Technology: None

Buildings and Grounds:

Locker Project

Pillars are now in and the Parapet will be next. Geoffrey Darby, Gordon Leavitt, and Tina are meeting with Dan Kopek tomorrow on site. Everything done so far has been excellent. The lockers are gorgeous in the color we have chosen according to the manufacturer. Most of the wiring has been done. Hope the project will be finished before Thanksgiving.

Thanks to the FOL for funding and to Dan Kopek, Gordon Leavitt, Geoffrey Darby and Tina for leading and managing this project.

Marketing: When we have a better feel for the completion date let Bernice know for planning its introduction.

Director's Report: (See Attachment #3)

- Attended many community meetings
- Getting ready for the tree lighting
- Children's Department has been busy – their take home crafts have been very popular, especially one for Halloween
- AME came to replace a part on FCU6, but the part they received was not correct and they are waiting for the correct part
- Priti Kinkhabwala has resigned for personal reasons effective immediately – we will be looking at the definition of the position and for a replacement

Friends of the Library

The annual appeal will start next month with a goal of \$10K.

Old Business –

New Business

- **EDI Task Force** – They met and selected a tool to get a better idea of our progress as we go through our assessment.
- **2023 Holiday Calendar**-In the Board packet. Tina proposes a change to Columbus Day, rather than Veterans Day (this will be consistent with the borough and Columbus Day has not been busy) and also closing the day after Thanksgiving. Let's do an analysis of the use of the Library the day after Thanksgiving. We don't have attendance data from last year. It is very difficult to staff. Defer a vote to the December Board meeting. We look at patron usage this year and can run circ data on 2019-2022 on Columbus Day and the day after Thanksgiving. Maybe we should close on Halloween night. We will vote on the calendar at the Dec. meeting.
- **Delayed Opening on December 8, 2022** Staff holiday party is scheduled for that day, with a luncheon at 11:30am. In the morning there will be a cleaning and organizing extravaganza. Open to the public at 2pm.

Public Comment

- **Fran Deacon 27 Oakwood Ave. Glen Ridge**
The Library does not consider that children could come into contact with these books. She read from a review and quoted from the book, This Book is Gay by James Dawson. Thinks that there is a disparity between the response she got from the Library and the content of the books. She wants copies made of the complaints filed and provided to the Board. Wants the Board to read these books.
- **Vincent Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
Quoted from the response given to group – part of the Library selection criteria. Thinks that Library should open doors and give candy on Halloween. We did and nobody came. Also asked about the cost of the book bike and about holidays. Asked about the formation of the EDI Task Force. He wants a list of people on EDI task force and their mission. Has comments on the Christmas tree lighting, but that is a borough event, not a Library event. They want a nativity scene since there is a menorah.
- **Mary Ellen Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
The response that was sent said the books that are in the Library meet the needs of the community - wants detailed response on how these books serve the needs of the community. They are filled with overly sexualized content. Address issues that they actually put into the complaint. Doesn't think they qualify under the Libraries policies. These works are highly pornographic.
- **Gabriel Cusumano 297 Ridgewood Ave. Glen Ridge**
These are recipes for constitutional cases to be brought against the library.
- **Fran Deacon 27 Oakwood Ave. Glen Ridge**
Wants to make sure that they need to appeal the Library Director's decision. Carol Harpster indicated yes so we have a written record.

Members of the public left except for Gordon Leavitt.

There was some further discussion by the Board.

- **Citizens need to appeal in writing.**
- **Each of us should read at least one book.**
- **Should we segregate these books – not on content. These books are not in the school library. They are in other BCCLS libraries.**
- **Board agreed Tina does not need to provide names of EDI Task Force members as that is an internal group. She can provide their mission.**
- **Public libraries provide access to a wide variety of materials; parents have a responsibility to monitor what their children are reading.**
- **Pending the receipt of an appeal, the Board may have further discussion at the December and January board meetings before rendering a decision. If necessary, those meetings will be held in Council Chambers (and will be advertised as such) in order to provide more room.**

Additionally, Tina and Carol recommended Board policies be listed on our website and the Board concurred.

A motion to adjourn was made by Harry Rush and seconded by Geoffrey Darby to adjourn at 9:26 pm. All voted Aye and the motion passed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Seyffarth

Next Meeting Date: December 14, 2022