

**GREAT NECK LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES BUDGET HEARING
APRIL 7, 2014 AT 7:30 P.M.**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Monday, April 7, 2014, in the Community Room of the Great Neck Library, 159 Bayview Avenue, Great Neck, NY 11023, for the purpose of discussing the NLS Delivery Fee and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) system for library materials, followed by a review and hearing for the proposed 2014/2015 budget. [Agenda attached].

The following Trustees were present constituting a quorum:

Marietta DiCamillo – President
Francine Ferrante Krupski – Vice President
Varda Solomon – Secretary [Arrived at 7:45 p.m.]
Josie Pizer – Treasurer
Joel Marcus – Assistant Treasurer
Michael Fuller – Assistant Treasurer
Janet Nina Esagoff [Arrived at 7:47 p.m.]

Also present:

Laura Weir – Interim Director
Christine Johnson – Interim Assistant Director
Neil Zitofsky – Business Manager

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 p.m. by President DiCamillo.

NASSAU LIBRARY SYSTEM MEMBER LIBRARY SUPPORT

Interim Director Weir summarized her report to show how services would be affected during the closure of the Main Building if Great Neck were to become a member not in good standing for failure to pay its portion of the delivery service fee. She also provided a cost comparison chart to show the differences in cost for the services NLS provides as opposed to acquiring them independently of NLS. [Report and chart are attached]

She stated that when the main building will be closed is not a good time to start a new system, and we will have to depend on member libraries to loan us materials, and they may not if we are not in good standing in NLS. She further added that after the library reopens, we can explore the possibility of purchasing databases independently of NLS with the flexibility to choose those databases that are most suitable for our patrons as opposed to NLS “bundled” collection which includes some databases that are of limited interest to our community.

Janet Fine, Head of Circulation Services who attended the meeting, supported the Interim Director’s suggestion, and she urged the Board not to consider taking any action until after the renovation is completed as this would have a serious impact on services.

President DiCamillo then read the following statement:

“I don’t want to rehash every issue between the Nassau Library System and the GNL, but know there are many. To identify some: the GNL is being financially penalized because we have a large library system (consisting of four buildings) and are committed to provide excellent library services. Because our budget exceeds \$8,000,000 annually we pay the highest of all Nassau County libraries, NLS refuses to consider the three branches as separate entities yet refuses to deliver any materials to any of our other “satellite” locations. We requested a review of the NLS budget, line by line, to determine if anything could be reduced, to my knowledge this exercise has never been done. We want accountability – a justification of the over \$1,000,000 NLS ask – they refuse to provide an accurate accounting of the services that Great Neck uses on a cost basis. They don’t utilize competitive billing on their database subscriptions. Member Library Trustees have little or no influence over the costs to be borne by the end users. Last, NLS openly refuses to adopt all aspects of the Public Officer’s Law, Freedom of Information Law or the Open Meeting’s Law, which the GNL voluntarily adopted decades ago.

This so called “fee” is in reality an additional tax being imposed on Great Neck residents for a delivery service of books and materials which represents less than 2% (.017) of our entire checkouts. This calculation is relevant to the calendar year 2013. In 2013, we paid \$46,912 for this service, which was, in some instances, ten times the amount of what other libraries paid. Since 2011 we have worked to correct the inequities in the NLS formula – the results of these meetings have been well documented at GNL meetings and the minutes which includes the rude treatment of our Trustees at the hands of the NLS Board. The GNL even went to New York State Librarian, Bernard Margolis, all to no avail. We are at a cross road, Main will close at the end of 2014. It is my recommendation we continue the NLS fee until the main building reopens the following year. Timing is everything and while our supply of materials could be limited during closure, ending the NLS relationship, at a concurrent time, would be a disservice to our public. Hence, I am recommending we continue our member library support through the end of 2015.

However, on the subject of voluntary services, we must change the way we secure our databases, online services and core collection. I am further recommending that, after June 3, 2014, we no longer purchase these items through NLS. There is no competitive bidding, and, in some instances, GNL pays an unfair share for the use of these databases. NLS in its core collection (\$33,000 per year) purchases databases that are inferior or ill-suited to this community. GNL will buy directly from the database vendors (making educated decisions, based on our professionals knowing what our residents prefer) – we will no longer be obligated for third party weighted billing. No more 2% NLS fees added to everyone our bills. This change will result in better integration of existing services such as Overdrive and e-books; tailored to meet the specific needs of our constituents. This will also provide fiscal transparency and significant control over the products we purchase, resulting in improved service to our residents.” [End of statement]

President DiCamillo then added that the professional staff recommended, and she listened to them and they convinced her that this is not the time to separate from NLS, and she would like for the Board to come to a consensus to support the NLS Delivery Fee for the 2014 and 2015 fiscal years. She asked the Business Manager to see if it were possible to reduce the database budget to \$92,000 based on the number of hits each database received.

Trustee Solomon agreed that the Great Neck Library should not leave NLS this year but would like to seek competitive bidding for their databases independently of NLS, and we should purchase from the vendor with the lowest bid (be it NLS or another). She pointed out that it was always the library’s policy to get multiple bids for large purchases.

Consensus (by show of hands): six Trustees – DiCamillo, Ferrante Krupski, Fuller, Marcus, Nina Esagoff and Pizer – supported the payment of the delivery fees for 2014/2015. Trustee Solomon was uncomfortable with the recommendation.

Public Comment: Karen Rubin, Ralene Adler

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)

The Great Neck Library was awarded a grant of \$100,000 through DASNY, earmarked for the installation of an RFID system. The Interim Assistant Director Christine Johnson stated that if the money were not accepted and spent for the RFID, it may impact negatively on the Library especially since we might be funding the renovation through DASNY, and it may also become a factor when applying for future NYS Library Construction grants.

She proposed a phased approach to the RFID project wherein the initial money could be used to tag all circulating books system-wide at a cost of 17 cents per item. Audio-visual and reference material and security gates would not be a part of this initial phase. The focus would be on having sufficient workstations for staff and self-check stations for the public. The other phases could be added to the system in the future. The first phase could be implemented for a total cost of \$113,000. [The report is attached to these Minutes.]

The consensus of the Board was to take this up at another time and the Business Manager was asked to remove any item from the budget that had to do with the RFID.

Public Comment: Ralene Adler, Marianna Wohlgemuth

BUDGET REVIEW

Business Manager Zitofsky sought and received approval from the Board to move the Main Building and Special Services Fund (MBSS) on line 39 as income and insert it on line 244 to offset expenditure.

Line 146 – this line should be zeroed out since there won't be any defibrillator training during this budget period.

Trustee Pizer asked the Business Manager to shave the landscape budget. President DiCamillo cautioned about what is shaved as some items are maintained because of the 2% cap. This budget now stands at \$500 under the cap.

Interim Director Weir also said that Levels programs will be at the Station Branch on Friday evenings during the closure of Main and not at the Saddle Rock School. Therefore that number has to be adjusted downward.

After these changes are made, the budget will come before the Board on April 9th for an Adoption.

Public Comment: Karen Rubin, Ralene Adler, Marianna Wohlgemuth

Trustee Pizer reminded the Interim Director that when documents are provided to members of the public upon request, the Board should also receive copies.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. on a motion by Josie Pizer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Varda Solomon, Board of Trustees Secretary