

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
January 26, 2021 – Approved February 23, 2021

The annual Organization & Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Susan Morduch, President, at 6:02 p.m. and held via Zoom. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance at both meetings of the WLS Board of Trustees:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Cathy Draper, Wes Iwanski, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, Jonathan Marshall, Denise Matthews-Serra Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Francis Okelo, Edris Scherer, Bernie Seiler, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Joseph Puglia

Also present from WLS were: Terry Kirchner, Wilson Arana, Patricia Brigham, Rob Caluori, Elena Falcone, Krishna Horrigan, Joe Maurantonio, Allison Midgley, Francine Vernon, Elise Burke

Public Library Director Association (PLDA) Representative: Greg Wirszyla, Director, Bronxville Public Library & PLDA Second Vice President

DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION

Elena Falcone, Director of the WLS Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE) Department, gave an overview of department activities. Starting with the purpose for outreach activities as part of public library services and covering New York State's particular focus on serving specific populations including the aged, educationally disadvantaged, the unemployed or under-employed, those with disabilities or in institutions. Ms. Falcone spoke of how outreach fits into the library core values of access, confidentiality, diversity and lifelong learning. PIE thrives on relationships and has been using principles set for by Richard Harwood and the Harwood Institute of turning outward and listening to engage communities. WLS helps direct service, supervises content creation, and provides professional development. In addition, PIE works with numerous partners and funders to reach the many audiences served. A number of metrics are kept to assess services: traffic on all websites are monitored; customer surveys are distributed; and client interviews are held. Krishna Horrigan spoke about the Westchester Seniors Out Speaking (WSOS) program, PIE's flagship senior program that has two arms—community education presentations on Medicare (Medicare Minute and Demystifying Medicare) and one-on-one counseling available via Senior Benefit Individual Counseling Service (SBIC) available at 9 library sites. This program shifted to a virtual environment during COVID and continues to provide authoritative, objective and non-commercial information. Alan Houston from the Yonkers Public Library Grinton I. Will Branch Library spoke about the impact of the SBIC program at their library.

Pam Hoffman and Francine Vernon spoke about the Adult Learning/HSE program, which has a new layout using FirstFind and meeting people when and where they are available.

Community Conversations continue to focus on Resilience and the Breathe Body Mind program that offers relaxation practices to cope with crisis, which has been helpful during COVID. Due to this program, the Westchester County tagged WLS to help with Project Hope, which will train crisis counselors to set up referrals to other services and encourage people to get mental health information without stigma.

Services continue to be supplied to the Correctional Facilities; and in light of that, Interlibrary Loan

has been moved under the PIE Department. Ms. Falcone is always asking the question, “Who else needs to know about these services?” and trustees were encouraged to let her know.

ORGANIZATION MEETING

Dr. Morduch called the Organization Meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.; and Karen Zevin, Chair of the Nominating & Board Development Committee, reported that the following trustees have agreed to continue to serve. With no nominations from the floor, the proposed slate was presented:

President: Susan Morduch
Vice-President: Karen Zevin
Secretary: Bernie Seiler

Ms. Scherer has also agreed to continue as Treasurer. The slate of officers as noted above was approved on a motion by Ms. Mills-Worthey and seconded by Ms. Draper. The motion was passed unanimously.

Because of COVID, the Oath of Office required by New York State for public library system trustees will be sent to the renewed trustees, Ms. Bober and Ms. Mills-Worthey, for signature and filing.

There being no further business, the organizational meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m. by consensus.

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by President Dr. Morduch at 7:18 p.m. Dr. Morduch noted that guests will be asked at the end of the session if they would like to comment (maximum of 3 minutes each). The Board will not respond to comments made at the meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of December 1, 2020, were approved as submitted on a motion by Mr. Seiler and seconded by Ms. Zevin. The motion was approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The pre-audit financial report through December 2020 was presented by Mr. Caluori, who noted that the figures were unaudited and subject to change. The reports were reviewed in detail and was accepted on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion was approved unanimously. The webinar series on the financial statement has been postponed to later in the spring.

ACTION ITEM

WLS Bylaws Revision: The WLS Bylaws made no specific mention of general criteria required to serve on the WLS Board Trustees. At the October Board Meeting, a question was raised whether employment at a WLS member library would pose a conflict of interest. The Nominating & Board Development and the Governance Committees met on November 17th to discuss whether or not the WLS trustee eligibility criteria should be revised in the bylaws. The following revision to Article 1.

Trustees, Section 3 was proposed (with new text shown in bold italics) and presented at the 12/1/20 meeting in advance of official approval:

Section 3. ***Trustees must be at least 18 years of age and residents of the WLS district they represent. No current employee of the System or any member library shall be eligible to serve as a Trustee.*** Trustees shall be limited to serving two consecutive five-year terms, excluding any partial term when a member is appointed to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term.

The Board approved the revision to the WLS Bylaws as submitted on a motion by Ms. Draper and seconded by Ms. Scherer. The motion passed unanimously.

WLS Capital Budget FY2021: The Budget Committee of the Board of Trustees met on November 9th and November 23rd to review the proposed FY2021 Capital budget; and the proposed Capital budget was presented at the 12/1/2020 Board Meeting, at which time the matter was tabled.

The following projects were identified by the Information Technology (IT) Department, and the amounts listed represent the maximum expenditure for each. The total amount being requested for FY2021 Capital Projects is \$510,000. As requested, an additional meeting was held on January 19th to discuss future strategies involving this Capital Budget request, and Mr. Arana gave a brief recap of each project:

\$175,000 – Member Library Network: This request will replace existing equipment to elevate the speed and performance of the network that services all libraries.

\$35,000 – Service Vehicle: WLS owns two vehicles for the use of IT staff to travel to libraries. One vehicle was replaced in 2015, the other in 2012. This request is to authorize the replacement of the older vehicle.

\$300,000 – Replacement of Public PCs: This is a continuation of the 2020 project, which was not completed within the 2020 budget year mainly due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. This request is to complete the task of replacing all public-designated computers to provide patrons Countywide with a consistently faster and more productive user experience.

The Board approved the FY2021 WLS Capital Budget as submitted on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. Zevin. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEM

WLS Service Level Agreement – IT Draft Version 2.1: As part of the Information Technology (IT) audits that took place in 2020, it was suggested to have new service level agreements created to assist with understanding needs and expectations.

Prior to the document being forwarded to legal counsel, Mr. Arana presented the draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) focused on the online catalog/ILS document with the Board. Mr. Iwanski, Chair of the IT Audit Working Group, noted that the WLS IT Audit Working Group met several times along with the PLDA Finance Committee to craft the current version, which was reviewed by the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) who issued the following statement:

The ILS and all related costs be removed from the current model and be treated as an independent service provided by WLS IT, and that all other IT services be offered through a fee for service model with actual fees provided to member libraries at the time of contract removal when possible.

One concern regarding the SLA was raised regarding sections 1.3 and 1.4 to ensure that the duration of this agreement would extend from year to year. The Board will be updated once the legal counsel has completed its review.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morduch shared brief comments on the board and executive director evaluations, which were very positive. An effort is being made to make more efficient use of the Board Meeting time.

Presentations regarding WLS operations, similar to the one that Ms. Falcone gave, will continue this year. Questions or suggestions can be sent directly to Dr. Morduch. The committee assignments are mostly set and are being confirmed by Dr. Morduch.

Libraries have their own internal issues that aren't relevant to WLS; but often Dr. Kirchner is asked to advise libraries on these issues. These are not discussed at WLS Board Meetings, but this is an important part of Dr. Kirchner's job duties that Dr. Morduch wanted to acknowledge.

Dr. Morduch shared a very kind note that Ms. Zevin sent to Ms. Burke thanking her for the superior minutes of the last meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating & Board Development Committee: Ms. Zevin, Chair, noted that at the end of this year, the terms of Ms. Zevin, Dr. Morduch and Mr. Seiler will expire (they are also serving as officers). If interested in serving a second term, trustees should contact their represented libraries. The Committee has met and discussed the WLS Trustee job description, and that has been tabled until after the WLS Board Retreat with Jerry Nichols that is scheduled for February 9th.

Governance Committee: Ms. Draper, Chair, noted that they are working on a health emergency and remote work policies. A meeting will be set up once the new roster is distributed.

Budget Committee: Ms. Scherer, Chair, noted that this committee is not active at this time, and the Audit Committee will be starting earlier. Dr. Kirchner noted that the Audit Committee gives a very good overview of WLS's operations.

Strategic Working Group: Ms. Kelley has agreed to chair this group, which will get started soon.

WLS Trustees were reminded that all committees can be attended and audited.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A copy of the Executive Director's Report was mailed in advance of the meeting.

A Library Author Talk is scheduled on Thursday, January 28th, at 7 p.m. Member libraries are interested in sharing this approach. Delané Michel and Dan Fried from Book Ya Ya are working with WLS on this pilot project. They are looking to build a strong viewer base that will attract top authors to build stronger community activity in Westchester.

Library Advocacy Day at the end of February has gone virtual. A virtual library advocacy visit has been scheduled for Friday, February 26th, at 9 a.m. with the NYS legislators in the Assembly & Senate that represent Westchester. The NYS budget includes a 7.5% reduction in Library Aid and a 0%

increase to Public Library Construction Aid. No word regarding Federal level funding has been received.

A WLS Trustee Institute has been scheduled on Wednesday, March 3rd, with Jerry Nichols to discuss the roles and responsibilities of Library Trustees. More information will be sent regarding both programs. Mr. Nichols will also be leading the WLS Board Retreat scheduled for February 9th.

Ms. Mills-Worthey noted that Ms. Falcone’s presentation was engaging but did not concentrate on metrics for each program. Dr. Kirchner noted that this can be part of the strategic discussion, and it would be helpful for us to understand what information is needed to make better decisions for the future. Dr. Kirchner will share information from previous reports with Ms. Mills-Worthey, who will send specific questions separately. The idea for a data dashboard was discussed but was put on hold due to COVID-19.

PLDA LIAISON’S REPORT

Dr. Morduch welcomed Mr. Wirszyła, PLDA 2nd Vice President and WLS Board Liaison. Mr. Wirszyła noted that most topics were already covered and reported that the directors felt it was important to have their voices heard so the Finance Committee brought forward their statement regarding the finance model in light of the SLA, which was passed by PLDA membership.

OTHER

Trustees were reminded of the upcoming events: January 28th – Book Ya Ya Library Author Talk; February 9th – WLS Board Retreat with Jerry Nichols; February 26th – Library Advocacy Virtual Visit; March 3rd – WLS Trustee Institute: Trustee Roles & Responsibilities with Jerry Nichols.

Dr. Morduch noted that she is still working on the board questionnaire, and Mr. Seiler graciously took on rewriting the survey.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:08 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Draper and seconded by Ms. Zevin that passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Bernie Seiler

Bernie Seiler
Secretary