

Board of Trustees Minutes - October 17, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on October 17, 2017. 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, Kenyetta Jackson (Late), Kristin Kelly, Earnestine Smith, and Kevin Weaver. Absent: Eloy Delgado, Anne Russell (Excused), Pearl Serratelli (Excused),

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

Visitors: No visitors

MINUTES

Mr. Freedman established that in absence of a quorum of Board members who attended the September 19th meeting, those minutes will be approved during November 21st meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

In the absence of the Treasurer, Ms. Chmiel presented the Treasurer's Report.

- At the end of the first quarter of this Fiscal Year, we have 75% of the Budget remaining. We are working on documentation to support requesting the City increasing the Library budget.
- Mr. Weaver noted that pension spending of \$319,000 is a third of the personnel budget.
- Ms. Chmiel noted that we don't have control on the Prescription Plan costs.
- Health Benefits are a consideration to discuss with the Union. Raises will hurt our ability to operate if we don't get budget increase from the City, Mr. Weaver suggested.

- Ms. Chmiel reiterated that, if we don't have a budget increase, our solution is to seriously discuss our "disaster plan" (closing early Main location).
- We don't have Friends of The Library to support us.
- Book Sale income was \$900 after a lot of work.
- Ms. Chmiel encouraged Board to think about eliminating the DVD rental fee at Eport. This move would potentially increase usage of the library. Late and lost fees will be applied.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Freedman, to approve the October, Treasurer's Report. Votes: Ayes –Mr. Freedman, Mr. Goldblatt, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none

PRESENTATION OF BILLS:

- Ms. Chmiel established that the Library may double the \$2,000 investment, so far, in materials to preserve the parking lot at Main. By performing this work in-house there are significant savings.
- Hillside Library digitizes back issues of the Local Source and compiles it on DVD. We have subscribed for the past two years.
- Mr. Weaver noted that under Insurance budget line we have spent \$15,800 year-to-date. He asked if we have researched other agencies.
- The library paid PSE&G \$22,097.70 last month. This payment included bills for two months last year or which we never received invoices. Ms. Chmiel called to request the missing bills and they finally came after July of this FY; it should have been part of the previous FY.
- \$14.95 was paid for a Panic Button Battery.

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees didn't meet.

Ms. Chmiel sent Board members a draft of a Personnel Manual for review; the appropriate Board committees are expected to send corrections and comments.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc Committees didn't meet.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

- The City Employment Legal Counsel won't service the Library during the current Union negotiations, since the Library is not a department of the City government, as defined in the contract. We posted a RFQ on our web-page for labor negotiation counsel. For the last contract negotiation, the City was charged \$7,000 for our legal representation. Ms. Chmiel stated that, as per the City attorney, posting an RFQ on our web-page met all legal obligations..
- We hired five more part-timers to bridge staffing gaps. It was difficult to maneuver summer vacations without a full roster of staff and the Holiday season vacations will soon be upon us.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- We will meet with the energy auditor who will give us recommendations on the HVAC System and lighting at Main.
- A construction wall and a waste container were placed on site for bathroom upgrades at Main. Maintenance Dept. had put aside all useful parts (lights, heaters, etc) from the old bathrooms. Mr. Goulart is always looking to saving us money.
- Arrangements have been made for the 4th floor public restrooms to be accessible. Children's and second floor staff bathrooms are also accessible to public under supervision only.
- Bathroom Renovations are expected to be concluded in 120 days; after which there is a \$1,000 per day penalty.

- A water heater was installed at Children's Dept.
- Groundwork Elizabeth had the water hook up completed and the open trench closed up at our Elmora Branch. This was paid in full by Groundwork Elizabeth. Ms. Chmiel explained in detail the maintenance that Groundwork Elizabeth had done at this branch.
- Groundwork Elizabeth presented a plan for future work in our Elmora lot. It includes a classroom with a handicap accessible deck. This plan will be presented to the Board for approval. Mr. Freedman would like to see how we are protected in term of our patrons' access to the library. Has Groundworks Elizabeth events compromised patron parking? Ms. Chmiel has made it clear to GWE that parking is a primary consideration for the Library.
- Ms. Chmiel stated that the Elmora parking lot will eventually need to be resurfaced and possibly expanded. This could be expected to cost \$200,000.
- Groundwork Elizabeth is helping the library maintain the trees at Elmora. Big trees are under City care.
- Library window cleaning at Main has not been completed by the Friendship House vendor, as per our contract, which states this work should be done twice per year.
- The Library is moving along with E-Rate funded projects. Ms. Chmiel explained in details the process of E-Rate funds, and how the Library benefits.
- The Library continues to work with Literacy NJ. We are having the Library approved as a testing site for GED and TASC (High School Diploma) students.
- Elizabeth School system media specialists came to the Main Branch for an In-Service day. 13 teachers toured the library including the Children, Teen, Reference and Computer Lab areas, and reviewed a multitude of resources. The media specialists seemed appreciative. Nancy Berkenfeld recommended inviting the Elizabeth School Board to a tour of the Library.
- To Mr. Freedman's questioned as to how Nancy and Ally attendance at the symposiums "Achieving Healthy Communities through Collaboration with Libraries" will benefit the library, Ms. Chmiel explained that meeting people that work in other social work fields helps

us give patrons better service. Knowing how people manage their health questions, and concerns, helps us to provide information to our patrons. The Library is a community, not just a standalone institution. We want to be part of that community.

- Mr. Freedman recommended sending the Mayor and Krishna Garlic Robert's report on his visit to the symposium on eviction held at Drew University. Ms. Chmiel stated that it would be included in the Library's Annual Report.
- Tracy and a volunteer from the Girls Who Code program decided to start a new group that is currently running with 15 students.
- Claudia and Rachelle alternate for weekly Baby and Me programs. 35 people attended the last program. Parental interaction aids childhood intellectual development. It is also an opportunity for parents to meet and develop support networks.
- A formal Quorum should be 5 voting members.
- The NY Times link is finalized. Ms. Chmiel suggested reporting any concerns.

It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, to approve the Director's Report.

Votes: Ayes – Mr. Freedman, Mr. Goldblatt, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays - none. Abstentions- none

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Freedman informed Board about the visit from Ms. Paclak, president of the NJ Library Trustees Association (NJLTA). She will talk about Board responsibilities and how to support and advocate for our libraries.
- We welcomed Ms. Kristin Kelly
- Staff Holiday Lunch. We have sunshine funds to cover costs. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Freedman, to approve to opening the Library on December, 15 2017 at 12:00 Noon for Staff Holiday Lunch celebration. Votes: Ayes –Mr. Freedman, Mr. Goldblatt, Mrs. Jackson, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Smith, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none

- Robert Barbanell and Nancy Berkenfeld coordinated the Elmora Branch Sunday closings for Jewish Holidays as follows: Sunday, April, 1st, Passover and May 20th Shavuot 2018.
- The proposed Holiday Closing Schedule for 2018 will be presented at the November meeting.
- We had an outside party request rental of the Auditorium for a program that would charge for attendance. The Auditorium is not to be used for profit making endeavors.

READING OF COMUNICATIONS

- Per Capital Aid Check; a copy was added to the Board package.
- Union County Freeholders Referendum on the Library Construction Bond.

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Ms. Smith that the meeting move into Closed Session. Votes: By Acclamation.

PERSONNEL

- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to hire Lois Javier, PT Library Assistant, \$12.15 hour, plus Union increase. Votes: By Acclamation.
- It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Ms. Smith to hire Francine Jones, PT Library Assistant, \$12.15 hour, plus Union increase. Votes: By Acclamation.
- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to hire Marc Anthony Moron, PT Library Assistant, \$12.15 hour, plus Union increase. Votes: By Acclamation.
- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to hire Stephanie Rivera, PT Library Assistant, \$12.15 hour, plus Union increase. Votes: By Acclamation.
- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to hire Christina Topolowski, PT Library Assistant, \$12.15 hour, plus Union increase. Votes: By Acclamation.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7: 21pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina.