



WARREN COUNTY LIBRARY

Warren County Library Commission
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Regular Session – September 23, 2021

The Warren County Library Commission met in regular session at 5:30 p.m. on September 23, 2021 via Zoom virtual meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson, Patricia Rokosz and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Present:	Marilynn A. Barone Patricia A. Rokosz Virginia R. Rutledge Henry Newbold
Administration:	Maureen Baker Wilkinson, Library Director Jill Butcher, Assistant Director
Guest:	Gina Marie

Vice-Chairperson, Patricia Rokosz stated that notice of the meeting had been properly advertised in the *Star-Ledger* and the *Daily Record*, and a notice had been sent to the Warren County Clerk's Office.

Minutes

On motion by Ms. Barone, seconded by Ms. Rutledge, the Minutes of the June 24, 2021 meeting were approved, motion carried unanimously.

Communications –

- The Blairstown Historic Preservation Committee sent an email (included in package to the Commission). The Director reported we were willing to give the group the newspaper.
- The Knit Wits letter was mailed to County Commissioner Kern (included in package to the commission) and the Director's response emailed to Commissioner Kern was also included and discussed.
- A letter from Lauren Ackerman was submitted to the Commission members as a late addition, as well as the Director's letter in response.

Public Comment - None.

Old Business - None.

Director's Report – Please see Director's Report attached.

New Business - None

- Director request to close for in-service training – date TBD.

On motion by Ms. Rokosz, seconded by Ms. Barone, the Request to close for in-service training was approved, motion carried unanimously.

- An amendment to the Circulation Policy was proposed.

On motion by Ms. Rokosz, seconded by Ms. Rutledge, the Amendment to the Circulation Policy was approved, motion carried unanimously.

- An amendment to the Meeting Room Policy was proposed.

On motion by Ms. Rokosz, seconded by Mr. Newbold, the Amendment to the Meeting Room Policy was approved, motion carried unanimously.

Closing Public Comment – The Director answered questions posed by Gina Marie regarding Hoopla, the NJ Construction Grant, and public computers..

Executive Session - Not required.

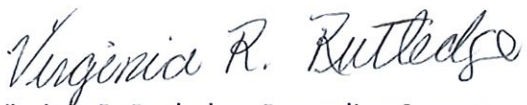
A reminder was given to the commission members that on October 2nd at 12:00 pm, there will be a Renaming of the HQ branch

Adjournment

There being no further business, on motion of Ms. Rokosz, seconded by Ms. Barone, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.; motion carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via virtual meeting, details to be announced at a later date.

Attested to:


Virginia R. Rutledge, Recording Secretary



WARREN COUNTY LIBRARY

Director's Report – September - 2021

COVID-19 continues to impact the use of our library. While usage has increased, we are still operating with fewer visits and circulations than pre-COVID. Virtual program attendance and summer reading participation also dropped over the summer month. These changes may be due to members switching to electronic/digital options (commercial and library) for reading and viewing. The summer months, which provided a reprieve from many COVID restrictions, may have encouraged our community to engage in more social and outside activities rather than visiting the library. The library started offering some programs outside during the summer and will continue them through October. Meeting rooms remain closed for library programs and use by outside groups.

Staff meetings are virtual, and we are likely to continue this practice after COVID restrictions end. Virtual meetings reduce travel costs and time and have allowed teams to meet even with the reduced staff in our buildings.

Staff and the public (vaccinated and unvaccinated) are required to wear masks in the library. Our team is primarily vaccinated; however, we have had one case of COVID with one unvaccinated staff member. Fortunately, we did not need to quarantine any other staff, and the affected employee recovered quickly.

Deb Dulepski is the new Branch Manager at the Southwest Branch. Deb's professional background has been in academic libraries, and she has family ties in Warren County.

We remain short-staffed in all locations. Unexpected leaves have exacerbated the situation this month, and many staffs have vacation time to use before year-end. Our CDH, NE, and SW branches are early voting stations, and staff will need to open and close the buildings for the election workers. To help us deal with the staffing needs in the branches, we are implementing online scheduling software. Our administration team will use the online schedules to find staff to send to other branches needing staff to operate.

The State Library has not released any information concerning which libraries received the Library Construction Grant. We hope to hear soon as we need to move forward with repairs at CDH. The branch has extensive building issues such as HVAC, roof, and electrical systems.

We have been working to improve network connectivity and online services. We have ordered new public internet computers to replace the very old ones we currently have. The new computers will take advantage of the faster internet speed we have added at our Northeast and Southwest Branches. We have increased the speed by ten and now have 100 mb service (the same as our HQ branch). We have increased the speed at virtually no increase in cost through the new Verizon contract negotiated by the State Library. We can

Director's Report September 2021 continued

only use this contract at NE and SW branches which are in Verizon Territory. Our HQ and CDH branches can only get service through CenturyLink. We will address the network speed and configuration at the CDH branch as part of the construction project. They currently receive internet access through the HQ Branch.

We have restarted work with the State Library and our library software company TLC to move our software to a virtual server at the State Library. Once we make this change, we will have greater operational resiliency. The State Library will store 30 days of full backups offsite, update server software, provide emergency power to servers, and ensure our systems are operational. We will reduce our costs (no need to purchase a server) and use their high-speed connections to the internet to interface with our data. Our current servers are at our HQ Branch. When the branch loses power, staff in all branches cannot use our library software, branches and the public are unable to use our library catalog and online services that must authenticate against our database. Our CDH Branch also loses all internet since their connection comes through the HQ Branch. Since we have lost power at HQ many times over the last couple months, reliable access to our servers will make a big difference in delivering library service.

We are working with our online membership registration software to transfer their data into our library software. The software has been used frequently during COVID-19 to allow us to manage new memberships to the library. The software gathers the required information for library membership and checks that the submitted address is in our service area. When the integration is complete, the system will search our data to determine if the person already has a membership. If they are a new member, their information will be formatted and transferred into our membership files where staff can complete the registration process. In addition to the online registration option on our website, we will use the software in the library to collect and verify applications at registration kiosks and staff workstations

We have removed staff furniture from the second floor at HQ. We no longer staff the floor, making the service desk obsolete. The desk has been moved to the storage area at SW for later use (possibly CDH after renovations) We have increased the public seating space on the second floor and move some local history collections out of compact storage (1st floor of HQ) to shelves on the second floor. Magazines and newspapers have been moved to the first floor to increase the collection's visibility. The second floor will be a quiet space for study and accessing our reference and local history materials. We are exploring the idea of developing part of the space as an additional meeting/program space for library, county and community use.

Submitted by:



Maureen Baker Wilkinson
Library Director