Demarest Free Public Library
Board of Library Trustees Meeting
July 10, 2023

1. **Call to order at 7:03 pm**

Secretary Shimokawa read the following:

This is a regular meeting of the Demarest Library Board of Trustees. The date, time and location of this meeting has been advertised in the Official Newspaper of the Borough, filed with the Borough Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. All notice of requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act for this meeting have been fulfilled.

2. **Roll Call**

Present: P. Desai; H. Shimokawa; L. Carson; E. Kass; S. Nankani; D. Hayden; A. Keysar; L. Ma; Council Liaison, D. Marks; A. Sandoval;

Absent: none

3. **Approval of Minutes of June 12th, 2023 Meeting**

- Motion to approve the Minutes of the June 12, 2023 meeting by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
  Minutes are approved.

4. **Modification of Approval of Agenda**

- Motion to approve the agenda content and modify the order to optimize Council Liaison Marks' limited availability in the meeting made by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
- The agenda and modified order are approved.

5. **Old Business**

- D. Marks introduced himself to the newer board members and shared that he is the lead liaison for the library and the Council.
- Museum of Natural History update- 80 tickets / $500 (per person, not per family)
  - This is a highly requested benefit and P. Desai would like to see how this benefit is received and utilized by the patrons before determining if any restrictions or parameters are needed to ensure broad access.
  - Pending approval of the mayor's office, P. Desai will move forward with this pass and drop the Children's Museum of NYC membership.
  - D. Marks confirmed that he and the Mayor had some questions around the museum pass' access and expiration dates. P. Desai provided the details and D. Marks will raise this in the Council's working session this evening.

- 2nd Quarter appropriation check update

- CFO is currently giving an estimate for this check based on 2022 numbers and not 2023. That 2022 Appropriation was $557K; however; the 2023 Appropriation *should* be $588K. This is still being provided as an estimate vs. the actual amount. The CFO stated that he is still waiting for the Borough's budget to be passed. However, the town's budget does not govern the library's appropriation.
- P. Desai reached out to the NJ State Librarian, Bob Keith, and he advised that, given the history of the collection of recent appropriation checks, the library seek legal counsel to assist with the collection of the past-due funds. He stated that, according to the statute (N.J.S.A. 40:54-8. Library Tax) "the library appropriation needs to be sent to the board Treasure in no fewer than quarterly payments based on the equalized valuation figures from the Division of Taxation for the current year." (See note below for full statute language)
- D. Marks requested that the board hold off on speaking with an attorney. He will liaise with P. Desai, the Mayor, CFO and Borough Administrator to resolve this issue. He also confirmed that the delta in the Library Appropriation for 2023 vs the amount confirmed by the CFO exists and needs to be rectified.
- P. Desai and L. Ma also requested a detailed statement (payroll, benefits, etc.) for each quarter, highlighting an issue with budget transparency. There have also been inconsistencies in the library's account & appropriation information provided by the Borough. An example of this includes: a non-library employee was listed on the library's payroll. P. Desai noted this with the Finance office and will not be covering that expense.
  -D. Marks will coordinate an in-person meeting with L. Ma, P. Desai and the Borough Finance Clerk to resolve this issue.
- The board shared its frustration with the lack of communication and cooperation from the Borough on this issue. D. Marks stated that he will be the point person for the library to address any, and all, issues with Borough Hall.

  ***N.J.S.A. 40:54-8. Library tax.

  a. Within every municipality governed by this article there shall annually be raised by taxation a sum equal to one-third of a mill, unless a higher rate is approved by the voters pursuant to subsection b. of this section, on every dollar of assessable property within such municipality based on the equalized valuation of such property as certified by the Director of the Division of Taxation in the Department of the Treasury in accordance with the provisions of R.S.54:4-49. The amount to be raised by taxation for a free public library pursuant to this subsection shall be assessed, levied, and collected in the same manner and at the same time as other municipal purposes taxes are assessed, levied, and collected therein and shall be paid from the disbursing officer to the treasurer of the free public library on a quarterly basis.

- D. Marks also shared two initiatives that he is working on with P. Desai.

- They are working with a historian on a presentation on the town. An intern from the high school will be assisting in recording this working session and uploading the content to the Demarest website and social media outlets.
- He is also working with the library on local senior outreach to strengthen the relationship and engagement with our town seniors.

- D. Marks thanked the board and had to leave to attend the Borough's meeting.
  - Motion to resume the normal order of business according to the agenda by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
  - The board resumes conversation according to the agenda.

- Treasurer's update on the Capital account
  -L. Ma shared that, due to the delay on the Appropriations Check, our Operating Account is below our threshold to confidently meet our expenses.
  -L. Ma has withdrawn $200K from our Capital account and will be depositing it into the new Fidelity account for US Treasury Bonds as soon as it is open. She just requires the President's signature to complete the application process.

6. Treasurer's Report

- Security Deposit Box keys have been duplicated. P. Desai will follow-up with Spencer Savings to have the key delivered to L. Ma.

- Motion to approve the Bill list by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
  Bill list is approved.

7. Buildings & Grounds Committee

- The Building and Grounds Committee met with Ed Arcari to review the final plans. He confirmed that the plans will be ready shortly to open the bidding.
- Some savings will be made by having minor repairs and shelf removal done by a local handyman in advance of the construction. P. Desai will be reaching out to confirm the work schedule. She will share that the library's policy requires that two people be present as some of the materials are heavy.
- A. Sandoval raised the issue of the gaps in the wood flooring in the Children's Room. *Please see the note in the Director's Report.

8. Director's Report

- General Updates
  - P. Desai received a quote of $854 from a local handyman for removing shelves in the quiet study room and moving the computer station.
  - The library has hired a summer intern.
  - P. Desai obtained an NJLA institutional membership for the library that provides all staff with access to NJLA resources.
- Building Maintenance

- Wood planks in the Children's Program Room and the small meeting room have settled and there are now potentially hazardous gaps between the planks. P. Desai has been in touch with two flooring companies on a State Contract to receive quotes on replacing the floor in those rooms. This is an urgent repair. The estimates for both rooms total $14K. P. Desai is waiting on the new construction estimate to see how much money the library might have to cover this repair. This work was listed as a part of the library's 5-yr improvement plan. P. Desai will also be looking into the cause of this plank settling before moving forward with this repair.
- The faucet in the public restroom needed to be replaced. A plumber was also called to repair a leak under the staff bathroom sink.
- LED light bulbs needed to be replaced. DPW did not respond to P. Desai's request for assistance, as this has historically been a service that DPW provides. Therefore, P. Desai had to call an electrician. S. Nankani also suggested P. Desai call Rockland Electric to request a complimentary energy efficiency consultation.
- P. Desai met with a few vendors and scheduled a complimentary estimate regarding the furniture needs for the renovation.

- Programming & Outreach
  - The library hosted a successful summer reading kickoff with a petting zoo and ice cream truck on June 26th that had over 50 kids in attendance.
  - Summer Concert, in partnership with Demarest Recreation Commission, is next Wednesday, July 19th. For the second consecutive year, the library co-sponsored this event. The contribution was $250.
  - Art School at Old Church showcase/reception was a great success with 45 people in attendance.
- Donations
  - The library has received its annual donation of $1,000 from the Richard Holzer Memorial Foundation.
  - The Youth Services Department received its annual $100 donation from the Demarest Board of Education as a token of gratitude for the support provided to the 8th grade research project.

9. New Business

- Patron Code of Conduct policy
  - Motion to approve the Patron Code of Conduct policy by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
    Roll Call Vote: All present vote YES.
    Patron Code of Conduct policy is approved.

- Solicitations & Distributions of Free Materials Policy
  - Motion to approve the Solicitations Policy by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
    Roll call vote: All present vote YES.
    Solicitations & Distributions of Free Materials Policy is approved.

- Move the October board meeting date.
    - Motion to approve moving the October board meeting to October 16th by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval
      Roll Call Vote: All present vote YES.
      Motion Is approved.
- Bookkeeper update
    - P. Desai has not yet been able to find suitable part time candidates. She was referred to a certified accountant who was willing to come in as a part-time bookkeeper at $35/hr.

  Motion to approve the freelance bookkeeper at the hourly rate of $35/hr for the next 3 mo. by L. Carson; Seconded by A. Sandoval.
  Roll Call Vote: All present vote YES
  Motion is approved.

10. President's Report

- S. Nankani connected the carpenter with P. Desai to discuss minor projects (noted above).
- L. Ma and P. Desai reviewed all the Bank account information required and the process to open the Fidelity Account.
- D. Hayden and S. Nankani checked in with P. Desai on her work from home arrangement due to health reasons and P. Desai has reverted to her usual schedule..
- Art exhibit event was very successful and a great example of how the library is fulfilling our strategic planning goals of "strengthening the library's role within the community".
- The Chess Club has had excellent attendance (almost 35 regular attendees). Moving forward they would like to continue the program. They may need to obtain 2 more tables for this club meeting. P. Desai will also work with TAB to see if there could be some TAB volunteer proctors for this event.
- Movie Night – patron feedback was that it would be nice to have more uplifting and lighthearted films shown. And coffee or snacks were also asked about.

11. Meeting Open to the Public

- No public was present, so we moved to adjourn the meeting.

12. Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Next Board Meeting will be Monday, September 11th at 7:00 pm.