

March 2013

Library Updates

The current Library Update is meant to provide our 23 Libraries with some information about what is happening at the other Libraries. We plan to post this on our website and update it a few times a year. During the past 3 years many Libraries have had layoffs, cuts and furloughs. You will read that some Libraries must fight hard to win a contract and others have settled contracts smoothly. You will also read about security issues, a dispute over a title, impacts from Super Storm Sandy, and a planned demonstration. We encourage all our Library members to keep us updated with information about your Library, so that we can all be informed.

Belleville Public Library, Civil Service

The Collective Bargaining Agreement expires in 2013.

Bergenfield Public Library, Non-Civil Service

After just a few sessions, the CWA's Bargaining Team and Administration have agreed to a new Memorandum of Understanding which was ratified by both sides in June of 2012. Although most of the contract remained unchanged, some minor language modifications were made to agree with new legislative changes. We thank the Bergenfield Board of Trustees and our Bargaining Team for working hard and coming to an agreement where both sides are satisfied.

Bloomfield Public Library, Civil Service

After a prolonged dispute with the Library Board, including the filing of an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), we succeeded in gaining union membership for an employee that Management tried to say should be confidential.

In another legal action, we have brought a bad faith layoff charge against the Bloomfield Library Board to the Civil Service Commission. In October 2011, an employee of more than 25 years was laid off when the Board's layoff plan was implemented. CWA is arguing that the person who bumped at Bloomfield Library did not take on any of the duties of the person who was laid off. The case was heard by an Administrative Law Judge at Civil Service in February of 2013 and the attorneys are currently preparing to submit their written arguments.

CWA Local 1031 obtained attorneys for both of these cases. Bloomfield Library spent more than \$20,000 **over** what they had budgeted in legal fees to fight the Union.

On a positive note, the Library and Union Bargaining Teams have reached a tentative agreement for a new contract which will now be voted on by the Union Membership and the Library Board. The Staff will receive retroactive raises for 2010, 2011 and 2012 of 1% for each year and 1% for 2013. The new contract will expire at the end of this year. The current negotiations were started in 2010, but were halted several times due to pending legislative action in Trenton, the replacement of the Library Director and the replacement of the Board's law firm.

Clifton Memorial Library, Civil Service

An agreement has been reached by the Union and Management Bargaining Teams and the Library's attorney is currently preparing a final draft of the contract, which will be taken to the members for a vote. A major issue in the negotiations was the Library's view that they needed to reopen on Sundays but could not afford to if they had to continue to pay Staff at time-and-one-half their current rates of pay. The Staff agreed that for the year of 2013 only, as a pilot program, the pay for Sunday would be a flat rate for the 4 hour workday (2 rates were established, one for Librarians and one for Library Assistants). It was also agreed that no Staff members would be assigned to work on Sundays, staffing would be with volunteers. If the number of volunteers was insufficient, the Library could hire Sunday workers from outside, provided they worked for the same rates that would apply to regular Staff.

The new contract calls for the following changes in rates of pay: 2011 - 0%, 2012 - 1%, 2013 - 1%. In addition, people who are not stepped out will receive their step increase on the salary guides for each contract year.

Cranford Public Library, Non-Civil Service

The current contract will run until the end of 2013.

Elizabeth Public Library, Civil Service

Long term Building Superintendent and Shop Steward for the Supervisory Unit, Joe Manto, has retired. The Staff chose to postpone their CWA sponsored holiday party until February so it could also be an occasion to celebrate Joe's retirement.

Security concerns have moved to the forefront in recent years at many of our Libraries and Elizabeth has now had the dreaded experience of having an employee, who was working alone in a somewhat secluded area, physically assaulted by a patron. In the wake of this incident, the Library Administration responded promptly by taking steps to provide more surveillance cameras and guards.

Glen Rock Public Library, Non-Civil Service

We have been engaged in difficult negotiations for a first contract for more than 2 years. Although many issues have been resolved, the major stumbling block is the Library Board wanting numerous givebacks from the Staff with regard to paid time off. We have prepared written summaries of the issues still open and will meet one more time with the Board to review them and then we will file jointly for mediation. During the course of negotiations the Board hired a new Library Director, Betsy Wald, a former member of Local 1031, who served on our Bargaining Team when she worked at the Maplewood Memorial Library.

Highland Park Library, Non-Civil Service

Contract negotiations were settled and the Staff was pleased with their first contract under CWA Local 1031. We represent only the full-time employees and they will receive raises averaging 2.5 percent per year over three years.

Due to Super Storm Sandy, the Library was closed for two weeks because the building was without power. This Library Administration made the decision to deduct vacation time from the employees for the majority of the days the building was not open. CWA held a labor-management meeting with Administration to try to negotiate those days back for our members. CWA's position was that the employees were ready and willing to work during this time but the lack of electricity made it impossible for the building to open. It was not the employees' fault that they were unable to work. The Administration agreed to pay employees for a few days and for the employees to charge the remaining balance with sick and vacation time. Arrangements were made for any employees who did not have time in November of 2012 to be allowed to deduct time from 2013 balances.

Irvington Public Library, Civil Service

A new Agreement was approved in November 2012. Staff will receive 2.5% stipends for 2011 and 2012 and a 2% increase for 2013. The stipends are treated like a bonus and do not go into the base pay or pension. Bereavement leave was increased to 5 days for spouse or child and 4 days for brother or sister.

We negotiated monetary settlements for Library Security Guards whose Civil Service positions were eliminated. The Library's coverage needs have changed and the current employees chose not to work during the hours proposed. The Library will now provide coverage by using an agency that will supply guards as needed.

Library of the Chathams, Non-Civil Service

The current agreement is in effect through December 31, 2014.

Livingston Public Library, Non-Civil Service

Negotiations for a successor contract have been difficult. The Livingston Library contract expired on December 31, 2010. The Union and the Library went into fact finding last year. The sticking point is not money, but how the money is paid. The workers want to retain a step system and management wants to eliminate it. In late 2012, we thought we were close to a settlement when we agreed to the same increases the Town received with the steps frozen each year except the last year. On the last year of the contract the Union asked for the money to be a step. The cost to the Library was roughly the same. Although the Library agreed in concept, they later rejected this and took many months to make a new offer. We are now waiting for a confirmation of a new fact finding meeting in April. The Library Board is represented by the Town Manager. Recently the Livingston DPW unionized and the Township clerical workers have been looking into unionization. It is believed that our difficult negotiations are meant to send a message to the other workers.

The Livingston Library members are not taking these delays sitting down. This past summer they collected over 500 signatures from residents supporting the Library Workers. They put this on a banner and have attended and spoken at several Library Board Meetings and a group of members are attending the Town Council Meetings each month. The West Essex Tribune has taken pictures and written articles in their weekly paper. A demonstration is currently being planned and we will be looking for other CWA Local 1031 Library members to support us by coming out and marching. Look for emails with more information.

Maplewood Public Library, Non-Civil Service

A four-year agreement has been ratified by both sides that will expire at the end of 2015. Sarah Lester, a former Maplewood Staff and CWA Local 1031 member, has returned as the new Library Director. She previously served as the Director in Nutley.

Middlesex Public Library, Non-Civil Service

A new contract was negotiated and approved by both sides in January of 2013. The Staff will receive a 2% increase for 2013 and a 2% increase for 2014. In addition, entry level hourly rates for part-time Librarians and Library Assistants were increased to \$21.50 and \$12.50, respectively.

Millburn Public Library, Civil Service

Library Director Bill Swinson has announced his retirement; he has served Millburn since 1990. New Library Director Michael Banick will start in March. He previously had been the Director of the Mountainside Public Library since 2007.

The contract expired on December 31, 2012. Negotiations will be scheduled in the near future.

Shop Steward and Library Branch Officer Patt Kent has been on sick leave and will be returning to work soon. We wish her a speedy recovery!

Mt. Olive Library, Non-Civil Service

The Library has settled its second Collective Bargaining Agreement. The new contract has modest increases and more flexibility when taking vacation and personal time. Furthermore, Management agreed to hold at least two meetings a year with Staff members to improve communication between the Staff and Management.

North Brunswick Library, Civil Service

The Bargaining Team and the Library Board began negotiations in late February on their contract.

Nutley Public Library, Civil Service

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement will expire at the end of 2014. Additionally, Library Director Maria La Badia has replaced Sarah Lester, who is now Director of the Maplewood Memorial Library.

Orange Public Library, Civil Service

Following the resignation of two Directors and the termination of another, the Union met with the Mayor of Orange in September of last year to discuss the welfare of the Library and its employees. These discussions ranged from the lack of communication between the Staff and the Library Board, to security issues and the uncertainty of when the search for a new Director would be set in motion. The Mayor reassured the Union he would communicate our concerns to the Board in order to get these issues resolved.

In early January of this year, the Mayor, along with the Library Board President, the Mayor's Alternate and the Business Administrator, met with the Union and the Staff at the Library to address some of the Staff concerns and what was being done to remedy them. Issues included the building operating on some

days without heat, safety issues, for which the Library has recently been cited, as well as the lack of communication between the Board and the Staff. The Mayor explained some of the problems the Library is facing and how he, along with the Board, was looking to handle these issues in the near future.

Following the meeting with the Mayor and the Board, a Union Representative, along with the Staff, attended the Library Board meeting to make sure all the responses regarding many of the issues at the Library were answered and a matter of public record.

Since the February Board meeting, the Board President has resigned, and a point person has been designated to establish better communications between the Library Staff, the Union and the Board. The Board has established a 90-day period to find a new Library Director. Orange Library is a Civil Service Library and they must follow these rules.

Rutherford Public Library, Civil Service

The Library has been dealing with drastic budget cuts phased in over 3 years and, as a result, had layoffs in 2012. In order to operate more efficiently with a reduced Staff, they have moved the children's section, which for years has occupied much of the lower level, to the main floor.

A tentative agreement for the first contract with Local 1031 had been reached at the bargaining table during the summer of 2012. However, after the Board's attorney drafted the Memorandum, there were some questions of interpretation and clarification that have arisen, necessitating additional meetings and emails. A revised Memorandum covering the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 and providing increases of 1.75%, 1.75% and 1.5%, respectively, has now been reviewed by both Teams and will soon be voted on by the Union members and the Board.

South Brunswick Library, Non-Civil Service

During the 2012 negotiations, it was agreed a committee consisting of Union members and Management would sit down to discuss and reevaluate some of the current job descriptions at the Library. South Brunswick is not a Civil Service Library and, therefore, has more flexibility when changing job titles or duties. With technological changes in the Library world, there are Staff members that are performing duties that may not be consistent to their current titles/job descriptions. Both the Union and Management agreed this would be the right thing to do in order to provide accurate job descriptions to the Staff. The changes could result in upgrades and more money.

The committee is comprised of three Staff members and two Management personnel. The CWA Members are: Susanna Chan, Head of the Children's Department, Judy Pietrobono, Head of Circulation, and Randy Marsola, Sr.

Network Librarian; Management representatives are: Chris Carbone, Director, and Claudia Stadtmayer, Assistant to the Director. This committee is scheduled to begin the reevaluation process in 2013.

Funding cuts to South Brunswick Library have resulted in 5 scheduled furlough days in 2012 and 6 scheduled furlough days in 2013.

During the power outages caused by Super Storm Sandy, the South Brunswick Library extended operating hours, offering a warm place for residents to gather, commune, use free Wi-Fi, and access computers, books movies, etc. For days until the doors closed each night, South Brunswick's grateful *power refugees* camped out for hours on end in every available open space in the library – on floors, tables and chairs – sharing stories and outlets.

Summit Library, Non-Civil Service

Last year, Lynn Thompson, a CWA Shop Steward, retired and after twenty-two years as the Summit Library Director; Glenn Devitt also retired. We would like to wish both Lynn and Glenn the very best. While the Library Board went through the process of searching for a new Director, Joe Keenan, former Elizabeth Library Director, was hired to serve as interim Director, and by all accounts the Staff was pleased to have worked under his guidance. (Mr. Keenan has also acted as an interim Director at Bloomfield and Orange Libraries.) Early this year, the Board announced the selection of Susan Permahos as the New Director, and we hope our relationship with her is as amiable, productive and successful as with the previous Director. Now that the Library has a new Director, we hope to commence negotiations very soon.

Westfield Memorial Library, Non-Civil Service

The current contract will expire at the end of 2013.

During the aftermath of Super Storm Sandy, the Mayor of Westfield asked the Library to serve as a “warming center” and extended their hours through midnight for several nights. Staff provided coverage on a voluntary basis. Part-time workers were paid at the rate of time and one-half their hourly wage, and full-time workers could choose to receive time and on-half in salary or compensatory time.

West Orange Library, Civil Service

West Orange is a Civil Service Library where the Supervisors and Non-Supervisors are currently in negotiations. For the Supervisors, this is their first contract, and while the Non-Supervisory unit is negotiating a subsequent contract, both contracts are being negotiated at the same time.

The Library Administration has made the Bargaining Team aware of budget cuts that have created financial difficulties for the Library. Due to these cuts, in 2012 the Library Administration laid off one full-time employee and three part timers, which brought what once was a Staff of thirty-two employees down to sixteen, a fifty-percent cut.

The Bargaining Team has offered cost effective ideas to the Library to save money and perhaps bring in additional funds to help increase the Library budget. Some ideas consisted of fundraisers, increasing fines and closing on Sundays. The Library, however, has been slow to take up these ideas, but did make it clear closing on Sundays was not an option.

As negotiations continue, we hope to come to an agreement that will benefit and ease some of the difficulties our members are facing during these difficult times.