

New Providence Memorial Library
377 Elkwood Avenue
New Providence, New Jersey 07974

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
June 20, 2023

AGENDA

Call to Order

Roll Call:

Lisa Barfield
John Cronin
Jon Keaney
Stacey Maisch
Amy Mascarina

Lisa McKnight
Mark Ondris
Perry Scopelliti
Stephen Vidal
Angela Wilson

Welcome to Visitors, with instructions on when to address the Board

Friends Report

Approval of Minutes of the May 16, 2023 meeting

Communications – (Open)

Superintendent of Schools' Designee – Jon Keaney

Mayor's Designee – Lisa McKnight

Director's Report

Committee Reports

Personnel:	Amy Mascarina
Policy:	Mark Ondris
Sunshine:	Angela Wilson
Building & Grounds:	Stephen Vidal
Finance:	John Cronin

Action on Bills

Old Business

- Book Challenge Decision
- Library Design Consultant Recommendation

New Business

- Resolution 2023-5 (Friends Murder Mystery Fundraiser, approval to host event past open hours and serve wine as permitted by NJ Division of Alcohol Beverage Control)
- Bill payment procedures

Motion to Recess to Closed Session, if necessary

Adjournment

New Providence Memorial Library BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

June 20, 2023

Board of Trustees:	Ms. L. Barfield*	Ms. L. McKnight*
Roll Call	Mr. J. Cronin*	Mr. M. Ondris*
	Mr. J. Keaney*	Mr. P. Scopelliti*
	Ms. S. Maisch*	Mr. S. Vidal*
	Ms. A. Mascarina*	Ms. A. Wilson*

(* indicates present)

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the New Providence Memorial Library was held on June 20, 2023 in the Conti Family Community Room.

President Mark Ondris called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm, and stated the following: We welcome visitors and invite engagement between New Providence residents and the library. This meeting agenda was set last week and will proceed as planned. Since we acknowledge that we have visitors with us tonight, we ask that you hold your comments until the end of the meeting, after our New Business. At that time, visitors will be invited to address the Library Board of Trustees, with a two-minute time limit to allow for others to speak. When you approach the podium, please state your name, and your street address before your comments. This meeting, including all public comments, must conclude by 8:30pm, as the library closes to the public at 8:30pm. No further comments will be heard after that time.

President Mark Ondris stated that adequate notice had been given in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act by both publication of the meeting schedule in The Courier News and the Star-Ledger and on the library's website, and the Borough of New Providence's website.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Sangeeta Benbow, President of the Friends, was in attendance.

FRIENDS REPORT:

Ms. Benbow announced the Friends have a new secretary: Katherine Biber. They also have two new Friends: Karen Markes and Chris Standing, both Chatham residents. Karen has experience with fundraising. Their total cash reserves as of June 11th is \$10,309.82. Donations have started to taper off; between April to May they received close to \$6,000, but as of June only \$300.

There were 40 attendees and 70 entries at the Community Photography Exhibit and there were 40 attendees at the artist reception last Thursday. The glass cabinet in the front of the library is showcasing staff travel souvenirs and in July will showcase Friends' travel souvenirs. There was an article in the Tap about the art exhibit. The fundraiser is scheduled for November 4th. For the fundraiser, they have had two subcommittee meetings so far, have created an action plan, and will contact sponsors. She asked the Board for any sponsor suggestions (for cash and in-kind donations). Suggestions included Elefante, Indigo Gymnastics, Summit Playhouse, Coppola's, and the new M&M liquor store owner. The event size is limited to 50 attendees due to the price and room size. Attendees will purchase tickets in advance for around \$100. They will have one door price and five silent auctions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2023 Board meeting was made by Mr. Cronin and seconded by Ms. Mascarina. The minutes of the May 16, 2023 Board meeting were approved unanimously with the exception of Mr. Keaney who abstained.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Board Secretary – (Open):

Superintendent of School's Designee – Jon Keaney: Mr. Keaney announced that the school year is officially over. Prom was held at Brooklake Country Club, a clap-out was held at the elementary schools, teachers decluttered classrooms to make room for new furniture, and kindergarten screening took place for four-day kindergarten. Graduation was held indoors after a lightening strike at the high school. AWR School finished their clap-out 15 minutes before the storm. Mr. Keaney and Mr. Cronin plan to discuss ways to encourage school students to attend historical society events/talks.

Mayor's Designee – Lisa McKnight: Ms. McKnight reported that a ribbon cutting was held at Veterans Park for the new gazebo. Some dignitaries from Union County attended because the gazebo was partially funded with a grant from Union County. The gazebo in Centennial Park will be fixed in the next few weeks. Torbilt will donate their time and labor to do the re-build. To spruce up Centennial Park, trees will be trimmed and lights will be put up. Twenty years ago, Centennial Park was fully donated except for the concrete sidewalk. Fireworks will be held on July 3rd, the concert series starts in July, and National Night Out will be held on August 1st with fireworks.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Maisch announced that May was a quiet month after a busy April. We have five new substitute staffers and a sixth expected to start in July. The extra staffing has helped staff morale so that they can take vacation time without worrying how it will impact scheduling. We will change our B&H Security from Comcast to radio because the police are called every time power goes out. To resolve this issue we are switching to radio which will not go out in a power outage, costs \$1,000 less annually, and offers more reliable service. We will pay TLC monthly rather than annually but there will be savings. She thanked Ms. Mascarina for walking in the Memorial Day parade with NPML. It was the first time in 25 years that NPML has marched.

Ms. Maisch shared that Vivianne Adadevor (a local woman) takes book store donations that we cannot sell and ships them to Ghana at a personal cost of \$1,500 per shipment. She has been doing this for two years. Together we have filled a school and a library in a village in Ghana. She is meeting with Ellen Malosh (reference librarian) to discuss how to create a non-profit. Ms. Maisch wants to get Vivianne in the press to let the town know what she is doing. Vivianne also includes food in the shipments.

School visits took place toward the end of the school year, to AWR, Salt Brook, and the middle school, to discuss summer reading and get teen volunteers to sign up.

Mr. Cronin asked about sprinklers in the lawn at NPML. Ms. Maisch confirmed that a director (2-3 directors prior) insisted that NPML needs underground sprinklers, so NPML paid for it. Recently, a pipe burst so we did not turn on the irrigation this spring. DPW plan to water the lawn manually. It is not worth fixing the pipe if we are planning a building renovation. Ms. Maisch stated that the spigot is in a window well covered by plexiglass, so she would like the spigot to be moved outside of the window well for easier use.

Ms. Maisch stated that the following circulation substitutes have been hired at \$17.47 per hour: Patty Staunton, Urmi Ghosh, Sydney McCormack, and Tim Krick; and a Librarian Substitute, Amy Popp has been hired at \$31.19 per hour.

Ms. Maisch made a motion to hire the substitutes. Mr. Ondris seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

We visited eight libraries on May 3rd, professional development day. Other directors have contacted Ms. Maisch about doing something similar. The new magazine wall is one idea we took from other libraries.

Mr. Cronin made a motion to accept the Director's Report as submitted. Mr. Scopelliti seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel: There was no report presented.

Policy: There was no report presented.

Sunshine: Ms. Wilson announced that a get-well edible arrangement was sent to Elizabeth Hathway (children's librarian). Ms. Maisch read to the Board a thank you note from Elizabeth.

Building & Grounds: Mr. Vidal shared that Thirdway was the second consultant we dealt with and they came in with a very high bar and we were blown away by their depth of insight. Mr. Vidal recommends hiring Third Way. Mr. Cronin asked about the costs of an architect if we expand beyond our current walls versus if we only make changes to the existing footprint. Mr. Vidal commented that the architect is secondary and the overall of their insights is what we want.

Finance: Mr. Cronin reported that the budget is doing very well; income is overbudget, most expenses are underbudget, and we have a surplus of \$116k. Reserve funds have \$506k. The operating cash balance is \$117k but we will not move any to reserve at present time.

ACTION ON BILLS:

*Motion to approve the June 2023 Operating Account, Special Gifts Account, and Debit Card Account Bills Payable:
Seconded:*

*P. Scopelliti
J. Cronin*

Operating Account	\$ 87,380.65
Special Gifts Account	\$ 1,121.41
Debit Card Account	<u>\$ 385.95</u>
Total	\$ 88,888.01

Motion to pay the June 2023 Operating Account, Special Gifts Account, and Debit Card Account Bills Payable was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. McKnight shared that the Book Challenge Committee has come to a decision. We received two requests to reconsider library materials on May 15th and May 23rd, for *Gender Queer*, a young adult graphic novel

biography. Per NPML's book challenge policy, Ms. Maisch collects three published reviews, completes a written analysis and forwards the analysis to the Book Challenge Committee for review. The committee then reads the book, reviews materials from Ms. Maisch, discusses the book as a committee, and meets with the patron. There were two patrons - one accepted an invitation to come and discuss, the other never replied. One patron did come in for her opportunity to tell her side of it. During the meeting, the committee is silent and only listens to her. The committee's recommendation is not to remove materials because individuals should be trusted to make their own decisions about what they read and parents should be aware of what children are reading. The book is extremely far away from the children's room. The book is not on display, it is just shelved on the shelf, not in any way seeking out controversy. The book has never even been checked out. Ms. McKnight was the first person to check it out in the six months the library has had the book. One thing to keep in mind – the book is about sexual exploration – but this topic is not uncommon in the YA section. A public library's purpose is to provide free access to all without restriction. Parents should be involved about their own household limits. Parents can object to what their own children read but parents do not have a say in what other children read. The unanimous recommendation by the committee is to not remove the book and we spoke about passing a resolution against book bans. Mr. Ondris stated that he would like to put such a resolution on the agenda for a future meeting.

Mr. Vidal made a motion to not remove the book. Mr. Scopelliti seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

Ms. Maisch said she will resend the building design proposals to everyone again. Ms. Barfield reminded the Board that while we are in the preliminary phase we can still engage with Thirdway and simultaneously continue to research the wetlands. Ms. Maisch said Thirdway will present different options: updates to the existing footprint, a small addition, and a larger overall change. Mr. Cronin said it would be nice to have small meeting rooms like other libraries. Ms. Barfield said one possibility is to square off the building to make a small room. Ms. Maisch said if we get a new driveway and remove one of the internal book drops, we can convert that space to a small meeting room. Mr. Cronin stated that he does not like that the Director's office is so far away from the staff area; the current Director's office could be a meeting room or staff lounge and the Director should be in the staff area. Mr. Vidal mentioned that Mr. Vinjamuri suggested re-working the shelving on the long shelves to draw foot traffic back there, similar to retail stores like Barnes and Noble. Ms. Barfield said this is an example of the value add that Mr. Vinjamuri brings and he can transform libraries into community learning centers.

Mr. Vidal made a motion to accept the Thirdway proposal. Mr. Ondris seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously with the exception of Mr. Keaney who abstained.

VISITORS:

Mr. Ondris invited the public to address the board and requested they state their name and address.

Allan Swanson – 47 Overhill Road

Mr. Swanson congratulated the board. He stated he is here over this country wide movement on banning books. He commends the reasons we had for keeping the book. He encourages NPML to go one step further and make a statement about what is happening in the country and in New Jersey about book banning.

Mr. Ondris stated that the mood of the Board is that we will never ban a book. Mr. Ondris thanked Mr. Swanson for his comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Scopelliti explained that the current bills procedure is convoluted because of timing – the bills list runs from the day after the last meeting date to the current meeting date because the bylaws state that the “Treasurer will present to the board bills to be paid”. Mr. Scopelliti stated that in his one and a half years on the Board, the Board has never questioned payment of any bill. The current procedures are as follows: Ms. Maisch reviews and signs the bills/checks, Mr. Scopelliti then reviews and signs the bills/checks, and then the bills are presented to the Board for approval.

He proposes an amendment to the bylaws so that the Board does not have to approve the bills but rather will be notified of what has been paid. This process will allow for checks to be mailed more timely thereby avoiding late bills and late fees that arise from not being able to mail a check until the Board has approved the bills in the monthly meeting. During July and August, the Board never approves the bills anyways but rather is informed of what was paid in September. He proposed changing the language in Article 3 Section 5 from “shall present to the board the bills to be paid for approval” to “shall present to the board all the bills that have been paid for the previous calendar month.”

Ms. McKnight asked if there could be a different procedure for bills that are out of the ordinary. Mr. Scopelliti answered that is difficult because how does one define “out of the ordinary”. Ms. Barfield stated that once NPML begins construction, we will have many unusual bills. Mr. Cronin stated that since he has been on the Board, the Treasurer has always had a financial background and he is reviewing thoroughly. Mr. Scopelliti stated that if he sees an unusual bill he will question it. Ms. McKnight asked what happens if the make-up of the Board changes. Mr. Scopelliti stated that unusual costs are typically discussed with the Board in advance of receiving a bill. Mr. Keaney agrees with Ms. McKnight. Ms. McKnight stated that while she has full trust in the current Board, she has concerns in the future if/when the make-up of the Board changes. Mr. Ondris asked if Ms. McKnight would be happy with putting a cap on check amounts which would require approval of the Board. It was further discussed that this is not ideal because two checks could be cut for less than the cap.

The agreed upon and recommended solution is to prepare two bills lists each month – one mid-month and one at the end of the month per the following procedures:

1. The bookkeeper prepares the bills
2. Ms. Maisch reviews and signs the bills/checks
3. Mr. Scopelliti reviews and signs the bills/checks
4. Mr. Scopelliti emails the bills list to the Finance Committee and notifies them that he has reviewed the bills and recommends that the Committee approves the bills
5. The Finance Committee replies to Mr. Scopelliti’s email with confirmation and approval
6. Once the Committee approves, then the bookkeeper can mail the checks
7. The Finance Committee consists of three members, and currently includes Mr. Ondris, Mr. Cronin, and Mr. Scopelliti

Per Mr. Ondris, one month’s notice is required prior to updating bylaws so these changes can be re-discussed in September.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 2023-5 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FRIENDS OF THE NEW PROVIDENCE MEMORIAL LIBRARY TO HOST A FUNDRAISER

Resolution No. 2023-5 – Allows the Friends of the New Providence Memorial Library to host a murder mystery fundraiser inside the library building past open hours on Saturday November 4, 2023 from 6:30 – 9:30 pm. The Resolution was approved as follows:

RECORD OF BOARD VOTE

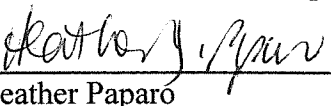
	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	NOT VOTING
L. Barfield	x			
J. Cronin	x			
J. Keaney	x			
A. Mascarina	x			
L. McKnight	x			
M. Ondris	x			
P. Scopelliti	x			
S. Vidal	x			
A. Wilson	x			

CLOSED SESSION:

There was no business requiring a closed session.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Mr. Cronin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Scopelliti seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.


Heather Paparo

Bookkeeper & Administrative Assistant

Mark J. Ondris
President