

**Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
October 18, 2016**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on October 18, 2016.

Treasurer Mr. Weaver called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Veronica Alvero (Late) Ted Freedman (Late), Kenyetta Jackson, Anne Russell, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith and Kevin Weaver. Absent: Eloy Delgado (Excused), and Christian Veliz. Visitors: No visitors.

Ms. Chmiel, Library Director announced that adequate notice of this meeting had been provided by a notice in the Star Ledger. Also, a notice was posted on the bulletin boards of the main library and branches.

**MINUTES**

Ms. Chmiel noted some minor typos that won't change the meaning of sentences. It will be corrected before being posted online. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to approve the minutes from September 20, 2016. Votes: ayes, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Serratelli, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Weaver established that we have already crossed the first quarter of the year with \$3 million left out of the \$4 million budget. Ms. Chmiel expressed concern about the prescription line balance. We have spent half of our prescription budget in the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the fiscal year. Ms.

Chmiel reminded the Board that our prescription plan is not a “prescription plan,” it is a management plan. We participate in the City of Elizabeth State Health Benefits, which could be our most viable option, she added.

Ms. Chmiel noted that we spent \$5,800 on a new burner for our boiler system, and that we spent \$3,300 on an expansion tank. Mr. Weaver recommended covering those expenses under Capital Funds, since it is going to be used for more than 3 years. Ms. Chmiel suggested adding a Resolution to the agenda, to move funds for the HVAC improvements from the Capital Funds to the Operating budget.

Ms. Chmiel noted that we are watching our expenses very closely to prevent any type of budgetary challenges; she is still pursuing an Energy Audit for potential grant money to replace our aging HVAC system. Mr. Weaver acknowledged that that kind of investment would create greater efficiencies and ultimately require less funding. Ms Chmiel reminded the Board that our budget has been flat since 07-08 and that expenses have continued to rise. Ms. Serratelli asked when a new Union contract starts; June 2017 Ms. Chmiel replied.

It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mrs. Jackson to approve the Treasure’s Report.

Votes: ayes, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Serratelli, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

#### **PRESENTATION OF BILLS:**

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Freedman to accept the Presentation of Bills.

Votes: ayes, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Serratelli, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

## **REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Property Committee. Ms. Chmiel reported that Mrs. Jackson and Mr. Freedman met with her to discuss which of the two responses to our RFQs for Restroom Renovations should be accepted. There is a \$10K difference between the proposals, but the less costly proposal is not necessarily the better choice, given the somewhat ambiguous language of the respondent. Ms. Chmiel is not completely comfortable with the assessment provided by the Legal Department. An additional expense during the renovation could be the need of a port-a-potty, given the abusive treatment dealt to the public men's bathroom. (Discussion) Mr. Freedman asked if it is legal to deny restroom facilities during the renovations; Ms. Chmiel has asked the Legal Department but doesn't yet have an answer.

Nominating Committee. Ms. Serratelli announced that the committee had met on October 13<sup>th</sup> and will present its slate at the December meeting.

## **REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Special committees did not meet in August.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:**

- Mr. Freedman asked about missing periodical issues. The issues are tracked by Circulation and reported to the vendor, Local Yellow. Ms. Chmiel noted that we pay only for the issues that we receive.
- Mr. Freedman asked what PEAS was. Ms. Chmiel replied that MORE P.E.A.S. is a partnership of Groundwork Elizabeth, Liberty Farm at Kean, the Union County Come Grow With Us initiative and the NJ Dept of Environmental Protection. The acronym stands for Permaculture Education in Agricultural Systems. The Elmora Branch Library is part of a

project that involves “two fully irrigated community plot gardens (100 total raised 2’ x10’ untreated pine beds) with edible urban forest gardens, located in the City of Elizabeth.” This is a project that should be managed by the community not by the library staff.

- Mr. Freedman commended Claudia Flores’ (Children’s Dept. Supervisor) for community collaboration.
- Ms. Russell responded to Mr. Freedman’s question regarding the Elizabeth Garden Club. There could be additional collaborations but she expressed disappointment in the low turnout for the Landscaping Your Historic Home program on October 8<sup>th</sup>. (Discussion). Ms. Chmiel noted that each person in charge of a program is responsible for that program’s publicity. She feels that professional staff should be capable of managing the necessary publicity, though she would like to see more enthusiasm for our programming communicated at all our public service desks.
- \$1,600 was made through the Book Sale. We will have a Book Sale at Elmora in December.
- Ms. Chmiel responded to a question from Mr. Freedman regarding the 72-hour passes from the NYTimes. Jose Alvarez has been working on this project.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell to accept the Director’s Report. Votes: ayes, Mrs. Alvero, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Serratelli, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

## **READING OF COMUNICATIONS**

- Ms. Chmiel presented the invitation to our reception recognizing the digitization of *The Elizabeth Daily Journal* on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that we had received the State per Capital Aid funds.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- The project to have Social Worker Interns is still moving ahead, with an Affiliation Agreement with Rutgers having been signed. January is the anticipated start date. Each intern would be expected to work fifteen hours a week, would receive general on-site supervision from Library staff and social work supervision through a trained social worker. Mrs. Jackson expressed familiarity with this type of program. The Coalition for the Homeless is an organization in the State of New Jersey for the Housing Insecure; they visit us weekly for two hours of outreach.
- Ms. Chmiel will meet with City Council at 7:30pm on October 18<sup>th</sup> regarding the City ID card. Ms. Chmiel stated that we seemed to have resolved the financial issues regarding the City ID so that it will have low impact upon the Library. Mr. Weaver asked if we have a written memo that confirms our financial arrangement; Ms. Chmiel said that there is email documentation from CFO Tony Zengaro. Ms. Chmiel noted that the card will be both a photo ID and a Library card and that the cities of Newark, Roselle, and Perth Amboy are currently distributing municipal IDs for a fee. (Discussion) Mr. Freedman asked Ms. Chmiel if she was satisfied with the plan. Ms. Chmiel feels very confident with it.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Health Benefits Review. Ms. Chmiel spoke to Linda Poplowski who handles Health Benefits at City Hall, and asked if the City would be passing the Resolution providing for employee incentives should an employee chose a tiered health benefits plan. Ms. Poplowski was confident the City would not. Ms. Chmiel determined that the Board could pass the Resolution, even if the City did not, since the Library has a separate ID and location. Ms. Chmiel recommended adopting the resolution whether or not any of the staff is interested in

the incentive program since this would at least open a door for a new Health Benefits program. Ms. Chmiel mentioned Mr. Delgado's question as to why we don't separate from the State Health Plan. Since we are only 35 people receiving Benefits, Ms. Chmiel doesn't know if the work involved in researching an alternative plan would justify potential savings. Ms. Chmiel explained some of incentives of a tiered plan that could be presented to staff. Board members agreed that they are not comfortable with the new plan. No Resolution was moved.

- Ms. Serratelli inquired about LMxAC Library Contract, and its cost to the Library. Ms. Chmiel replied it shouldn't cost anything; relations between LMxAC libraries used to be handled through an interlocal agreement similar to MURAL. Ms. Chmiel explained that we will allow patrons from other libraries to borrow our material and other libraries will allow our patrons to check out their materials; there will be no fees involved in this process. Ms. Chmiel recommended passing a resolution to sign the agreement. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jackson to sign the agreement. Votes: ayes, Mrs. Alvero, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Serratelli, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.
- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that the LMxAC FY17-18 Budget Assessment that will start July 2017 contains an error, which she has reported to Ms. Eileen M. Palmer. Our digital access fees have been confused with those for Edison. Ms. Chmiel answered questions regarding some Circulation numbers.
- Ms. Chmiel also noted the revenues; currently our assessment formula is based on the total number of WorkFlows logins plus a \$.08 charge per circulation up to 500,000. Roughly 2/3's of our assessment comes from WorkFlows logins and 1/3 from circulation.

- Ms. Chmiel noted the informal NJ Transit meeting that took place in the Auditorium; the meeting concerned the placement and the acquisition of the art at the new Elizabeth train station. Documents were placed at LHR. Ms. Chmiel expressed how impressive the plans for the project are. Ms. Chmiel will provide Board with copies of these documents.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell that the meeting move into closed session. Votes: ayes, Mrs. Alvero, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Serratelli, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, Seconded by Ms. Russell to move out of closed session. Votes: By acclamation.

#### **PERSONNEL**

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Smith to hire Mr. Andrew Luck as Assistant Director at an annual salary of \$72,000. Votes: By acclamation. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mrs. Jackson to hire Samantha Villa as part-time Library Assistant at hourly rate of \$12.15. Votes: By acclamation. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Alvero to hire Nastajja Colon as part-time Library Assistant at hourly rate of \$12.15. Votes: By acclamation

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, Seconded by Mrs. Alvero to adjourn the meeting. Votes: By acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina