

Board of Trustees
Minutes
February 21, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on February 21, 2017. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:35pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

ROLL CALL

Present: Eloy Delgado, Ted Freedman, Kenyetta Jackson, Anne Russell, Earnestine Smith, Kevin Weaver. Absent: Veronica Alvero (Excused), Pearl Serratelli (Excused) and Christian Veliz.

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.

Visitors: Michael Ward a resident of 570 Jackson Ave., Elizabeth, NJ 07201, and Kason Little (Student Advocate) who resides at 225 S. 7th St., Elizabeth, NJ 07202. Mr. Kason Little introduced himself as a High School student who wants to use our location as a site to tutor younger Elizabeth students. Mr. Weaver asked them if they had researched other locations and if they have expectations from the Library. Other than our space, the volunteers don't expect anything from the Library, since they have their own resources, Mr. Little stated. Ms. Chmiel asked them if they were aware of our "Homework Club" program in the Children's Dept.; they could join forces with our program, Ms. Chmiel added, since we are running out of space due to multiple internal and outside activities. Having made their request, the visitors left the meeting. Mrs. Jackson recommended investigating both young men if we are going to allow them to be around kids. We want to have adequate supervision of people that will be meeting children in the Library, Ms. Chmiel stated. Mrs. Jackson suggested allocating them to the branches.

MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Delgado, to approve the Minutes for January 17, 2017. Votes: Ayes – Mr. Delgado, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Mr. Delgado established that budget is in good standing. Mr. Weaver suggested changing check payments to an online system. (Discussion) The auditors want to have hard copies and two signatures on checks, Ms. Chmiel reminded the trustees.

Mr. Delgado had an inquiry about a payment to City Fires; this was a payment to a private company for the inspection of the fire extinguishers and the basement fire pump. Ms. Chmiel mentioned that she continues to be troubled by the fact that the City Inspections office bills us for the annual elevator inspection.

Ms. Chmiel presented a BALANCE SHEET AS OF FEBRUARY 21, 2017. This shows the balance of all our funds, providing a more global view of Library finances. Ms. Chmiel explained in detail the figures and the sources. Mr. Freedman inquired where E-Rate funds are coming from. Ms. Chmiel replied that when we upgrade our Network and other technologies, we get reimbursed by USAC; Ms. Chmiel explained how E-Rate funding operates and how cautious we should be in spending the refunded money. Currently we are upgrading laptops in the Computer Lab, spending about \$4,000. The Money Market Account refers to our Capital funds. Ms. Chmiel added that funds for the Teen Classrooms and for the Bathroom upgrades are covered by this line and should be shown as encumbered; these funds were also used to replace the public elevator.

Mr. Weaver asked if we had paid for pension benefits; Mr. Delgado replied that we had and that the amount will be reflected on the April bill list.

It was moved by Mr. Delgado, seconded by Mr. Weaver, to approve the Treasurer’s Report
Votes: By Acclamation

PRESENTATION OF BILLS:

Mr. Freedman asked about updates regarding Hudson Energy. Ms. Chmiel replied that municipalities are not exempt from sales tax on energy. Ms. Chmiel noted that we should wait a full year to make a comparison to see if we have saved money by moving from PSE&G to Hudson. Mr. Freedman also had a question about Corfacts On Line for \$513. Ms. Chmiel replied that it refers to a great low-cost resource about businesses in New Jersey, published annually, that allows searching by industry and county; we own a print copy since we are watching our budget.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, to approve the Presentation of Bills
Votes: Ayes – Mr. Delgado, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson Ms. Russell, Ms. Smith and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees did not physically meet in February, Mr. Delgado noted; however, he communicated by e-mail to individual Board members regarding the proposed language change and the proposed quorum change in the By-Laws.

Mr. Freedman said that he wants the By-Laws committee to remain a standing committee and for Board members to be aware of the By-Laws, so the trustees continue performing correctly, and communicating well with the Library Director.

Ms. Chmiel communicated with the Mayor, as per Mr. Freedman's suggestion, notifying him about Mr. Veliz's continued absence. Ms. Chmiel hasn't had a response. Board members agreed to the need for another Mayor's Rep.; Mr. Freedman as the Board of Trustees' President will communicate with the Mayor about Mr. Veliz's absence.

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Delgado, to approve the Committee Name Changes. Votes: Ayes – Mr. Delgado, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson Ms. Russell, Ms. Smith and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

Budget and Finance

No change

Personnel and Salaries	To be Ad hoc
Library Materials and Resources	To become Communications
Property	To become Operations & Facilities
Nominating	To be Ad hoc
Planning	To become Strategic Planning
Policy and Procedures	No change
By-Laws	No change
Technology	New Committee

It was moved by Mr. Weaver seconded by Ms. Russell, to approve the number of members required for a Quorum. Votes: Ayes – Mr. Delgado, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Russell, Ms. Smith and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none. Five members will now need to be present to establish a quorum.

Mr. Freedman recommended that a Technology Committee be established to collaborate with Ms. Chmiel in discussion of digital and computer resources such as databases, also in situations that could affect the work environment. Ms. Chmiel noted that, with the Bathroom renovation moving forward, Operation and Facilities would be the committee most in demand.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc committees did not meet in February.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

- The City ID telephone line will be relocated at the Main Library, where volunteers (hopefully bilingual) recruited by the City will continue to be responsible for taking calls and scheduling appointments. We will have a Spanish brochure soon. Ms. Smith asked if Creole is one of the additional languages being addressed; Ms. Chmiel answered that the City had initially suggested the brochure would be available in Creole, Portuguese and Arabic, as well as Spanish and English.
- The first EMID Invoice was send to the City; according to the terms of the MOU, it is sent to the City Treasurer. Mr. Luck has kept a record of the Library’s staff hours. Ms. Smith also inquired if besides the Mayor, any Council members had shown an interest in this program. Ms. Chmiel has not heard from any of the Council members.

- Ms. Chmiel noted that BabyBox Company (Bezos Foundation) has promised that our first shipment should arrive soon; she also explained the purpose and how the program works. New Jersey and Ohio are the only other states doing the program; Grace is maintaining a list of people awaiting a Box.
- We are looking into having the Summer Lunch program in our building; Ms. Chmiel has contacted Jamie Leavit, BOE Lunch Facilities District Manager, and Paul Addressa of the City Recreation Department. We will be an open site for children and teens 18 and under, which means students could come every day to get lunch without registering. The process and implication were described by Mr. Luck and Ms. Chmiel. Ms. Chmiel noted that this is a State program. The concept of allowing food in the library is a matter the Board should consider and discuss, particularly the Policy Committee; Ms. Chmiel suggested since we sell snacks at the 4th floor a “snacks” policy should be considered. (Discussion)
- Books Lovers program was canceled due to irregularities that took place during book discussion; Book Lovers devolved into a spirituality session that made participants uncomfortable. Ms. Chmiel noted that the person abusing the focus of Book Lovers is more than welcome to have a bible study group here, but cannot hijack our programming for her own ends.
- “Foundation Center Training” was offered to Rutgers students as part of a course curriculum. Robert Barbanell willingly stepped up to the challenge and provided instruction including a power point presentation, and one-on-one support, to approximately 25 students. We are one of three libraries in the State providing the Foundation Center online to the public. We want to promote it, Ms. Chmiel stated.
- The “Love Is Love Dance” was a successful Teen program that attracted 63 people. Each of Tracy’s planning meetings for the dance had at least 20 participants. Mr. Freedman encourages the Board to read Tracy’s published article.
- It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Weaver, to approve the Director’s Report.
Votes: By Acclamation

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- In regards to the EMID program, the proposed MOU calls for the City to reimburse us for supplies; we have ordered bar codes labels that can be used instead of actual library cards in the creation of the individual EMID cards. The labels are a much cheaper alternative. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Delgado, to approve the MOU for the City ID Card program. Votes: By Acclamation.
- The two responses to our RFQ for the bathroom upgrades were discussed. Ms. Chmiel and Mr. Luck met with the City Attorney, the City Engineer and USA Architect, to address concerns she had and that were raised by the Board. Ms. Chmiel apologized for failing to have notified the Board Facilities & Operation Committee of this meeting; time was a crucial issue. The Architect answered the Library's questions and, doing so in the presence of the City Attorney, gave Ms. Chmiel the reassurance required. USA Architect seems to have good reputation, and a good relationship with the City of Elizabeth. After architectural fees, we have a total of \$100,000 assigned to the bathroom renovation project. Mrs. Jackson stated that we should be prepared for any extraordinary events. If that were the case, asbestos and lead paint issues will be the contractor's responsibility Ms. Chmiel established.

NEW BUSINESS

- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Freedman, to approve the Resolution accepting the Bathroom Upgrade proposal by USA Architects for the sum of \$25,000. Votes: By Acclamation.
- Due to scheduling conflicts, the Board agreed to cancel April's Board meeting. Public notice will be posted. It was moved by Mr. Delgado, seconded by Ms. Russell, to cancel the April 25th Board Meeting. Votes: By Acclamation
- Mr. Barbanell is tracking door counts at the branches.

READING OF COMUNICATIONS

- SWAT Team congratulation letter to Mr. Luck, Assistant Director.
- Thank you card from Ms. Earnestine Smith
- Thank you letter to Anthony & Rosalie Spirito. Ms. Russell noted that Mrs. Spirito was the Board of Trustees Secretary back in 1986; LHR Dept. will research Mrs. Spirito's time on the Board.

- City of Elizabeth 2017 Polling Dates will be accommodated.
- Digital Memory fund-raising opportunity could be done by same company that digitized our Daily Journal. It is a great opportunity to have memories recorded.
- Earnestine Smith and Anne Russell will attend Trustee training in Cranford on March 13th.
- Mr. Freedman asked about 13th movie and discussion survey results; Ms. Chmiel replied that was very positive. Mr. Freedman encourages the Library to post more of our programs into the social media; some of our programs are noted in The Local Source.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, to move the meeting into closed session Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell, to come out of closed session Votes: By Acclamation.

PERSONNEL

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina