

## **Board of Trustees Minutes – August 8, 2018**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on August 8, 2018. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Ted Freedman, Aaron Goldblatt, Kristin Kelly, Pearl Serratelli and Earnestine Smith.

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson (Excused), Anne Russell (Excused), and Connie Pires Sanchez (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 its branches.

Visitors: Salaam Ismial resides at 14 Denman Pl. in Elizabeth, NJ; Rev. George Britt resides at 160 Madison Ave. in Elizabeth, NJ; Lolita Roberts resides at 158 Jacque St. in Elizabeth, NJ; Ronald Roberts resides at 15 Richmond St in Elizabeth, NJ; and William Johnson resides at 1146 Anna St. in Elizabeth, NJ. Visitor Salaam Ismial introduced himself as the Director of National United Youth Council Incorporated in Elizabeth, NJ and provided his statement on an incident that took place June 29, 2018 at the Library. Mr. Ismial stated that his corporation had served the County about 30 years, providing work applications to young kids, and that he met about eight to ten kids and their parents at the Library third floor on the date in question. Mr. Ismial was informed that he was in violation of articles 16 and 27 of the Rules of Conduct for not submitting an application to perform a program as the Library Policy requires. Mr. Ismial compiled a petition of 100 signatures asking for the Director's "resignation on behalf of racism." Rev. George Britt requested a formal response to Salaam Ismail's statement. Visitor William Johnson stated that he was at the scene. Mr. Freedman, Board President, thanked the visitors and noted that the Board would discuss the matter in Closed Session.

### **MINUTES**

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes from the June 19<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting Vote: By Acclamation. Abstentions – none

## **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

As the Treasurer was not in attendance, Ms. Chmiel proceeded to present the report.

- Pgs. 11, 12, 13 address the end of FY 2017-2018; Pg. 14 shows bills for 2017-2018 received after the end of the FY; Pg. 16, 17 show the status of FY17-18 as of August 3, 2018.
- As Board knows, last month the Library ordered new public computer chairs that caused some controversy but didn't affect the budget as we ended FY 2017-2018 with a modest surplus. Ms. Chmiel noted that the chairs were purchased under State Contract, for the best competitive price.
- We saved on prescription costs. Ms. Chmiel recommended a discussion about the personnel line since we are in need of more staff due to increased Library programming.
- It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to approve the June 30 Treasurer's report. Vote: Ayes - Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.

## **PRESENTATION OF BILLS:**

- Pg. 14, 15 justify expenses for the end of FY 2017-2018.
- Check # 27778 was voided since we took service from another company.
- CDW Government refers to Microsoft Office Software that was updated from 2010 to 2016.
- Brainfuse, Inc. refers to an online tutoring service. Nancy has demonstrated the service and reports that people show strong interest on it. The Library dropped World Book since the schools subscribe to it and usage had dropped significantly. The DOL Literacy grant covers a large portion of the Brainfuse cost.
- Bilingual Publications Company refers to books that Claudia Flores purchased in New York (Multilingual) at a cost of \$3,999.97.
- Responding to a question from last meeting as to why there was only one Catholic Charities check, the second monthly check is for rent, and the month of June had already been paid, in

May. FY 2018-2019 budget consequently show the July and August Catholic Charity rent payments.

- It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve June 30<sup>th</sup> Presentation of Bills. Vote: Ayes - Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.
- Pg. 18 shows three checks that close out FY 2017-2018 and leads us in an accurate budget report, especially as all utility costs from the year have been received and paid.
- Literacy New Jersey is paid from a state literacy grant.
- It was moved by Mr. Freedman seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve August 3<sup>th</sup> Presentation of Bills. Vote: Ayes - Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.

#### **TREASURER’S REPORT FY 2018-2019:**

- With the increase in participation in Library programs, the Library will need to hire more staff. For instance, 2000 people participated in Children’s programs during July. Last FY the Library budgeted \$3,071,368 toward Personnel expenses; for the new FY the budget is \$3,389,350
- **The** Pension and Benefits lines were increased: for Health Benefits from \$580,000 to \$605,000, for Pension from \$340,000 to \$372,000. The Library doesn’t have a specific amount assigned from the Division of Pension and Benefits. A percentage is deducted from staff pay toward that bill.
- It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve the 2018-2019 as of August 3<sup>Rd</sup> Treasurer’ report. Vote: Ayes - Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.

#### **PRESENTATION OF BILLS: July 2017 & August 3<sup>rd</sup> FY 18-19**

- The Freeholders Grant for Children’ programs was halved, from \$7,500 last year to \$3750 this year.
- Back in 2013, Ms. Chmiel calculated 19 visitors at Eport Branch on Saturdays. With statistics now showing 45 people visiting on a Thursday, attendance figures for both Eport and LaCorte should be re-reviewed.
- The Summer Lunch Program at Eport Branch started with 10 and increased to 15 a day, showing increasing interest and demand. It’s imperative that children feel safe and welcome at the branch. Both parents and kids use the Library computers.
- The Main location increased Summer Lunches from 25 to 40. Elmora Branch distributes 25 lunches as does the LaCorte Branch. The Library serves about 100 kids per day. It’s been very good to see that many kids gather in the Flex area enjoying lunch. The Summer Lunch program ends August 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve the Presentation of Bills as of August 3<sup>th</sup>. Vote: Ayes - Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.

## **REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

No meetings.

## **REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES**

No meetings

## **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

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

- Lightning on Friday August 3<sup>rd</sup> affected some of the Library’s telephones and computers. Apparently one of the newest cameras went down; Edwin Lopez is working on it.
- There was an evacuation of the LaCorte Branch due to a strange burning smell coming out of an AC fan unit; everything ended well.

- On September 5<sup>th</sup> the Library will provide Local History Room training to 100 social studies teachers from Elizabeth high schools. Aimee Fernandez is conducting the training. Mr. Freedman will participate in one of the trainings.
- A disturbed patron destroyed a library computer and keyboard on the second floor. Ms. Chmiel described the incident in detail. The patron apologized and admitted that he has emotional issues. Mr. Luck handled the incident report.
- All-in-One Computers are compact computers, without a tower, so when a monitor goes bad we lose the computer. The Library plans to purchase more computers using E-Rate funds
- A new people counter was installed on Broad Street door for statistical reports.
- The Elmora reference collection will be weeded. It is a very old collection whose use has declined. Much of its info is accessible through online services.
- The Library will place a new door at the Elmora Conference Room, pending the receipt of vendor quotations. Elmora's Reference Room will be converted into a Teen Room.
- The Library is changing security camera vendors. The new provider will be Maffey's since they are more competitive. Maffey's will be able to replace our equipment faster than Tyco.
- There is a strong need of more evening hours at the Elmora Branch. The Library is considering opening Thursday evenings; there is a high demand for programs and meeting room space. October is the tentative start date for the expanded hours.
- It was moved by Mr. Freedman seconded by Ms. Smith to approve Opening Thursdays Evenings at Elmora Branch. Vote: By Acclamation. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.
- Ms. Serratelli recommends changing the parking entrance at Elmora Library as a solution to the traffic issues caused by the farmer's market. Mr. Freedman recommended consulting Sergeant Brian Clancy about changing entrance directions. Ms. Chmiel recommends the change to be effective October 1<sup>st</sup> to align with opening Thursday evenings-Appropriate signage will be posted.

- The RedHawk Systems bill is related to a fire panel in the furnace room installed back in 1994.
- The meeting with Sam Awad from Netta Architects dealt with the odd placement of bricks in the Carnegie attic.
- The Union/Management meeting will be discussed in closed session.
- It was moved by Ms. Serratelli seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve Director's Report.  
Vote: By acclamation. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.

### **READING OF COMUNICATIONS**

- The awarding of the 2018 Freeholders Children's Grant for programming and materials will take place Thursday, August 7, 2018 7:00 PM, at Administration Building, 10 Elizabeth Plaza, 6<sup>th</sup> floor , Elizabeth, NJ 07207. Mr. Freedman, Ms. Smith and Ms. Chmiel will participate.
- Meeting change date for August 7, 2018 to Wednesday, August 8, 2018
- Library Journal Design Institute will be held at Cherry Hill on September 28, with an attendance fee of \$117.00, Ms. Chmiel will attend.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- EMID Card updates and statistics are in Mr. Luck's report.
- USA Architects have been experiencing ceiling room problems with the Elmora project. An a/c vent issue was recently resolved. Upfront money is needed to order the acrylic screen for the renovated bathrooms at Main; the cost is covered by funds budgeted for the project.
- At the Elmora Branch, a neighbor has been draining run-off water into Library property. Groundwork Elizabeth will install a drainage system that will run across the back of the Library property to a City sewer drain adjacent to the shopping center. At the same time, an electric line will be run to our garage. A Geopavement path is part of this project. The

Elmora deck will be handicap accessible. Ms. Chmiel will contact the City to get parking repair references for quotation purposes.

- November 30<sup>th</sup> will be the final day of the current Eport Branch Lease; no alternate sites for the branch have been determined. Ms. Chmiel recommends putting money aside for carpeting, painting and staff desk reconfiguration; the Library may want to provide its own security under the new lease. The Library has budgeted \$26,000 for the Eport lease in the current year's budget. Ms. Chmiel recommends closing the branch for 2-3 days to manage the location improvements.
- Pg. 30 shows Robert Barbanell's report from the Facilitation Workshop, presented by Sharon Browning, at Monroe Twp Library.
- The Children's Dept. report will be presented in September due to the high volume of summer programming.
- The LaCorte Branch carpeting hasn't been completed due to miscommunication. The work is expected to be done shortly.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Line item transfers FY 2017-2018: \$34,900 reallocated.
- It was moved by Mr. Freedman seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve Line Item Transfers, FY 17-18 \$34,900. Vote: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none.
- Ms. Chmiel presented an updated budget for FY 18-19, based upon the increase received from the City of Elizabeth. Library funding was increased by \$200,000. Ms. Chmiel noted that much of it will go to the Personnel line since we are in need of more staff.
- It was moved by Mr. Freedman seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve Updated 2018-2019 Budget. Vote: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Pearl Serratelli and Ms. Earnestine Smith. Nays – none. Abstentions - none

- Mr. Freedman inquired if the \$12,500 spent on New Furniture and Equipment could be paid from the Capital Reserve, not from the Library budget. Ms. Chmiel recommends Capital Reserve to be used for the parking lot repair at Elmora.
- Pgs. 41, 42 shows projected budget for FY 2018-2019. Building repair increases were applied.
- As per Mr. Freedman request to talk about Library Foundation Groups or Friends of the Library Groups, he expects the Strategic Planning Committee, of which Ms. Smith is chair, to meet with the Library Director to discuss the possibilities. From a Board meeting some time ago, the Board knows that there is some money designated for a Friends Group in the Library's funds. These funds could be eaten up by the reestablishment of the Group as a non-profit with the state; the Group has not registered as a non-profit for several years. Mr. Freedman recommends consulting with other Libraries as to how to proceed. We have a couple of faithful volunteers, but they haven't expressed an interest, Ms. Chmiel noted.
- The Fall Concert Series as well as the music therapy program held this summer will expend the \$2,300 grant received from the County Cultural and Heritage Commission.
- The Library potentially has a number of items to auction, including,
  - a. A Hammond Musical Organ circa 1977, including multiple derivative divides and arpeggiator (dedicated to David Lee Elks, former Director Hazel Elks late husband) in the Auditorium kitchen. This item has not be used in many years.
  - b. 5 brass hose Connections weight not yet determined.
  - c. Electronic/computer components
  - d. 350-400, 16 mm. films reels, in canisters. They were shown and circulated as entertainment in the past. Mr. Goldblatt objected to selling them if they are related to valuable Library or Elizabeth History. Ms. Smith observed that Aimee Fernandez (LHR Supervisor) has researched ~~on~~ them and has determined they aren't related to historical records. Once these items pass the point of utility they should be disposed of, Ms. Chmiel added.

The Resolution was tabled until more information could be obtained.

- Ms. Chmiel recommends having Sharon Browning as part of Staff Development day. Her presentation will help staff understand the Library's diverse patrons. Robert Barbanell also recommends Ms. Browning. Last FY, the Library didn't schedule a staff development day; previous years were funded by LLNJ.- The Library has new resources, and staff have to be trained in order to provide it to the public. First Friday meetings take place every month; separate trainings also take place Fridays from 8:45-10: AM. For example, Aimee Fernandez will do staff training on Ancestry.com; Ally Blumenfeld is providing BrainFuse.
- It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Kelly that the meeting move into Closed Session. Nays – none. Votes: By Acclamation.

## **PERSONNEL**

It was moved by Ms. Russell seconded by Ms. Kelly to move the meeting to Closed Session.  
Votes: By Acclamation.

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt seconded by Ms. Serratelli to move the meeting out of Closed Session. Votes: By Acclamation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:03pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina.