

Little Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Special Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2021

A special meeting of the Little Falls Public Library Board of Trustees, via a virtual Zoom meeting, was called to order at 5:32 PM, Ms. Anne Kahwaty presiding.

Present: Anne Kahwaty, Carol Miller, Adam Zurbruegg, Joyce Frommer, Juliann Meletta, Peter Tomasi, Christine Hablitz, Kristin Blumberg

Absent: Nancy Friedrich, Tracey Marinelli

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss applying for a grant under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Grants for New Jersey Public Libraries. The application is due by July 30, 2021 at 4:00 PM. Ms. Kahwaty discussed this grant with the Township grant writer, Michael Weiss of Millennium Strategies. Grants are now used to better improve libraries in the 21st century.

The project title of this grant is: Tutoring and technology to promote the use of English among non-English speaking residents who wish to learn the language. Discussion: The room downstairs in the library will be renovated with up-to-date technology. There will be a TV mounted on the wall. We will need a projector; we already have a screen. Our patrons would like one-on-one instruction with ESL instead of a group instructor. There will be yearly costs for the database. The grant will pay for one year.

Mr. Zurbruegg asked is this program is aimed at adults or children: Ms. Blumberg said that the tutors are more for the adults. He also asked if we know how many people need this so that we can put it in our application. Ms. Kahwaty said that the most recent Census data is eleven years old; we have put that data in the application. Mr. Zurbruegg asked if the broadband is just for the ESL or for the whole community. Ms. Kahwaty said that it is for the whole community. Mr. Tomasi asked if we are going to charge our patrons for these services. Ms. Kahwaty said that it will be free. She said that we will know by August 27th if we get these funds. Mr. Tomasi said that we should evaluate the program for the first year, then decide going forward. We will know when it is accessed because that number will be included on our stat sheets every month.

Ms. Kahwaty said that people learn English by watching television. We have chosen Netflix, HULU and Disney for this application. There are lots of documentaries, etc. on those services. The ESL patrons will be given preference for the Roku sticks. Mr. Zurbruegg said that there are also free educational channels we could add.

Ms. Frommer asked if we could advertise this program in Spanish and other foreign language newspapers; should we add advertising costs to this application? Ms. Kahwaty said that advertising was a good idea. Mr. Tomasi asked if our chance of getting approved was better if we keep the cost down. Ms. Kahwaty stated that if we are approved, we put the money out and then we get reimbursed what we asked for in the application. We can get going with this project right away because we are currently actively being asked for these services by our residents.

Ms. Meletta asked about the room space downstairs. Do we need partitions if there is more than one person learning at a time? Ms. Kahwaty said that we cannot use partitions because we only have one exit and they would hamper a fast exit in case of an emergency. Also, partitions are not technology and so we cannot use the grant money for them.

Total cost of our application is \$14,116. In addition to the other items already mentioned, this also includes three new computers, the Learning Express database and the cost of training people to become ESL tutors.

After this discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Hablitz, seconded by Mr. Tomasi, to open the meeting to the public. Discussion: None. A motion was made by Ms. Hablitz, seconded by Ms. Frommer, to close the meeting to the public. Discussion: None. The motion passed on a voice vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Zurbruegg, seconded by Ms. Frommer, to approve the Resolution for the application of The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 grant for New Jersey Public Libraries offered by the NJSL and Institute of Museum and Library Services. There being no further discussion, on a roll call the motion carried.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Zurbruegg, seconded by Mr. Tomasi, to adjourn the meeting. On a voice vote the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Miller, Vice-President/Secretary