

**FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MONROE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Regularly Scheduled Meeting October 18, 2017 – **As Amended.**

A. Call to Order:

The regularly scheduled October meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Monroe Township was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Suzanne King. Those present: Barbara Chamberlain, John Pohler, Ron Garbowski, Carol Patterson, Joan Betterly, Janet Mead, Joyce Samoyan, Linda Comfort, and Martha Oxley. President, Suzanne King confirmed that tonight's meeting is being held in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

B. Public Portion (Open/Close)

President King opened the Public Portion. Present: Jennifer Shurman and Therese Bonmati appeared for the Public Portion of the meeting as well as Mayor Daniel Teefy. Ms. Bonmati stated she was inquiring about the Library Director position. She asked when the Board planned on requesting the list of eligible candidates from Civil Service. She asked if that came up for discussion yet. President King answered no. Ms. Bonmati asked if the Board is planning on doing that any time soon? President King said she believed that had been taken care of by Karen Uhl. Ms. Bonmati stated she and Ms. Shurman came into last month's meeting after voting had already taken place. She said from her experience from going to meetings, she thought that voting was to take place during the public session. President King answered, no not during the Public Session. It takes place during the meeting. John Pohler stated it depends upon the issue that comes before the Board. Ms. Bonmati asked if there were any votes that took place before they came in tonight. President King stated the meeting was called to order and then the public portion of the meeting took place. Ms. Bonmati said when she listened to the minutes and during an inquiry the following day, it was stated there was no interim director. Ms. Bonmati said she spoke to Human Resources at the Mayor's Office. President King stated that person was not privy to the meeting. John Pohler stated the Library Board is not part of the Township. The Library is an independent agency and doesn't follow exactly everything the Township does on matters. The Library has its own guidelines set up by the State Library Association as to the functions how the Board operates and its mission. He further stated our people can negotiate their contracts with the Library Board rather than going before the Township.

Ms. Bonmati said when a person leaves depending on how they leave, you can appoint an interim Director but if it is from a person retiring, within the laws of Civil Service that doesn't exist. You would have to put in someone who is provisional, President King said the Board would get into that tonight. President King said the Board is waiting for Civil Service. Ms. Bonmati asked if the Board was planning on filling the position this year. President King said the Board is under the guidelines of Civil Service and they are waiting for their determination right now to give the next step to go by.

John Pohler noted what used to be Civil Service is now the Department of Personnel. Ms. Bonmati said she wants to make sure the Board is filling the position. If the Library does not have a Director, she believes the State can withhold the \$15,000.00 of funds that it gives to our Library if we don't have a Director. President King said it is not necessary to have a Director unless we get grants. Carol Patterson noted several past grants such as from the Gates Foundation.

Jennifer Shurman Brenner stated she had been to two previous meetings and she had spoken with the State Library. She stated the Library has to have a Director because our Municipality is so big and we are over the amount of people that we need. She said the Library has to be run by an MLS Director in order to secure State funds which is \$15,000.00. At the last meeting, Ms. Shurman said she had given Board members a copy of a Complaint for Ethics Violation. She wanted to know if there has been any movement on that. John Pohler said it is a moot situation. The Director is retired. Ms. Shurman asked if the Board knew when they hired Linda Comfort that Manny was her father? President King said the Board did not hire Linda Comfort. They had nothing to do with that. Ms. Shurman said so you hired someone's daughter knowing that their father would be supervising them. That is an ethics violation. Ms. Shurman said she will file against Manny, the Board and Linda Comfort.

President King asked what Ms. Shurman's goal is? The Board did not hire Linda Comfort. When she was hired, the Board had nothing to do with it. Manny was not her supervisor. Ms. Shurman said the Director is the supervisor of every employee. Ms. Shurman said her goal is to be the Director of her Town's Library. President King reminded Ms. Shurman back in June that she had asked her for her resume so she could be considered for the position and she had refused saying she would let Civil Service take its course. Ms. Shurman stated that Linda Comfort did not have the qualifications which requires a Director must have five year's experience as a certified librarian. Ms. Shurman said Linda Comfort graduated in 2013 not as an MLS Librarian.

Ms. Shurman stated that she had spoken with Civil Service at 2:30 this afternoon and no one had requested the list of applicants. Ms. Shurman said she had received her eligibility notice on May 3rd. She said the Library has to request the list and request an interview. Ms. Shurman also spoke about the West Deptford Library and how they had selected their new Director and then notified Civil Service. President King said that in this instance Civil Service was notified incorrectly because there were three candidates in house. Ms. Shurman again stated that Linda Comfort graduated in 2013 and not as an MLS Librarian.

Mayor Daniel Teefy stated he was present to support our residents and to make sure everything is done properly. He wants to make sure that we are doing the process right. He wants to protect our residents. He noted with Civil Service there are certain rules.

Any vote has to be on the public record. He said the prior vote was in Executive Session. President King noted that was incorrect. The vote was held during the meeting and is reflected in the minutes. Mayor Teefy said the Director is provisionally to be codified for that position. Discussion was held about the waiting period required by Civil Service. President King stated that Karen Uhl is the go between person coordinating with Civil Service. Janet Mead requested clarification if the word provisional replaces the word interim with regard to the position of Director. Regarding a statement that Linda Comfort was made a Level 3 in February of 2014, Ms. Shurman explained that in 2014 Civil Service changed the titles of Librarians from 3, 2, 1 to 1, 2, 3. Linda Comfort was not made a Level 3 until the last meeting.

President King closed the public portion.

Off the record.

Back on the record.

C. Approve Minutes of September 2017 Meeting.

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 2017 meeting was made by John Pohler, seconded by Joan Betterly. All voted in favor.

D. Financial Reports: Off the Record to allow Board Review. Back on the record.

1. Approve Financial Reports for September 2017.

Motion to approve the Financial Reports for September 2017 was made by John Pohler, seconded by Joyce Betterly. All voted in favor.

2. Approve Payment of Vouchers for September 2017

Motion to approve payment of Vouchers for September 2017 was made by John Pohler, seconded by Barbara Chamberlain. All voted in favor.

E. Director's Report:

Plumbing Issue:

John Pohler reported that he had come in on Sunday and Fred from the Cleaning Service showed him there was water all over from a toilet clogged up. Linda Comfort said that Buildings and Grounds came before the Library opened and fixed the problem. John Pohler reminded that because of the size of the pipe installed when the Library opened, there are habitual back ups if the effluent doesn't have enough water. Linda Comfort said as soon as she arrives, she flushes every toilet. John Pohler said she should alert the staff to check the bathrooms before they close for the weekend.

Computer Stalling:

Linda Comfort advised that every now and then a computer will stall. Ken Bellia trained her and she in turn trained Samantha so they can now handle this problem themselves without having to call him.

Scanner/Xerox Machine

Linda Comfort placed a call to Fred, an associate of Ken Bellia relative to a hard drive not working properly.

Letter from Carol Geschwindt:

Suzanne King read a letter from Carol Geschwindt who has been a patron and a volunteer for 18 years at the Library as well as a member of the Friends of the Library. She expressed her growing concern for the individuals always hanging out in the lobby of the Library. She noted that the furniture was a good idea but it attracts the wrong group of people. She wrote that she hopes the situation will be rectified. Linda Comfort said the Code Blue policy was Martha Oxley's idea where the Police will be called to handle unruly groups. Linda Comfort stated that 97% of the time, it is the same group. She noted some of them are older. The staff tries to be courteous. The last time the Police were called, three officers responded.

John Pohler noted as the weather gets colder, if there is a problem, call the police. The Board discussed removing the chairs from the lobby and requesting regular patrols. The Mayor asked to have his email address on any correspondence to the Chief so that he will know the Mayor is in support of the request. Suzanne King said she will personally stop to see the Chief concerning this issue.

F. Committee Reports:**Fund Raising Committee:**

Joan Betterly reported that the Friends had their Book Sale and raised just short of \$2,000. She noted that at this sale, the prices of the books were reduced. The next Book Sale is scheduled for the end of April 2018. Joan Betterly said she ordered the tables for the next Book Sale today. In view of the ongoing problems in the school district, the Friends group donated six boxes of Children's Books to be used by the displaced Holly Glen School children who are now at the High School so they would have a library. The Friends group delivered the books last week. They have offered to help with books at any of the other schools if needed.

Joan Betterly said the Library set up a Flood Bucket Collection by the door in conjunction with the Methodist Church. There were three buckets of supplies donated by patrons of the Library. The Church is taking care of sending the donations wherever they need to be sent. Joan Betterly also asked to be able to go ahead and plan the Volunteer Tea in December. She picked Friday, December 15, 2017 because the volunteers come in early in the morning before the Library opens.

The Board also discussed donating books to flood areas such as Houston or Puerto Rico. Suzanne King said she has a friend who is coordinating aid to Puerto Rico and she will contact him about this.

Gardening Committee:

John Pohler advised around November 15th the water to the garden has to be turned off. Next a call needs to go out to Buildings and Grounds to blow out the sprinkler system so we don't have a geyser burst during the winter. He noted the light timers need to be reset in view of the time change on November 4th to Eastern Standard Time. He cautioned the staff needs to be sure to contact Buildings and Grounds to adjust the lights so that staff will have lights going to their cars at closing time. John Pohler said he is planning a late October or early November winter clean up depending on the weather. He also reminded Linda Comfort to have Building and Grounds go up to the roof especially with the leaves falling to clear the downspouts to prevent ceiling leaks. This needs to be done every two weeks into December. He also reminded he may need coffee and donuts for the clean up volunteers. Joan Betterly will take care of that.

G. Old Business:

At last month's meeting, the Board approved a motion to appoint Linda Comfort as Interim Director. Carol Patterson made a motion to rescind the prior motion to appoint Linda Comfort as Interim Director; seconded by John Pohler. All voted in favor. Carol Patterson made a motion to appoint Linda Comfort as Provisional Director; seconded by Joan Betterly. All voted in favor.

H. New Business.**Sargent-at-Arms**

Motion was made by Carol Patterson to appoint John Pohler as Sargent-at-arms, seconded by Joyce Samoyan. All voted in favor with John Pohler abstaining.

Appreciation Lunch:

Carol Patterson made a recommendation that the Board recognize the wonderful job done by the staff with the schools being closed when they went to bat to set up things for the parents and children including legos. Linda Comfort said the public was very grateful. Motion was made by Carol Patterson to purchase hoagies from Shop Rite to treat the staff to lunch for the outstanding job they did the day of the school closings; seconded by John Pohler. All voted in favor.

Christmas Luncheon:

John Pohler asked Linda Comfort to speak with Karen Uhl to discuss where the staff would like to have the Christmas Luncheon this year. The event is usually held on the first Friday in December.

Mayor Daniel Teefy:

In view of all that was going on with social media, Mayor Teefy came upon the Library's notice that they were having programs going on for the children with the sudden school closings. He said that spirit of community made him feel proud. It was a really positive thing. Channel 10 was conducting interviews as Suzanne King arrived with about 10

other patrons that day. She said so many patrons and parents were struck by why this Township is so great as shown by the Library that day. Lots of agreement was expressed by all of the Board Members.

I. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Joan Betterly, seconded by John Pohler. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Susanne McKee, Clerk Transcriber

Suzanne King, President
Board of Trustees

