

Ramsey Free Public Library

Meeting of the Board of Trustees March 14, 2022

The March meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. Martin with the reading of the public meeting law. Also present were Mr. Bogaenko, Mrs. FitzPatrick, Mrs. Knauss, Mrs. McCaskey, Mrs. Palchisaca, and Mrs. Rennie, Trustees, and Director Latham. Mayor Dillon, Mrs. Ohnegian, Mrs. Thorp, and Councilman Gutwetter were absent. The minutes of the February 14, 2022 meeting were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. Rennie, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, and passed. The minutes of the Executive Session (February 14, 2022) were accepted as received on motion by Mrs. Rennie, seconded by Mrs. Knauss, and passed.

Correspondence: None

Library Board Members Comments: None

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Bogaenko had forwarded the financial reports which were reviewed. At this point, there is not much to glean from a review of the 2022 budget since things are generally a little skewed in the beginning of the year. The library's annual audit has been paid for. Upon motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, approval to pay the February bills was unanimously passed. The treasurer's report was received and filed for audit.

A special presentation was made to Friends of the Ramsey Library member and current President, Marilyn Taylor. Her numerous contributions to the FORL were highlighted and Mrs. Martin read a proclamation. Mrs. Taylor is moving to Massachusetts.

Director's Report: Director Latham began the meeting with physical plant updates. Following up from the February meeting, Director Latham reported that the necessary filter for the generator has not yet arrived. Supply issues have delayed receipt of the part. Once it is received, it will be installed by the library's plumber and then the generator company will return to verify full working order of the generator. In the meantime, the generator has been turned off since it was continually going into a state of alarm. Hopefully, that repair can be done by the end of the month.

The library's electrician has finished replacing nearly thirty light fixtures both inside and outside of the library. All outdoor lights have been replaced. Regarding the ground lighting in front at the main entrance, it may need to be partially rebuilt since it has not been looked at in some time and there may be some damage that requires repairs. A decision will be made once a repair estimate has been received.

One of the library's security cameras has malfunctioned and needs to be replaced. Additionally, the library's door alarm system has not been functioning properly for quite some time and has been turned off. Director Latham is working with Anthony Reganato to update the door alarm system and replace the malfunctioning security camera in the Quiet Study Room.

Despite being delayed because of the Omicron variant, the library's first Winterfest was eventually held in the back parking lot on Saturday, February 26th, with a turnout of approximately 275 people. There were three fire pits, hot pretzels, hot chocolate, hot cider, s'mores, backyard games, outdoor crafts, activities for children, and music. Director Latham would like to make Winterfest an annual event.

NJ Makers Day, a day when the state's libraries offer STEAM events and activities, will be in-person this year. Appropriate Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math activities are scheduled for teens and younger children on Friday, March 25th. A bigger event for all ages is scheduled for Saturday, March 26th. The day will be split up into three different sessions of about thirty people each.

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A new collection of thirty Vox Books has been added to the children's department. They are picture books that enable children to listen to an audio recording directly from a printed book. They are being offered on a limited basis and nearly all of them have been borrowed immediately.

The FORL will be running their spring used book and jewelry sale between Thursday, April 28th and Sunday, May 1st. Mr. Hofmann is working with them to improve promotion of the sale through various diverse outlets.

At the end of February, Winter Kindness Boxes were offered to provide a fun gift for using the library and checking out at least three Ramsey Library owned items. These boxes included a hot chocolate packet, cookies, and candy.

Because of the Omicron variant surge, the January programs were shifted to a virtual format and in-person meetings were postponed. The celebration of the Lunar New Year event was moved to a virtual format for a second year. Ms. Newton converted everything to a live, virtual event that was streamed live on Zoom, and then posted to the library's YouTube Channel. The number of performances remained the same as prior years. She also created wonderful decorations for the library along with additional crafts and take-home bags to celebrate Lunar New Year.

The 2021 audit, done by Garbarini & Co., was completed in February. Ms. Patel fully prepared all the materials for the audit and made the process very smooth for the actual audit. No notes were received that would indicate any needed changes. Upon motion by Mrs. Knauss, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, the 2021 audit was unanimously approved.

Director Latham reported that he and the Executive Committee have been discussing the future of the building project. At this point, there are two smaller immediate projects that could be completed at limited cost and with no changes to the building structure. The first is the painting of the community room. This could be done as a single project to repaint that room only. This would have no impact on other possible projects and would make an immediate positive impact on the most used community space in the building. He called attention to the corner which has been discolored due to a leak which needs to be further addressed. It was noted that the carpeting in the library needs to be cleaned. The second project is the review and restructuring of the library grounds which, for the most part, was not included in the first phase of the library building review project. For example, construction of an outdoor program space of some kind would be ideal, and it could be as simple as improving the landscaping, walkways and patio space near the gazebo, as well as adding a permanent awning element to provide shade during events. Additional storage space is definitely needed, and various actions have been taken to create more storage space. Options to increase the amount of outdoor storage space, even with the addition of another shed, need to be explored. Utilization of the library's extra property space might be possible for such things as a reading garden, informal program space, and a seating area. Additionally, a recent trend in libraries has been to add elements to the outdoor space that would enhance service. Director Latham asked approval to move forward with the painting of the community room and engaging some design specialists to review the outdoor space and bring back proposals for improvements that can be made. Funds for the work can be taken from the library's capital reserves, which has \$500,000 specifically allocated for capital projects, and another \$600,000 in bequest funds. The footprint of the building would not be touched.

Director Latham and the Executive Committee have also been working on the library's strategic planning process. He reviewed the purposes for creating a strategic plan which is standard practice for public libraries. The process is meant to evaluate how the library is functioning, to identify places which should be focused upon based on community need and to create goals based on that information. He shared several means of

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researching community needs including a community survey, a survey of the library staff, library board and FORL, demographics research, focus groups, and community representative interviews. A draft of a community survey question list was included in the monthly packet. A service like SurveyMonkey would be used to run an online version of the survey, supplemented with a printed version. Through the community representative interviews, individuals in Ramsey who are members of different communities within the borough would be identified and interviewed. He distributed a handout with various borough groups and representative individuals for possible interviews. The board members were asked to sign up to help with the interviews to be completed in conjunction with a member of the library staff.

Consent Resolution: None

Public Comment: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: Mr. Bogaenko suggested that an update regarding the various systems in the library such as the generator and the security system be included in the monthly report.

At 8:30 p.m., the meeting was closed on motion by Mrs. Knauss, seconded by Mrs. McCaskey, and passed.

