

Board of Trustees Minutes – March 20, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on March 20, 2018. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:33pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

ROLL CALL

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

It was moved by Mrs. Pires Sanchez, seconded by Mrs. Russell to approve the minutes from February 20th 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.

- As we are three quarters of the way through the Fiscal Year and we have a third of the year's budget remaining, Ms. Chmiel established that the budget is in good standing. Ms. Chmiel transferred \$333,609.36 into the payroll account to cover the staff pension payment for April 1st, 2018.
- We spent some funds on technology, but E-Rate should refund some of those costs. Telephone costs will drop drastically. Ms. Chmiel stated that East Coast Energy is late transmitting the paperwork that transfers our electricity purchases from Hudson Energy to East Coast. East Coast will refund to us the difference between the prices charged by Hudson and the auction price guaranteed by East Coast. Ms. Chmiel will let Board know the refunded

amount. It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Smith to approve March Treasurer's Report. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS:

- T&M refers to Asbestos Treatment paid out of Capital Reserve. The USA Architect payments come from that account as well. These are the Library contributions toward the CDBG bathroom upgrade.
- Smart Signs Store provided the handicap access signs that will be installed at Main and Elmora branch. It was moved by Mrs. Pires Sanchez, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to approve March Treasurer's Report. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions - none.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Ms. Chmiel explained the thinking behind her budget request to Mr. Luis Pupo, assistant comptroller. The Library budget is based upon 1/3 of a mill of the equalized property evaluation of the City of Elizabeth. While the Library is funded well above 1/3 of a mill, she noted that from 2016 to 2017, the 1/3 of a mill increased by about \$150,000. So \$150,000 seemed a reasonable amount to request. We have been basically flat-funded for 7 years and our expenses have increased significantly. Mr. Pupo noted that Mr. Anthony Zengaro will make the final recommendation.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc Committees didn't meet.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:**
- Robert Barbanell and Ms. Chmiel went to Plainsboro to attend a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program. It was about telling your story, "what is important to you and what attracts you to your job." Ms. Chmiel shared a story of a patron that started as volunteer at the Teen Department, participating in activities while dropping out of high school. This teen then got her GED through a program held at the Library, and now works at the Library. That is a success story. That is what we do – host literacy volunteers for ESL instruction, Jewish

Family Services for citizenship instruction, and GED Testing - all community needs being addressed. Mr. Freedman noted that we need a bigger parking lot.

- We need more tables and spaces for providing services that our community needs. Ms. Chmiel has discussed with staff the possibility of having more space in the mezzanine area.
- Ms. Chmiel recommends more evening hours to Elmora Library, since we are having ESL Conversation groups in the evening, regular literacy classes; and other groups also want to meet at the branch, including Ground Elizabeth, community garden participants and Block Watch meetings. Two nights are insufficient to meet demand. Responding to Mrs. Pires Sanchez' question about increasing Elmora evenings, given the decrease in February foot traffic, Ms. Chmiel replied that may be related to weather issues.
- We had a great Makers Day; Ms. Chmiel appreciated Mr. Freedman's participation. According to statistics provided by the presenters, we had about 1000 participants. Having an activity like that builds our reputation, Mr. Luck stated. We are one of the few libraries in NJ doing such a large Makers Day event. The event was listed on Chanel 12 News, Ms. Chmiel added.
- Mr. Freedman commended the Computer Help Desk reorganization, with Frank Castro coordinating library publicity and the web site.
- The upgraded lighting at Elmora was part of the Energy Saving; HVAC improvements will also be part of the Energy Savings grant.
- A portion of the carpet at LaCorte needs to be replaced due to water damage.
- \$8,400 in technology spending was for a new Auditorium projector, plus labor. Equipment installed back in 2005 during Mr. Keenan's administration was upgraded. Ms. Chmiel noted paid that the expenses could be paid from Capital Reserve. In addition, a very old electronic cabinet in the Auditorium' kitchen that could be upgraded; this would be an ideal opportunity for a grant, if one surfaces. E-Rate funds can possibly cover these costs since is the projector provides a public service.

- TASC (GED) - we are moving ahead using our Computer Lab; there is a heavy demand for this type of service.
- Information Services and the Children Department reports were not added to March packet, it is important to have them every month Mr. Freedman stated.
- Responding to Mr. Freedman's question about the cleaning staff transition to an in-house service, Ms. Chmiel stated that we haven't had any complains or problems since it is same staff. The cleaners were paid for snow days; in the past they wouldn't have been paid. Ana Maria Sanchez reports to Mr. Goulart; for immediately attention she communicates to Violeta in order to get to Ms. Chmiel. The other two cleaning staff members are part-timers and Ana Maria is satisfied with their work.
- Robert Barbanell mentions Branches activities in his report.
- We are working on staffing the Periodical Desk; we are still short on staff. The Library has only four full-time Circulation staff which is two less than in the past. The shift to part timers was due to benefits costs. Staffing the Periodical Desk is important to back up the Teen Department, Mr. Luck added.
- Due our diligence in documenting everything, there are a large number of monthly incident reports. We document incident situations that affect staff and patrons at the library. In general once we ban patrons, when they return they act more circumspectly and show greater respect in general. The bans enforce our Rules of Conduct. Cameras allow for greater control; we are installing a minimum of six more at a total cost of \$2,000.
- Tracy was awarded two \$500 grants.
- hoopla downloadable resources are available through our consortium LMxAC, with each library's daily allocation determined by prior average usage. This allocation schedule was instituted to curtail continued out-of-budget spending. Ms. Chmiel explained in detail the monthly patron allowance. Mr. Luck also explained the cost per item as compared to books. ElibraryNJ offers E-Books as well.
- The elimination of DVD borrowing fees has improved circulation drastically.

- NY Times web allows a 48 hour downloadable pass. It is a great resource.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Two valuable events are coming up:
 - NJLTA workshops at Clifton Public Library, the Monroe Township Public Library, Gloucester County Library, and the Cranford Library.
 - A Legislative Breakfast at Cranford Community Center Friday, April 27, 2018; a great opportunity to meet other Board members.
- Mr. Freedman said we should expect the City to supply the matching funding that will be required by the Construction Bond.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- EMID Elizabeth Municipal ID program update is in Mr. Luck's report. We are billing the City for \$500 a month for Tech support (Edwin Lopez's time) and \$250 for Administrative Support (Mr. Luck, Roel Laurel, and Ms. Chmiel work). Ms. Chmiel feels more comfortable invoicing the City this way. In the last two months the average number of ID cards made was 15 per day. City ID program hours are Mondays to Thursdays 2:00 to 7:00pm and Saturdays 10:00 to 3:00pm.
- The bathrooms will be finished in April. A ribbon cutting was proposed.
- Groundwork Elizabeth has a large supply of seeds donated by seeds companies; they will be given away at Elmora Branch on March 20th and March 26th at 6:30pm. There will be garden meetings at Elmora from 6:30 to 8:00pm the first Monday of the month. This year there is a \$10 garden bed fee.
- Ms. Chmiel will send Board members the revised Personal Manual as an attachment again.

NEW BUSINESS

- Reading down fines: libraries across the county have this program for patrons 18 and under, some programs are for 12 and under. Ms. Chmiel recommends 19 and under for our community. There are different parameters for reducing fines, but the reading has to be done in the library where a staff member can monitor the reading time. Newspapers, books and

magazines are allowable reading materials. The idea is to encourage kids to read. We are preparing a policy to make clear parameters. Forgiveness won't apply to damaged or lost material. This could be either a permanent or a temporary program. It could start April 1st and run at least until the beginning of July so kids will be able to clear out their accounts for the Summer Reading Club. Reading cannot be applied to future fines.

- BOE AgLab Placement will take place at Elmora Branch.
- Responding to Mrs. Jackson's question about why there isn't parking allowance in front to Elmora Library, Ms. Chmiel replied that we will have to address that to the City.
- National Library Week Fine Forgiveness is under revision.
- Elmora Branch will be used as a Polling Site; Ms. Chmiel read City Clerk communication:
TO ALL POLLING PLACE OWNERS: [added to Board Package]
It was moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Freedman to approve Resolution for Elmora Branch as a Polling Site. Vote: by acclamation. Abstentions – none.
- Ms. Chmiel recommends as a consideration having a security consultant to come to our space to make safety recommendations since libraries are soft targets. Library Link NJ could cover \$1,500 of the total cost of \$4,500 total. We had the Elizabeth Police Department talk to us about active shooter situations.

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

PERSONNEL

No Personnel matters.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7: 04pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina.