

**FEBRUARY 27, 2017 MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE PARSIPPANY-TROY HILLS LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Joseph Weisberg called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in the Downstairs Meeting Room of the Parsippany Library. The purpose of this meeting is for the Library Board of Trustees to take formal action on library business. Notice of this meeting has appeared in the January 5, 2017 issue of the *Daily Record*. Notice has been posted on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the three library branches.

**II. ROLL CALL**

*Present:* Herb Levine, Christine Liparini, Rosemarie Merola, Jerrold Moses, Fred Preston, Joseph Weisberg, Mayor James Barberio, Loretta Gragnani, Lisa Vallacchi, Jayne Beline

*Excused:* Roberta Chopko, Ellen Waldman

*Absent:* Jennifer Frantz, LeRoy Seitz

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***MOTION:*** To approve the Agenda by Moses, seconded by Merola. ***Motion carried.***

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

***MOTION:*** To approve the January 30, 2017 Minutes of the Library Board of Trustees Meeting by Moses, seconded by Merola. ***Motion carried with abstention by*** Preston, Vallacchi.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING**

The meeting was opened to the public at 7:04pm.

A. Public Participation – President Weisberg opened by stating that the Board sincerely appreciated the interest in the Mt. Tabor Branch Library. The Board’s decision to make a six-hour cut (2 hours for 3 evenings) at the Branch was very well thought out and made so that the Board could afford to keep the Branch open. He emphasized that the Board had never made a decision to close the Mt. Tabor Branch Library. He said that closing the Branch had been suggested, but was strongly rejected. The Board has had to make additional cuts in other Library services besides the reduction in hours at Mt. Tabor. At the Main Library, the Sunday hours grant has been reduced from 37 to 26 Sundays a year. The Board has been asked to postpone very seriously needed renovations (upgrading and repair) to the Lake Hiawatha Branch Library. Based on a \$1.5M estimate from 2010, plans were drawn up but the scope of the project escalated to \$3M.

Director Jayne Beline explained one-third mill of equalized valuation, whereby the Library receives mandated (by NJ State Statutes) funding through the Township based on property value for the prior year. Sometimes over the years, the Township has funded the Library more than the mandated amount for capital projects. She expressed appreciation and said that the Township has been very supportive of its Public Library.

**Jim Lau** – Mt. Tabor resident – Reports differences in services and hours compared to the Main Library and the Lake Hiawatha Branch, that the Bethel is not utilized, and that the

lease agreement has been in limbo for over a year. He read the Library's Vision Statement. He said there are only about 4-5 hours/week available to residents who work and there are no children's programs held there. Mayor Barberio addressed the lease issue stating that the building belongs to the CMA. It was proposed that the Township would make a contribution of \$1/year and in return maintain the building. The attorneys have been working on the agreement, but no agreement has been signed. The Mayor said that the Township also pays liability insurance. Jayne Beline said that the Bethel was not included in the proposed agreement because the Board was told it would cost extra to use it. President Weisberg said that in the past, the Library's employees had to set up and clean up when they used the Bethel.

**Rich Morgan** – Mt. Tabor resident and CMA President – He said that there has never been a charge for use of the Bethel but some time ago when negotiating a prior lease agreement the Bethel was described as a "value added component" when asking for a small raise in the rent. The rent had been stable for seven-eight years. He said with the proposed agreement, there will not be an extra charge for use of the Bethel. Mayor Barberio stated that the economic value of the Township wasn't doing well and that \$3-4,000 is a lot when there are no increases in income. Going forward 2017, 18, and 19 look as if values of Parsippany properties should increase significantly and ratables have also increased. Mr. Morgan said the people are arguing the funding of each branch—wanting a bigger piece of the pie. The Mayor said that he and the Council President are present to understand the concerns and to work with the Library Board as best as possible.

President Weisberg reminded everyone that the Township's income has decreased and therefore the Library's income has decreased. Mr. Morgan expressed concern that if usage at the Branch goes down, there will be further cuts—a downward spiral. President Weisberg said the usage had indeed been decreasing prior to cuts in hours.

**Mary Ann O'Brien** – Mt. Tabor resident – Ms. O'Brien asked if everyone on the Board actually read the proposed lease in November 2014. The Bethel is included and there is no additional fee for it. She asked if hours couldn't be 1-9, rather than 9-5, so that people who work could use the Branch. She said she is not clear as to why the Bethel ceased to be used, why the Children's programs were eliminated, and why the lease has not been executed. She also asked to have the invoice/purchase order practice explained as in the case of payment of rent. She said there was no lease in 2015 but the rent was paid; why not last year. Jayne Beline said there was a lease in effect when payments were made and there haven't been any payments because the Township is now negotiating the lease. President Weisberg said there is no lease for now. Mayor Barberio said the Township does not run the Library, but he will call her.

**Jennifer Roth** – Mt. Tabor resident – Ms. Roth stated that she uses the Branch all the time because she works from home (in addition, she uses all Parsippany Branches and libraries all over Morris County). She is concerned about the future of the library. She said she wants to be creative in solving the problems that won't involve money; she wants to be part of the solution. There are ways to keep the hours the same and bring back the programs without cost by utilizing volunteers. She said the evening hours are important to the children in the summer. President Weisberg said that the Board wants to keep the library open because they are concerned about the future of the library.

The Director stated that the Board looked at various library models and the Mt. Tabor Branch was being treated as an Express Library, which is why programs are no longer held there.

**Students** – We all want the programs back at the Library. I wish that volunteers could run the programs because I would run a book club there. Also we use the Library a lot more during the summer and it's always closed when we want to use it. It would be good to have summer hours and winter hours.

Board Member Christina Liparini asked the students what they enjoyed most about the Library, what's most important to have at the Library when you need to go. Browse through books to find something to read, to do activities there with friends, programs. Asked if they use the main Library, they said yes, but they can't walk there.

Another student said she is in the Drama Club at school and the Library is closed when she gets home.

President Weisberg assured the students that the Board and Director will try to bring back some of the hours, but it will take time.

**Rebecca Sondergan** - Requested that a sign be placed in front of the Library where there had been a sign showing the hours, making it clear when the Library was open. She would like to see the Library open more than one night a week.

**Tim Severer** – He stated that the residents were never consulted about the loss of programs and cutting the hours. They are a concerned community and will work to solve the problem. On November 4, 2016, a fundraiser for the Library was held that raised \$20,000. He asked outside of labor cost, what is the cost to restore all the hours. The Director replied that the cost just to operate the Mt. Tabor Library is \$70,000 a year with the hours cut. (note that does not include Library materials, admin costs, etc.) Before the cut in hours, it cost approximately \$110,000. Mr. Severer also asked about the new requirement to have two people staff the Library and stated that one of the two people could be a volunteer. Board Member Jerrold Moses stated that the volunteer would have to assume the liability if anything happened involving him/her at the library while volunteering.

President Weisberg said there wasn't time to hold a public meeting when the budget notification came. He also asked the group to picture themselves alone in the Library at 4:30pm in December and January.

Council President Dr. Valori interrupted to state that Mr. Peluso and Mr. Carifi needed to leave the meeting because their presence constituted a quorum. The Councilmen stated that they supported the Library and the Friends of the Library as well and left the meeting.

President Weisberg continued. He stated that the Library Board has always had excellent support from the Council. He stated that volunteers would have to be trained and be insured. Volunteers do not have the same commitment as employees, and if they cannot be there, Library staff must be shuffled around to replace them, causing a shortage in another area.

The President stated that the discussion could only continue another ten minutes since it has been going on almost an hour and the Board needed to have its regular business meeting.

In response to Mr. Severer's question as to the cost of security checks and insurance for even two volunteers, the Director said it would also have to include the cost of a volunteer

coordinator to schedule the people. The President reminded everyone that it would cost more to pay the staff to have more hours.

**Glenda Haase** – A teacher in the district for over 30 year, she discussed educational reasons about the importance of children’s programs and the importance of encouraging our children to use the Library. Through school programs and even class trips, children will be asked to go to the Library, get a library card, and make good use of them. Children use the Library for resources and for homework. Adults also access computers to look for jobs when they may no longer have access to the Internet at home.

**John Walz** – Because he works, the cut in hours has limited his use of the Library from Sunday-Friday to under two hours. He said the Library is based on an express model, but he has had a notice that his interlibrary loan book is in and has to wait for three or four days since he cannot pick it up due to the hours the Library is open.

President Weisberg turned the meeting over to Council President Dr. Valori, who thanked everyone for being here tonight and said that “truly from the heart, we (Council, Administration, and Library Board) are going to do whatever we possibly can do to work this out.” He said support was given to the Library last year during difficult times and we are not going to let you down.

Mayor Barberio clarified that the two Councilmen were asked to leave the meeting because the Open Public Meetings Act (aka the Sunshine Law) states that if three or more members of Council attend a meeting not published in the newspaper, it constitutes a violation.

The Mayor said he would investigate the question of liability insurance for volunteers as he thought volunteers could be a good solution. He will also investigate with the Administration and Library to determine if there is anything that can be further done with the budget at hand. He will report to President Weisberg about the liability insurance. This insurance is carried by the Township. Background checks are required to protect the children. He assured the attendees that their concerns have not fallen on deaf ears. He said that the next two years should be good as rates in town have increased significantly. Every time a company comes to Parsippany, it benefits the Library. The Mayor responded to Board Member Christina Liparini’s query that he would also follow up on the Mt. Tabor Branch Library lease.

Board Member Jerrold Moses thanked everyone for attending and stated that he has been on the Board for 23 years because he loves libraries as do the other Board Members. He is pleased to see that the residents of the town also love their Library.

This portion of the meeting was ended so that the Board could move to the Board Meeting Room to continue the meeting.

- B. Friends of the Library – Jayne Beline reported for Pat Simon that the Bag Sale will continue through the upcoming weekend. The tables are active, although slower than usual. The total for the sale should be available by mid-March. The next book sale will begin in early April and will feature the arts, movies, and music. The Friends donated \$4,000 to the Library and they have a wish list of things they would like to see purchased.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:12pm.

**VI. REPORTS**

## 1. Finance

Jayne Beline reported that the Library will soon have their budget hearing scheduled with the Township. Ellen Sandman sent suggested budget figures (distributed). Sunday hours will be reduced. The Town will supplement the employer's share of the pension (PERS), although Jayne would like to attempt to pay the total. Budget figures will need to be reworked so that she can determine if this is possible. The Library contribution toward medical insurance will be \$450,000 because another employee was added. We have not yet heard back from the broker as to alternative prescription and medical plans, even though Jayne has followed up. Jayne reported that the woman who, unbeknownst to the Library, had been on the medical plan and was removed, has passed away.

In response to Loretta Gragnani's question about the Kiwanis grant, Jayne reported that if awarded it will be \$5,000, which will provide services to benefit the children and teens in the community.

## 2. Buildings and Grounds

Lake Hiawatha Branch Library – The door has been fixed.

Main Library – We are investigating the possibility of grant opportunities for solar panels for the parking lot. President Weisberg suggested speaking with Tony Bonivita of the PAL.

Mt. Tabor Branch Library – The sign needs to be replaced by the Township Parks and Forestry Department as soon as Branch hours are determined.

## 3. Personnel

Each full-time Library assistant is devoting four hours a week on a rotating schedule to go to the Mt. Tabor Branch. This is working out well. The head of the Lake Hiawatha Branch is also serving as the head of Mt. Tabor, spending each Thursday there.

The head of Children's at Lake Hiawatha will retire in June. Jayne plans to move people around and interview current staff to head up the position.

## 4. Policy – There was no report.

## 5. Technology

Envisionware, a print management system purchased through MAIN at a discount, will be installed on or about March 27.

In response to Jerry's question about the MAIN assessment, Jayne said the larger libraries will be able to pay using a payment plan. Our assessment for MAIN is approximately \$71,000.

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## A. Questions Concerning the Director's Report – There were none.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Director's Bulletin

**MOTION:** To approve the Director's Bulletin, Number 210, dated February 27, 2017 by Moses, seconded by Merola.

**AYES:** Levine, Liparini, Merola, Moses, Preston, Weisberg, Vallacchi

IX. CLOSED SESSION

**WHEREAS**, the Library Board of Trustees is about to discuss items on the agenda related to Contracts,

**WHEREAS**, these matters would be more appropriately discussed without the attendance or participation of the public, and

**WHEREAS**, the Library Board of Trustees believes that the substance of the discussion conducted at this closed session may be made known to the public at the conclusion of this closed session,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that pursuant to the provisions of Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, the public shall be excluded from attendance and participation in the discussions by the Library Board of Trustees of the above matters, and it is further RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees undertake to make available to the public the substance of the discussion conducted in this session at the conclusion of the closed session, moved by Moses, seconded by Merola. **Motion carried.**

**MOTION:** To return to regular session by Moses, seconded by Levine. **Motion carried.**

X. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting at 8:49pm by Moses, seconded by Merola. **Motion carried.**