

Board of Trustees Minutes - January 16, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on January 16, 2018. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

- Installation of New Officers:

President: Ted Freedman
V. President: Aaron Goldblatt
Treasurer: Eloy Delgado
Secretary: Pearl Serratelli

ROLL CALL

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

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 library branches.

Visitors: No visitors

MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mrs. Jackson to approve the minutes from December 19th 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.

- Mr. Freedman didn't note anything unusual. The Library budget is at the half way point and the remaining budget seems in line.

Our 20 years' lease at Eport expires November 2018, Ms. Chmiel pointed out. She will contact City Legal Dept. for advice. Responding to Mr. Freedman's question, Ms. Chmiel noted that there were planned increases every 5 years. Security is an issue and Ms. Chmiel would like to address that in a new contract. Our current contract includes security two evenings and Saturday. Responding to Mr. Freedman's question if hiring a security guard for Eport as we have at Elmora branch would be cheaper, Ms. Chmiel replied that she is not sure since we have a contract with a vendor that has a lot of issues. That is another reason why Ms. Chmiel is looking into pulling it back in house as we had it in the past. Mr. Freedman recommended hiring County Security services. Ms. Chmiel noted that we can't afford it but will remain open to additional options. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve the January Treasurer's Report. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - None.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS:

- We paid our projected Pension obligation. The amount is dependent on staff salary.
- Two more Hudson Energy bills remain from a contract that will expire February 8th; PSE&G has implemented some increases that affect us, however we had signed an agreement that will lessen the impact. It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve the January Presentation of Bills. Vote- Ayes: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Mrs. Kenyetta Jackson, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Earnestine Smith. Abstentions- None.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr. Freedman recommended meeting with Mrs. Pires Sanchez, Ms. Chmiel and the relevant committees to see what kind of plan to prepare in terms of the Library budget. Ms. Chmiel encouraged Board members to meet with Council members and representatives to help advocate for the Library. Ms. Chmiel noted that during a conversation over a year ago with Mr. Keenan, he thought we were already receiving \$4.5 million budget, based on his experience as director here. Ms. Chmiel said that we have existing and increasing needs that we were able to manage last year, but that can't be sustained indefinitely. Mrs. Jackson thought that Ms. Chmiel was present when the City Council review the City budget plan. Ms. Chmiel replied that she was never invited. Ms. Chmiel plans to submit the Library request in March.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc Committees didn't meet

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

- In answer to Mr. Freedman's question about Elmora heat, Ms. Chmiel stated that there were a couple of things involved including a belt that broke. Mr. Goulart methodically fixed the problem. Our energy upgrade will be able to do some work on the HVAC system. Mr. Goulart can be available to resolve heating issues on weekends if there was an emergency, depending on his personal schedule. Sixty degrees is not considered an emergency situation; staff has portable heaters. Elmora needs improvements and they are on the agenda. We are working to install energy savings components that include efficient lighting, and HVAC components as well. The work is expected to be done in the spring.
- DCRP (Defined Contribution Retirement Program) is part of Governor Christie's Retirement Plan Reform. Full time employees are enrolled in PERS (Public Employee's Retirement System). Around \$5,000 was returned to DCRP-enrolled employees for 2017 and the correct amount will be contributed going forward. We make our contribution on a monthly basis.
- Posting snow closing in our Web Site would have to be done on Library premises. A phone message is set up for public notification. We will look into other possibilities. The Library was closed Thursday for parking- lot cleaning purposes.
- Liberty Hall seems to be a warehouse of historical documents. Most actually belong to the Kean family personally.
- T&M was the asbestos removal company; this company was also used previously.
- AARP volunteers are handling the free tax preparation at the library. We have 15 appointments a day, two days per week (30 people a week). They take walk-ins starting in April.
- Mr. Luck is working on handicap access signs.

- We no longer have maintenance on the electronic door counters. When Ms. Chmiel became director, she noticed that there had been three service calls in the previous five years, while annual maintenance was \$13,000 year.
- Hoopla is download service for TV, Comics, Audio Books, eBooks, Music, and Movies. It is part of our consortium service, but could eat a lot of our budget since it is a variable cost. Mr. Luck explained in detail the hoopla service model. While hoopla is free to our cardholders, DVD rentals are not - another reason why we should stop charging for DVD's Ms. Chmiel pointed out. Patrons should pay for Hoopla Mrs. Jackson added.
- We are still waiting for City Council to approve the amendment on City EMID program MOU.
- We don't put magnetic strips on all magazines due to labor and processing costs.
- The Cookie Mouse program was a success.
- The puppet show attracted about 60 people.
- Providing an inexpensive ID in house will allow library staff to have an employee card with a picture and identifying title. It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Smith to approve the Director's Report. Vote- Ayes: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Mrs. Kenyetta Jackson, Ms. Kristin Kelly, Ms. Earnestine Smith. Abstentions- None.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Letter from the Mayor Appointing Mrs. Connie Pires Sanchez to the Board of Trustees.
- Reappointment updates will be provided.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- City ID updates are included in Mr. Lucks' report.
- We have two projects with USA Architects: We had six weeks of no activity in the bathroom renovations at Main due to asbestos issues that were done overnight for a total cost of \$4,000. The contractor estimates work will be completed in two months. The other project at Elmora was funded with \$42,000 in CDBG funds, significantly less than we expected. Ms. Chmiel

recommends doing one bathroom at time due to the budget short fall. We would have to submit another CDBG application for additional funding. There hasn't been a sewage backup at Elmora in the last three weeks. Elmora definitely needs new bathrooms, as the current facilities date from the 1950's, Ms. Chmiel noted.

- Groundwork Elizabeth will be here next month to report on their grant application for the deck in the Elmora lot. Mr. Freedman inquired if we are satisfied with the work they are doing in term of parking lot availability. Ms. Chmiel noted that communication could be better, especially when meetings are held past Library closing.
- The new food policy has been verified by department heads and staff is comfortable with it. The policy states that pizza, McDonald's, and smelly food are verboten; patrons can bring a snack to be consumed at the Flex space only. Ms. Chmiel fantasizes about a coffee machine on the first floor one day. No food can be consumed at our computers. Currently there is a "No food or drink in the Library" policy. There is no government policy forbidding food, only alcohol. Signs will be placed at the Flex space tables. Ms. Chmiel encourages Teen staff to walk around the area after school, as that is the area with the heaviest snack consumers. Staff should engage with the kids, reminding them that hot food is not allowed, that snackers are responsible for cleaning up afterwards. Mrs. Jackson suggested being very specific and changing the word "food" to "snacks," Mr. Goldblatt agreed. Ms. Chmiel expressed the belief that people will understand that we have relaxed our policy, but that there is still a food policy. It was moved by Mrs. Jackson, seconded by Ms. Smith to approve Food Policy with amendment. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - None.
- Personal manual was moved to February's Board meeting. Previous and new manuals was distributed to Board.
- Trinitas, Jewish Family Services and the Library will have a health screening program, Saturday January 20th managed and supported by Ally, Nancy and Robert. Robert will promote the event on the Mayor's Show, Our City. The collaboration with Trinitas creates the possibility of other cooperative initiatives; that could also create Grant opportunities for the Library, Ms. Chmiel noted.
- **NEW BUSINESS**
- Updated Board Members Contact list, email and addresses.

- Comments provided by Mr. Freedman were added to the Resolution to honor Mr. Kevin Weaver. A copy will be mail it to Mr. Weaver and to the City. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve the Resolution in Honor of Mr. Kevin Weaver. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - None.
- DVD Rental Fee. Page 11 of the Jan Board Report shows video rental income \$3,500 a year. Ms. Chmiel thinks that Circulation will increase when we remove these fees. We are more about circulation than making \$3,500. Cost of replacement and late fees will remain in effect. It was moved by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve to remove DVD rental fee, effective February 1st. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - None.

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

It was moved by Mrs. Freedman, seconded by Mrs. Jackson to move the meeting out of Closed Session. Votes: By Acclamation.

PERSONNEL

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Smith to accept Flor Mendez's Resignation. Votes: By Acclamation.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7: 15pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina.