

**Board of Trustees**  
**Minutes**  
**January 17, 2017**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held on January 17, 2017. President Ted Freedman called the meeting to order at 5:35pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Veronica Alvero, Ted Freedman, Kenyetta Jackson, Anne Russell, Kevin Weaver.

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Pearl Serratelli (Excused), Earnestine Smith (Excused) and Christian Veliz.

Visitors: No visitors.

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.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Freedman introduced the new officers: President- Theodore Freedman; Vice President- Kevin Weaver; Treasurer – Eloy Delgado; and Secretary – Pearl Serratelli. The Board members signed a sympathy card to Ms. Smith, whose mother has passed away.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell, to approve the Minutes as amended, with the corrected name of the “Nominating Committee,” for December 20, 2016. Votes: Ayes – Mr. Freedman, Ms. Russell, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- Mrs. Alvero, Mrs. Jackson.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:**

Ms. Chmiel presented the Treasurer’s report in Mr. Delgado’s absence. Ms. Chmiel established that it is a tight budget year. She mentioned that it is always a relief when the bi-weekly payroll is under \$70,000, as it was for the current payperiod; however, she noted that there are a couple

of staff positions that she would like to fill. Ms. Chmiel further established the need for furniture (chairs that cost \$100 each) and maintenance (HVAC). Ms. Chmiel noted that the remaining budget for books is \$45,000; audio visual is under control. Decisions on databases have been made; the expenditures aren't yet noted on the budget line. Ms. Chmiel added that we have cut the book budget in half since she got here; while this is not an uncommon practice, it is not a recommended one and it is one we have discussed with staff.

Ms. Chmiel noted that certain grants – such as the Cultural & Heritage one that supports the Fall Concert Series – require matching funds. Ms. Chmiel concluded that, while we haven't yet paid the pension bill, we do know that this year's cost is \$317,000. Mr. Freedman and Mr. Weaver agreed that Health and Prescription costs and the Pension are budgeting obstacles. Drug screening, which the Library does not do, would be an additional overhead cost. (Discussion) Ms. Chmiel will ask the City about their drug screening.

Ms. Chmiel expressed a little disappointment in the outcome of the Elmora Book Sale.

Computer Printout and Photocopy Machines will be combined into one line the following Fiscal Year, since we have Copy Machines at every branch.

Ms. Chmiel raised the possibility that video material could be borrowed at no charge, if the Board were to so decide.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Freedman, to approve the Treasure's Report  
Votes: Ayes – Mrs. Alvero, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson Ms. Russell, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

#### **PRESENTATION OF BILLS:**

Mr. Weaver inquired about Hudson Energy. Ms. Chmiel replied that she was told that municipalities are not exempt from sales tax on energy. Mike Stoller, who managed our Energy Auction, and BPU both verified this. Ms. Chmiel noted that fuel prices have dropped drastically; and she will ask Roel for a printout of our fuel costs, comparing this year to last, once we have a full 12-month cycle with Hudson Energy. Ms. Chmiel reported that John's Café (Staff Christmas lunch) was paid with Sunshine Ffunds. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell, to approve the Treasure's Report  
Votes: Ayes – Mrs. Alvero, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson Ms. Russell, and Mr. Weaver. Nays- none. Abstentions- none.

## **REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Standing committees did not meet in January.

## **REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Special committees did not meet in January.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:**

- The MorphaTrust which verifies documents, arrived January 17<sup>th</sup>. Edwin Lopez worked extensively on setting it up. We have 100 appointments for the week of January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Luck noted that we are getting volunteers from a variety of places, such as Keen University, the City Human Services Dept, and local high schools. Mr. Leonard Grayson is the point-person for volunteer participation. Mr. Luck expressed the need for bilingual volunteers, and explained in detail their responsibilities. Ms. Chmiel explained that there will be step-by-step training on document verification and card processing. Ms. Russell asked if the City ID pictures will be taking at the library; Ms. Chmiel confirmed this. A question was raised about discrepancies, and who will arbitrate decisions. Ms. Chmiel explained that the City will handle these issues. Both Ms. Chmiel and Mr. Luck were very clear in noting the amount of time and energy the Library staff, especially IT manager Edwin Lopez, had devoted to this project. Without Edwin, this project would have still been in planning stages. They wanted the Board to be aware that the City ID has technically acted as a cut upon the Library budget, given the space, time and resources directed toward the project, that could otherwise have gone toward other Library activities.
- Graffiti in the men's public bathroom has been labeled a hate crime.
- The cannonball in the LHR dates from the Revolution and has no explosive components.
- We closed early for snow on January 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The messages on the phone line will be updated to reflect our new Friday hours. The Board recommended a message to report weather or emergency closings.
- Ms. Chmiel explained the missing brick mystery at the circular pavement outside the Rahway entrance in response to Ms. Russell's question.
- The City placed mouse traps to resolve a mouse presence at the LaCorte Branch.

- To Mr. Freedman question, Ms. Chmiel replied that we are still working on implementation of the 72 hour *New York Times* passes.
- Art displayed by Roberta Zlatkin was abruptly removed by the artist, weeks' ahead of time, with no notice to the staff.
- Makers Day is Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup>; Mr. Freedman offered participation as volunteer. No City IDs will take place that Saturday due to heavy internal programming.
- We have registered as a seller with Better World Books. If we send them 40 boxes of books at one time they will pay for shipping. Mr. Freedman asked if we will receive a profit from this; Ms. Chmiel said that was the goal.
- Ana Maria Sanchez, one of our cleaning staff, became a US Citizen thanks to the Citizen classes held Wednesdays at the Library.
- Mr. Luck has been updating some of the missing statistical data.
- Mr. Freedman had a question about the EBook waiting list. Ms. Chmiel explained that we can access various reports to review wait times and titles. If there only one book, the entire consortium has to wait for it, Mr. Luck added. Mr. Freedman asked if we have had complaints of any abnormal waiting time; Ms. Chmiel replied that we have not. Ms. Chmiel will print the holds list for Mr. Freedman. Mr. Luck explained the process of eliminating long hold periods and dealing with missing books. One of our goals is to do a complete inventory, Ms. Chmiel stated.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, to approve the Director's Report  
 Votes: Ayes – Mrs. Alvero, Mr. Freedman, Mrs. Jackson Ms. Russell, and Mr. Weaver. Nays-  
 none. Abstentions- none.

## **READING OF COMUNICATIONS**

- Thank you letter to the County Freeholders
- Re-appointment letter
- Support letter for Jewish Family Services of Middlesex County (JFS)
- Thank you letter from Mrs. Eppinger.

## **UNFINISH BUSINESS**

- The Board members discussed the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between the Library and the City for the ID Card Program; a decision was tabled until the next meeting.
- Mr. Freedman asked about liability issues related to the City ID cards. Ms. Chmiel noted that the Library does have a Liability Policy but that our insurance agency said we incur no additional liability since we are not collecting Social Security numbers. Mr. Freedman asked if any additional costs, other than those mentioned in the MOU, are being shouldered by the Library. Mr. Freedman suggested evaluating City ID program' cost and labor demand, in March of 2017, in support of additional City funding in FY 2017-2018.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- The Board agreed to add unclaimed money to Sunshine Funds.
- Board of Trustees members' contact list was updated.
- Mr. Freedman presented the 2017 Board of Trustees Committee appointments; some changes were made, as is his discretion.
- Mr. Freedman suggested changes to the format of the Board Agenda
- Audit proposal from Suplee & Clooney. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell, to accept the Audit proposal by Supplee Clooney & Company for the fiscal year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at a fee of \$13,500.00 Votes: By Acclamation. Mr. Weaver requested confirmation that we are verifying the ADP retirement payments, as recommended in the last audit. Ms. Chmiel will reconfirm this by the next meeting.
- HVAC/plumbing expenses to be Capital expenditure' Resolution was tabled.
- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, to approve Resolution in support of Senate Bill S2171 Votes: By Acclamation.
- It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, to approve Resolution in support of Assembly Bill A222 Votes: By Acclamation.
- Mrs. Jackson inquired about the costs for Tracy's classes, and the amount we cover per semester; Ms. Chmiel replied that we cover \$ 1,500.00 per semester, up to \$ 6,000.00 per total of her career. It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Russell, to approve Resolution for reimbursement to Tracy Robinson of \$1500.00 for her school tuition. Votes: By Acclamation.

- No Resolution was presented to honor Margaret Spirito a previous Board member, since we couldn't find information dating to her term on the Board.

It was moved by Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Alvero, to move the meeting into closed session

Votes: By Acclamation.

## **PERSONNEL**

It was moved by Kevin Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Alvero, to move out of closed session.

Following the earlier budget discussion, Ms. Chmiel again mentioned the need for another effective librarian; she has already made contact with a potential candidate. Ms. Chmiel reminded the Board that we have lost Nancy Smith, Louisa Bann, and the Archivist. We need an effective Librarian such as we had in Louisa Bann. Mr. Freedman asked if anything has been suffering because of Louisa's resignation. Not necessarily, Ms. Chmiel replied; but since we are facing Makers Day, her absence will be noticed, since Louisa was always an advocator and innovator for that event. Ms. Chmiel can't guarantee that we will have same the results without her participation in that event. Mr. Luck explained his and Ms. Chmiel's expectations for the position, such as weekly reports, and goals. Mrs. Alvero inquired if there is an effective evaluation form that the Library is using. Mrs. Alvero offered to provide an Expectation Evaluation Tool, which could be useful.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm

Submitted by Ana V. Monje-Medina