

## **Board of Trustees Minutes – February 20, 2018**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on February 20, 2018. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:43pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Eloy Delgado (Late), Ted Freedman, Aaron Goldblatt, Kenyetta Jackson (Late), Anne Russell, and Connie Pires Sanchez. Absent: Kristin Kelly (Excused), Pearl Serratelli (Excused), and Earnestine Smith (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: No visitors

### **MINUTES**

Ms. Chmiel noted a correction - The Hudson Energy contract expiration date is not on February 8<sup>th</sup>, but actually January 4<sup>th</sup>; it will be amended in record. It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Mrs. Russell to approve the minutes from January 16<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.

- Ms. Chmiel didn't note anything unusual. Ms. Chmiel went through all the major lines and found that we are 62% thru the year and have about 38% left, so in most categories we are where we need to be. Retroactive salary payment due to the new Union contract was included in this analysis.
- Under Building and Maintenance, the final payment for Friendship House was lowered from \$8,000.00 to \$6,000.00 as per attorney Ray Bolanowski's advice. Friendship House had not completed window and carpet cleaning as specified by their contract.

- State Pension has set up a new system for retired staff that was never clarified. Mr. Freedman noted that \$319,000 was budgeted and only \$2,270 is expended. Ms. Chmiel replied that a big bill will come in April. Salaries seem fine since 47% of that budget line remains. Prescription cost is unpredictable (prescriptions are managed, not a plan). Health Benefits have \$44,832 remaining. Health benefits cover only full-time staff and family members. 57% of our staff is full-time and 37% are part-time; two employees opted to waive health benefits. We are under State Health Benefits, and the co-pay remains same. Ms. Chmiel reminded us of Mr. Delgado's suggestion to look for another health insurance entity, but since the library is a small group, there wouldn't be significant benefit to seeking a new plan, especially as we are partnered with the City for Health Benefits.
- The library has \$3,500 budgeted as income for "video rental," but the amount will now be \$1,173 this year, as the rental fee has been dropped. Patrons are responding very positively to the new policy.
- Responding to Mr. Freedman's question, Ms. Chmiel noted that we created a spreadsheet to more closely monitor elevator issues. Responding to another inquiry from Current Elevators' bonding company for the elevator upgrade, Ms. Chmiel noted again that we are NOT satisfied, as we continue having problems. Current Elevator knew there were problems, but was not prepared to thoroughly investigate. Jersey Elevator is our current Maintenance Elevator Contractor. We are working together to identify the possible issues and are satisfied with their service. Mr. Luck explained that a fuse is blown a couple of times a month and it takes about 10 minutes to resolve the issue. Maintenance is available to perform this task during all operating hours. Ms. Chmiel will talk to Attorney Bolanowski about any action that can be taken in regard to Current Elevator. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mrs. Pires Sanchez to approve February Treasurer's Report. Vote: by acclamation.  
Abstentions - none.

**PRESENTATION OF BILLS:**

- New Jersey Library Trustees Association should be in current list.
- A typo was observed in the payee for Voucher #31469. The correct payee is Mount Laurel Library.

- Intermedia.net, Inc. provides our email storage/exchange. Our email storage capacity is significantly increased.
- Responding to Mr. Freedman's question about switching cleaning staff to in-house, Ms. Chmiel explained that we had sixty days notice when Friendship House withdrew from their contract, so the Library put the job out to Bid. Attorney Ray Bolanowski recommended hiring ACCSES NJ, which, after three weeks, settled on a price of \$102,000 per year. This amount was beyond what we had budgeted for the year. One day before Friendship House was to cease providing cleaning service, ACCSES informed us that they were unable to fulfill the contract as specified. It was crucial for the Library to maintain its current cleaning staff since they are trained and trustworthy. Ms. Chmiel stated that it didn't look ethical to accept a contract under \$94,000 per year as it certainly involved under-paid labor and probably unfulfilled contract specifications. We hired Ana Maria Sanchez to head the cleaning crew at 40 hours a week. This is similar to maintenance hours. Additionally, we hired 2 part-time cleaning staff at 19 hours/week. Responding to Mrs. Jackson's question if the library will save by hiring them, Ms. Chmiel replied that although we are not saving, but that, as a municipal institution, we are also a role model for our community and should not engage in exploitive labor practices. The estimate of 40 weekly hours plus benefits (salary compensation is part of the benefits package), does not show as an issue. Ms. Chmiel pointed out that we have to let the City know that cleaning is part of our operating expense and that we may need more money in our budget. Mrs. Jackson replied that we can't do this just assuming that the City will give us more money. This cleaning crew will also service the Elmora Branch.
- Workers started installing new lights at Elmora under our Energy Savings program. This costs the Library a little money upfront, but long-term energy savings are predicted. HVAC is included too. We have been working for about two years on Energy Savings upgrades. The project starts at Elmora and we hope to have it at Main as well.
- It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Mrs. Pires Sanchez to approve the February Presentation of Bills. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none.

## **REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Mr. Freedman welcomed Mrs. Pires Sanchez; he informed Mrs. Pires Sanchez that as part of her Finance Committee Appointment there will be some meetings about budget and finance. Our budget was flat for ten years and finally last year we got a 2% increase; as everybody knows Health Care and other uncontrolled cost need additional funding.

## **REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES**

Ad Hoc Committees didn't meet

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- **Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:**
- Mr. Freedman commended the camera system. The Library will be increasing the number of cameras, including two more on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor near Reference and Computer Assistance. We will add three more at Elmora and one at Eport; as part of E-Rate upgrade that also includes upgrading our Wi-Fi capacity.
- Mr. Delgado questioned if Department Head reports was taking from staff work time. Board members expressed satisfaction with the additional reports; departments should be reporting their activities. It is part of Ms. Chmiel mission here to establish a comprehensive record of what we do, when we do, and how we do it. Mr. Luck explained how reports impact the Annual Report.
- The Outreach Kit, unlike a Bookmobile, is multitasking. It can be taken any place in the community to demonstrate what we do at the Library.
- Mr. Freedman commended Mr. Luck's and Nancy Berkenfeld's reports. Responding to Ms. Russell about Trinitas Regional Medical Center's attendance, Ms. Chmiel replied that it could be related to weather conditions. We are trying to get Social Work intern students in the Library. It was moved by Mr. Delgado, seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve the Director's Report. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none.

## **READING OF COMUNICATIONS**

- None.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- City ID updates are included in Mr. Luck's report. An average of 15 IDs created daily. We have updated the EMID MOU with the City. It is now set up as a flat rate of \$500 a month for Edwin Lopez's time for technology assistance, plus an Administrator flat rate charge of \$250 a month. This is the same Admin rate billed to LiteracyNJ. This covers Roel Laurel's accounting and Andy Luck's supervision. We feel more comfortable of doing it this way.
- We met with the Architect regarding the bathrooms. Progress is being made at both Elmora and Main.
- Groundwork Elizabeth has come to Ms. Chmiel with their plan for the back garden at Elmora. They were awarded the grant to build a deck. Ms. Chmiel explained the project in detail and showed Board the garden location and Deck Project plans that will be an opening classroom, accessible to musicians, art projects, and more. It will be ADA compliant.
- Ms. Chmiel will send Board members the revised Personal Manual as an attachment again.

## NEW BUSINESS

- We received the audit for FY July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 through June 30<sup>th</sup> 2017; Ms. Chmiel provided the Board with copies of the report. Suplee Clooney & Company offered a proposal for the audit of the current year at a fee of \$ 14,200, an increase \$275. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Russell to approve Audit Services for the Fiscal Year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none.
- Patron Photo Policy - patrons have the opportunity to have their photo taken as part of their library card application process. This allows patrons to potentially access library services without their card. The photos are taken at the Circulation Department. Other Libraries throughout the United States are using photo IDs within their ILS systems. We are the first in LMxAC. There is no additional cost. **It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mrs. Pires Sanchez to approve the Patron' Record Photo Policy. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mrs. Pires Sanchez to approve the Staff Patron' Record Photo Policy. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions – none.**
- Food and Drink Policy was amended to include microfilm readers as a prohibited area. No food or drink may be consumed at the research tables outside the Local History Room as per

Aimee Fernandez's request. The new food policy has been positively received by the public and there have been no issues. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve the amended Food and Drink Policy. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions – none.

- Disciplinary Action Policy for Patrons - the Library now has a more formalized system on our server to document incidents. The Librarian in Charge determines sanctions based on the rule violation. Security must bring to our attention anything they consider to be an issue. This is fine in theory, but we have to be realistic about the level of performance we can expect considering our low hourly pay. We regularly lose good guards due to low remuneration. Our current vendor contract will end in June. Following attorney Ray Bolanowski's recommendation to consider a no-bid contract with ACCSESNJ for such services, we have learned that such a contract would cost us \$22.95/hour per guard. While going out to bid certainly remains an option, bringing security in-house should also be considered. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve Disciplinary Action Policy. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions – none.
- Ms. Chmiel read Resolution for Administrative Staff Salary and Union Contract Increases: "WHEREAS, the recently negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement between Communications Workers of America Local 1031, AFL-CIO, and The Free Public Library of the City of Elizabeth, NJ, allows for 3.5% increase for all employees as of July 1, 2017, WHEREAS, Administrative staff of the Library have historically received increases commensurate with those negotiated by the Union, WHEREAS, the Collective Bargaining Agreement further stipulates increases of #.5% as of July 1, 2018 and 3.5% as of July 1, 2019, NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The exempt employees of The Elizabeth Public Library working in Administrative position will receive 3.5% increases, retroactive to July 1, 2017, and future 3.5% increases as of July 1, 2018 and as of July 1, 2019." It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve Resolution for Administrative Staff Salary Increases. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions – none.

It was moved by Mrs. Pires Sanchez, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt 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**

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Mr. Freedman, to hire Christian Medina as Part-Time Library Assistant at \$12.58 per hour. Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mrs. Jackson to hire Alihanisha Reyes-Piza as Part-Time Library Assistant at \$12.58 per hour. Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to Accept Nastajja Colon's resignation. Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to Hire Ana M. Sanchez as Crew Supervisor Maintenance at \$13 per hour, 40 hours weekly. Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Russell to Hire Carmen Losada as Part-Time Cleaning Maintenance at \$12.00 per hour, 19 hours weekly. Votes: By Acclamation. It was moved by Mrs. Pires Sanchez, seconded by Ms. Russell to Hire Doris Rodriguez as Part-Time Cleaning Maintenance at \$12.00 per hour rate, 19 hours weekly. Votes: By Acclamation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mrs. Pires Sanchez to adjourn the meeting. Votes: By acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at 7: 44pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina.