



WARREN COUNTY LIBRARY

Warren County Library Commission
Henry A. Newbold, Chairperson
Patricia A. Rokosz, Vice-Chairperson
Alice A. Mollitor, Recording Secretary
Cathleen Gerhardt
Elizabeth Thomas

Regular Session – June 27, 2024

The Warren County Library Commission met in a regular session at 5:30 p.m. on June 27, 2024. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Patricia Rokosz, and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Present: Patricia A. Rokosz, Cathleen Gerhardt, Elizabeth Thomas
Administration: Maureen Baker Wilkinson, Library Director
Jill Butcher, Assistant Director

Note: In person and via Zoom combined, there were approximately 40 attendees.

Vice Chairperson Ms. 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 of Ms. Gerhardt, seconded by Ms. Thomas, the Minutes of the May 23, 2024, regular meeting minutes were approved, motion carried.

Recorded Vote: Ms. Rokosz, yes; Ms. Gerhardt, yes; Ms. Thomas, yes.

Commission Comments & Questions regarding expenditure & program reports: None.

Communications: Four emails were received referencing the WCLC meeting of 5/23/24, two separate emails from Paul Eskola, one from Anna Babitsky, and one from Martha Hickson; and

One letter dated 6/24/24 from Sylvia Zika regarding the Small Study Room Policy.

Public Comments – Agenda Items:

Vice Chairperson Rokosz asked if there were any public comments on Agenda Items.

Anna Babitsky, Hackettstown – Referenced her email, and asked specifically how “sexually explicit” is defined, and who is it that defines it as such. She stated, everyone’s definition would differ, and that alone should not determine the location of a book.

Paul Eskola, Allamuchy – Stated that at each meeting, the same information is being rehashed. The information received from the lawyer at the last meeting should have settled this issue and we should not be rehashing the same issue at every meeting. It’s a waste of time and money.

Sylvia Zika, Blirstown – Spoke regarding her letter and desired changes to the Small Study Room policy. She also stated she wanted a committee formed to review the policy and wants to be on the committee to offer a patron’s perspective.

Old Business – None.

Director’s Report – June 2024 Director’s Report attached.

New Business - None.

Closing Public Comments - Vice Chairperson Rokosz asked if there was any closing public comments.

Sylvia Zika, Blirstown – Reiterated her desired changes to the Small Study Room policy and the importance of creating a committee to review the policy and her desire to be on the committee.

Sandy Roberts, Blirstown – Spoke of the term “sexually explicit” and a discussion on how it relates to censorship.

Jodee Inscho, Liberty Twp. – Stated books should not be hidden in a back room.

Erin Andersen, White Twp. – Spoke of the terminology regarding censorship and “sexually explicit”. She also discussed the Study Room policy and wanting more people to have access to them, rather than someone sitting in them all day, and how the regulations work toward the safety and well-being of library staff.

Brie Devlin, Hackettstown – Commented on both the legal interpretations discussed early and the Study Room.

Evie Tilney, Blirstown (via Zoom) – The impediment to access is censorship, and books should not be reconsidered for moving or censoring.

Sylvia Zika, Blirstown – Spoke again regarding her letter and desired changes to the Small Study Room policy. She again stated she wanted a committee formed to review the policy and wants to be on the committee to offer a patron’s perspective. She also wants an experimental period for changed and new policies.

Executive Session – Yes.

Executive Session (Resolution 2024-13) began at 6:25 p.m. to discuss the Attorney’s response to questions brought up at the May 23, 2024 WCLC meeting. The Executive Session ended at 6:45 p.m. at which time, the Regular Meeting was re-entered.

Adjournment :

There being no further business, Ms. Rokosz made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Gerhardt, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. to be held at the Richard D Gardner Branch of the Warren County Library, with a virtual link also available on the Library website calendar.

Attested to:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice A. Mollitor".

Alice A. Mollitor, Recording Secretary

AAM/mbm



WARREN COUNTY LIBRARY

Director's Report - June 2024

Summer Reading launched on June 17 and is on track to have the highest participation since before COVID. This year's theme, "Adventure Begins at Your Library," has attractive promotional materials (including a video on our digital screens) and provides opportunities for various program tie-ins and decorations. Public feedback on returning to paper logs from the online program has been primarily positive. Parents appreciate that their children are more involved in recording the books in the log, and staff are enjoying increased engagement with the participants. We initially switched to online software during COVID-19, when library services and access were limited.

Planning for Summer Reading begins in January and is a system-wide effort. Participants can be of all ages, and while elementary-age children are the largest group, we have seen an increase in adult participation.

The Board of County Commissioners approved the furniture and shelving for the CDH Branch at their June 26th meeting. We have sent out the purchase orders today to secure the current NJ State contract prices before they end at the end of June. We will purchase some additional items in 2025 that are not part of a State Contract (i.e., Televisions for digital screens).

We have lost power or internet at all branches this month. Northeast was without internet for a day (Verizon issue), and Southwest lost power most of the day. Other outages were brief or lasted a couple of hours.

The electrical work on the first and second floors of the RDG Branch is finished; so, staff no longer needs to use the breaker in the electrical panel to turn lights off and on.

Our administration team regained access to the County Financial software on June 20. The problem with accessing the software began in March, and we could only enter bills and payroll from our offices twice during this time.

The County replaced parts of the sidewalk at the RDG Branch. The sidewalk has been an ongoing issue due to its deterioration and broken areas, which have caused falls for staff and the public. The County patched parts of the sidewalk with less damage. I have since received calls from the public indicating that the patching is inadequate, that the sidewalk is unsafe, and that the County should replace all damaged parts of the sidewalk.

The initial review of the ILS RFPs will begin in mid-July, and vendor demonstrations and evaluations will be the last week of July and the first two weeks of August. We anticipate a final selection of the vendor in the fall.

In response to comments indicating they could not hear speakers at our meetings, I purchased a set of wireless microphones. Once we receive them, we will do testing to learn how they operate and confirm that they will meet the needs of our meetings.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maureen Baker Wilkinson".

Maureen Baker Wilkinson
Library Director