
**GREAT NECK LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE
BUDGET WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

A first budget workshop, was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2021, via Zoom [Agenda attached]

The following Trustees were present constituting a quorum:

Weihua Yan – President
Liman Mimi Hu – Vice President
Chelsea Sassouni – Treasurer
Scott Sontag – Assistant Treasurer
Kathleen Gold – Assistant Treasurer
Josephine Mairzadeh - Trustee

Also Present: George Trepp – Interim Director
 Steven Kashkin – Business Manager

Absent with Prior Notice: Barry Smith – Secretary

Call to Order

President Yan called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and turned it over to Trustee Sassouni, Treasurer.

Review and Discussion of 2021/2022 Budget

Steven Kashkin, Business Manager, provided an overview of the first draft of the budget for the fiscal year 2021/2022. The total for the budget presented is \$9,609,125 made up of \$8,759,638 from taxation, \$116,000 from PILOT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes from the Great Neck School District) Revenue and \$733,488 from Tax Revenue from Debt Service. A copy of the budget is appended to these minutes.

This draft budget will be revised to include suggestions from the Board and presented at the second budget workshop on March 22, 2021.

These minutes provide highlights and comments on the 1st draft budget:

OPERATING REVENUE

Mr. Kashkin reported that the revenue was reduced by \$57,000 with the assumption that the library will be almost fully operational by October 1st, three months into the new budget year. He noted that one of the biggest reductions is in the interest income received from banks due to the multiple federal rate decreases.

Trustee Sassouni questioned the amount budgeted for Fines (line 14) since the library is not currently collecting them and it is not known how much longer this practice will be in place. Trustee Hu said that the Policy Committee is currently considering the implementation of an amnesty program for the library that could potentially permanently waive late fees. President Yan recommended budgeting this line at zero while the board considers what to do with fines.

Trustee Sassouni feels that a 900% reduction on the Interest Income – Savings (line 24) is too much. Mr. Kashkin said that banks are giving little to no interest during this pandemic. Trustee Sassouni requested backup to fully understand how much money is in these accounts. President Yan suggested that the library look into other ways to invest their money in a safe way that will have a higher return.

Trustee Mairzadeh referred to Gift Income (line 26). She asked under what condition donations are made and if they are fiscal donations or in-kind gifts. Mr. Kashkin responded that they are in-kind gifts typically for the Levels shows.

Trustee Hu wondered if the library has been actively applying for grants which could affect the amount in Local Library Service Aid (line 29). Mr. Kashkin said that although no grant funds have been added to this draft, they can be input into the 2nd draft should the library qualify for any. Mr. Trepp stated that the Local Library Service Aid will be reflected in a legislature that may adjust the Governor's budget in March and impact the aid to libraries.

Public Comment: M. DiCamillo asked the board to consider offering incentives to ensure people return material in a timely manner while they work on revamping the fines program.

SALARIES

Mr. Kashkin noted that salaries have been reduced by over \$200,000 due to 17 open positions, 12 of which will not be filled until later in the fiscal year. No new positions have been added because employees from other locations will be utilized when we reopen while the branch renovations are ongoing. Mr. Kashkin reported that there are 10 open positions budgeted for January 2022 and five open positions budgeted for the beginning of the fiscal year. He added that the open Director position is budgeted for November and the Assistant Director position is budgeted for April. Trustee Hu wondered if the Director and Assistant Director should be budgeted closer together. Mr. Kashkin said that if the board agrees he has flexibilities in other funds to move money around.

Trustee Sassouni said that the librarians' salaries seem high. She questioned if its inline with the previous years. Mr. Kashkin said he will look into it and provide a comparison.

Trustee Sassouni wondered if the reduction in part-time Librarians and Clerks (lines 72 and 73) is enough considering that we will have to reallocate. Mr. Kashkin said that it is driven on when we are bringing back open positions and that the hours there are the ones currently scheduled for part timers.

Trustee Hu asked if there is a budget set aside for continuing education reimbursement. Mr. Kashkin stated that there is money for this in the Recruitment and Training line under Administration.

Public Comment: J. Pizer recommended conducting an evaluation of staff needs to see whether or not positions need to be filled.

LIBRARY MATERIAL AND PROGRAMS

Mr. Kashkin shared that the budget for this section is determined with input from the department heads. He said adjustments were made to programs, specifically for Parkville, in anticipation of the branch renovations. Book adjustments were also made and additional funds were allocated for computer software.

Trustee Sassouni said she expected larger cost savings on Recordings Audio – AV (line 116) and Recordings Video – AV (line 117) through the library’s membership with NLS. Mr. Kashkin stated that the NLS savings are reflected more in the E-books and E-Audiobooks. Trustee Hu noted that there are many benefits with NLS membership that will not be seen in dollars.

Trustee Sassouni suggested having department heads use data to support their budgets.

Public Comments: J. Pizer said that the library was also supposed to see savings on databases. M. DiCamillo asked why there are funds in the E-book category considering everything is being relayed over into NLS. Mr. Kashkin stated that not everything is going through NLS. Trustee Sassouni requested Mr. Kashkin bring to the next workshop a breakdown of the cost savings on E-services as a result of the library’s NLS membership. Mr. Trepp clarified that the cost savings on databases is a reduced rate which is obtained through group purchasing.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE

Mr. Kashkin noted that the reason for the significant difference in this line is because this is where the dollars for the Interim Director (Outside Consultant) are budgeted. He said the consulting expense is budgeted through November to offset the hiring of a new Director. Mr. Kashkin announced that the increase to conference fees & expenses is due to the PLA (Portland, OR), ALA (Washington, DC) and NYLA (Syracuse, NY) conferences being held this year. He added that this number may change if any of these conferences go fully virtual.

Public Comments: M. DiCamillo asked if the consultant expense is being categorized in two locations in the budget. Mr. Kashkin said it is in just one.

BUILDING AND OCCUPANCY

Mr. Kashkin stated the increase here is primarily due to having the guard on for a longer period of time during the first three months of the new budget year before bringing him back to pre-COVID hours. He reported that additional funds were put into the landscaping fund for the upcoming project and that rent escalations were also taken into account.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu.

Respectfully submitted,

Weihua Yan, President
Board of Trustees