

Board of Trustees Minutes – April 17, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on April 17, 2018. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:33pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

ROLL CALL

Present: Ted Freedman, Aaron Goldblatt, Kristin Kelly, Anne Russell (Late), Connie Pires Sanchez, Pearl Serratelli and Earnestine Smith. Absent: Eloy Delgado and Kenyetta Jackson (Excused)

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

Visitors: Letitia Sweat who resides at 220 West Jersey Street Apartment # 14 K, Elizabeth, NJ 07202. Responding to Ms. Sweat's question about reentry programs, Mr. Luck replied that the Library has an updated Community Resources Directory online with information pertaining to re-entry issues. Ms. Chmiel encouraged Ms. Letitia Sweat to recommend any additional resources and noted that the Library has connections with the City's Department of Health and Human Services. Responding to Ms. Sweat's question about having a "Friends of the Library" group and capital reserves, Ms. Chmiel stated that there is currently no "Friends of the Library" group, but the Library does have capital reserve which can be used for expenses such as new carpeting, and had been used for the new public elevator. The capital reserve is gleaned from small surpluses from each year's Library municipal budget. Ms. Chmiel stated that we are again exploring the possibility of a museum pass program; this issue was also explored 2-3 years ago. Our total yearly programming budget is \$6,000; Ms. Chmiel encouraged Ms. Sweat to visit Freeholders, Council members and the Mayor for budget support.

MINUTES

- Responding to Mr. Freedman's question about the additional \$1,500 required for the installation of the new projector in the Auditorium, Ms. Chmiel replied that it was a HDMI wire compatibility update. On page five, line twenty three Ms. Chmiel noted an extra (**paid**)

word; it will be remove from original record. Responding to Ms. Serratelli's question about extending Elmora's hours, Ms. Chmiel replied that we are waiting for a budget update; it is necessary to have a third night but is not possible under the current budget. The Eport Branch remains open two nights a week. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to approve the minutes from March 20th Board of Trustees meeting. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer report was tabled till May.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS:

- Tele-Measurements Inc. refers to the projector installation. The \$8,450.75 amount doesn't completely reflect the projector bill; the remaining balance will be on a pending invoice.
- \$54,805 was paid to the bathroom renovation contractor. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve April Presentation of Bills report. Vote: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Mrs. Connie Pires Sanchez, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Abstentions - none.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committee didn't meet.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc Committees didn't meet.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

- On Wednesday, April 11th we had an impromptu fire drill due to a mistake on the part of the electrician installing the alarm in the renovated bathrooms. Monday, April 16th we had fire alarm activity due to a water leak in the attic shorting the system. Tyco was notified and it was determined not to be an actively dangerous situation. However, the alarm couldn't be

silenced without shutting down the system. Ms. Chmiel explained in detail how it was managed. Edwin Lopez recommended dismissing staff due to the extreme noise. Branches were open and appropriate notifications were posted advising patron of the situation.

- The fire alarm panel located at the basement passed inspection earlier in the year, though our vendor recommends an upgrade; quotes for two levels of service were provided. A new panel could cost \$10,000. Ms. Chmiel notified the City Engineers, the Law Dept. and Ms. Kelly Martin regarding the building shutdown on April 16th. Had we remained open, a fire watch would have been activated. Fire Inspector Omar Munoz made an inspection the following day and said that we were good to open, adding, “You are very valuable.” While a Fire Alarm Panel replacement could cost the Library around \$10,000; upgrading the system might require the installation of an automatic sprinkler system.
- The leak that caused the alarm malfunction had earlier been repaired by the installation of a small wall of bricks between two wooden support beams. Ms. Chmiel was told that it was part of the exterior renovation contract inspected by retired Building Superintendent Joe Manto. City attorney Ray Bolanowski recommended consulting with the architect for the renovation project, Netta Architects. Ms. Chmiel will also obtain a quote from USA Architects.
- The Elmora Branch was built in 1953 and the first Fire Inspection was performed in November 2017. Ms. Chmiel wondered why previous administrations never did anything to rectify this situation. The inspectors have found some issues - including an unfinished ceiling in the electrical closet - that need to be repaired. Ms. Chmiel mentioned that we are also installing a new heat system that will arrive April 18th. All of Elmora’s lights have been upgraded and we hope to have similar improvements come to Main.
- The security guard contract specs having been reviewed by the City Legal Dept. were presented to the Board. The plan is to discontinue security at Elmora. Ms. Serratelli and Mrs. Pires Sanchez showed concern about this. Ms. Chmiel explained in details the poor security service we have had at Elmora. Responding to Mr. Freedman’s question about incidents at Elmora, Mr. Luck replied that only one incident was reported to Administration. Ms. Chmiel stated that Robert Barbanell is in favor of having a third staff member present, instead of a

guard, which would allow more work to be done. A third library staffer at Elmora will allow Robert to accomplish more branch manager work. The Library proposes to hire an in-house guard; Officer Harrison has showed loyalty and has nine years' experience and is a good candidate. Ms. Chmiel encourages staff to call police and to use the panic button in an emergency. Ms. Chmiel is looking for consistency and quality in security staff; the Library will have better control over security services, if guard supervision comes in-house. The Library has not heard from the City regarding our budget. Mr. Freedman encouraged the Board to attend to relevant City events as Board Members to promote the Library. Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski visited the Children's Dept. during The One Thousand Books Before Kindergarten program, Mr. Freedman added.

- More trees were cut down at Elmora due to disease.
- We are still pending on a new lease for the Eport Branch. The current lease will expire in November 2018. In discussion of alternate sites for that branch, Ms. Chmiel stated that she is not in favor of adding another Carnegie building to our current budget, given maintenance costs, especially if it lacks a parking lot.
- Under technology, Edwin Lopez's project of using E-Rate funds to install flat screen monitors for promotion/announcements is underway. In the Teen's Department, a new TV was installed to provide our programming information, making events more visible to the public, and to eliminate some paper fliers. The plans are to install two TVs on the 2nd floor, one each on the 3rd and the 1st floors, and one at Elmora. Edwin's piece de resistance is the placement a 54" TV in a window in the Children's Department, facing outside, to promote our programs, hours and more. TVs would be closed circuit and able to mirror to smart phones.
- Responding to Mrs. Pires Sanchez's question about the possibility of having volunteers to cover during staff shortnesses, Ms. Chmiel replied that Easter Seals volunteers aren't trained for Library Services. Mr. Luck added that the Easter Seals volunteers are actually paid by that organization.
- The new auditorium projector will be manipulated only by authorized staff, Edwin Lopez has already trained some.

- Ms. Chmiel had an initial meeting with USA Architects regarding the Elmora bathrooms. A preliminary layout has been created, and presumably the bathrooms at Main will be completed before the Elmora ones are begun. Ms. Chmiel invited Ms. Serratelli to participate with the building committee discussion. CDBG contribution will allow a nice facility there Ms. Chmiel added.
- The Children's Department provided photos to record their activities.
- Robert Barbanell has been out sick so his report wasn't submitted.
- Mr. Luck met with Mr. Leonard Grayson about a reentry services event that will take place at the High School and at the Library.
- Last Friday, April 13th we had the LMxAC meeting at the Library. The topic of fines came up and libraries shared their experiences. Most agreed that a fine doesn't stop people from returning a book late. Late fines are not our mission; the Library wants its materials returned. We continue to bill people for lost and damaged material, but billing for late materials becomes a barrier to access, Ms. Chmiel noted.
- Responding to Ms. Serratelli's question about weeding, Ms. Chmiel replied that we always weed. Ms. Serratelli recommended reachable shelving, accessible to everyone. Ms. Chmiel will talk to Robert about it.
- We have a quote for Elmora's HVAC system, but we haven't had an exact work date yet.

READING OF COMUNICATIONS

- An article on guns in libraries was addressed; like schools, libraries are soft targets. Stone Gate Associates security consultants pitched their services to the Library. Ms. Chmiel thinks that a lot of what they offer we already have (cameras, guards and panic buttons). Westfield Library recommended them to us. The State Library hasn't offered training on this topic recently. Ms. Chmiel provided Board with the article and the quote for informational purposes only.

- Ms. Chmiel will provide Board members (Mr. Freedman, Mr. Goldblatt, and Ms. Smith) a digital invitation to the County Consortium Legislative Breakfast at Clark Public Library Friday, May 18, 2018 at 8:00am.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- EMID Elizabeth Municipal ID program update is in Mr. Luck's report.
- The bathrooms' reopening is pending on electrical and occupancy inspections; the removal of the construction wall is pending the architect's review. Ms. Chmiel invited the Board to tour the renovated bathroom before its opening.
- Groundwork Elizabeth pledges not to impinge upon parking at Elmora Ms. Chmiel stated. They are receiving a grant for decking and green walking surfaces. Ms. Chmiel will investigate how seeds will be distributed.
- Board recommendations and changes will be applied to the Personal Manual. Mrs. Pires Sanchez recommended changes in discrimination and dress code policy; Ms. Chmiel stated that cell phone policy was modified due to abuse by some Library Assistant staff. Sexual harassment, performance review, and phone manner will also be modified. Ms. Chmiel is in favor of an open door policy instead of chain of command hierarchy.

NEW BUSINESS

- Board members received Financial Disclosure notice.
- Staff Development Day is penciled for June 8th 2018, with the building closing for the day.

It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Russell that the meeting move into Closed Session. Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to move the meeting out of Closed Session. Votes: By Acclamation.

PERSONNEL

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Kelly to adjourn the meeting. Votes: By acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at 7: 35pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina.