

Board of Trustees Minutes – May 16, 2023

Call to Order: The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held in person and remotely via Zoom on May 16, 2023. Ms. Pearl Serratelli called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. **A quorum was established by roll call.**

ROLL CALL:

Present: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd.

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

Also present were Mary Faith Chmiel, Library Director; Assistant Director, Robert Barbanell; and Helen Speros, Office Manager, taking minutes.

Announcement of Compliance with The Sunshine Law: In compliance. There is a notice in the Star Ledger for when the board meetings are held. We post this one time per year.

Welcome to Visitors - Ms. Pearl Serratelli states there are no visitors.

Comments from the Public: None

READING OF THE MINUTES (APRIL 2023) (Action Item):

Ms. Pearl Serratelli asks if everyone has finished reading the Minutes. It was motioned by Ms. Pearl Serratelli to accept the Minutes from the previous meeting on April 18, 2023 and seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd.

AYES: Present: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

TREASURER'S REPORT

MaryFaith Chmiel says there are 3 more payrolls but overall we are in good shape. We have a balance of over half a million dollars. See page 11. Budget Comparison Report. MaryFaith compared last year with this year at this time, and it was equivalent. We rolled over about \$200,000 last FY. Mr. Ted Freedman asks about the increase of the health care costs and MaryFaith said it may not have kicked in yet; possibly 9/1/23. Mr. Ted Freedman said the

Governor's \$200 million dollars will take effect 7/1/23 but you have to apply for it. MaryFaith said she submitted the budget request.

Ms. Pearl Serratelli asks if there is a motion to accept the Treasurer's report It is motioned by Mr. Martin Weingast and seconded by Ms. Lisa Torres.

AYES: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF BILLS (APRIL 2023) (Action Item):

- MaryFaith explains expenses for Liberty Mechanical and Jersey Elevator and Willdan Energy Service. Ms. Pearl Serratelli said hopefully next year we will not have HVAC and elevator expenses. Lorraine Tidd said she had a bit trouble with the elevator. MaryFaith said the button gets stuck and she will let the maintenance vendor know.
- Edwin Lopez re-imbursed for \$1600- re-imburement for Latta where we display daily events on the TV screens which informs patrons what is happening.
- John's Caffé was for the Staff Development Day- everyone enjoyed it. We had Employee Assistance Program. Then we had the Improv group, with bonding and team building exercises. We had the Union come in for Q&A. Afterwards, Active Shooter Training by EPD officer who took us through the building.

Ms. Pearl Serratelli asks for a motion for approval to pay the bills. It was motioned by Ms. Lorraine Tidd and seconded by Ms. Earnestine Smith to accept the Bills List.

AYES: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES: None

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES: None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Consult your packet for the complete report.

- MaryFaith discusses D'Andre who punches the air and uses foul language. If you talk to him and treat him with respect he is compliant but then there was a sexual harassment incident to be discussed in closed session, and he was banned for 2 months from the library. Another woman Debra, who worked for the prosecutor's office was also banned, as she does not bathe and may carry microbes; we are within our rights to ban her. A woman named Darlene interacted in a negative way and is also banned. If they show up, the length of the ban is extended.
- Thank you for attending dedication for Dan and Anne Russell. We have language for Nesbitt.
- HVAC project is reaching conclusion; a/c is still not on. All work has been completed by Liberty. The chiller must be turned on by the manufacturer of the chiller, Daikin, otherwise warranties are void. There is a leaking valve in the ceiling of the boiler room affecting 2 pipes below it. There was a flood in the boiler room while electricians were working. The switch gear is expected late July and there will be a 3-day closing to install. The switch gear is a large piece of equipment. The A/C can go on as soon as the vendor comes in. If interior temps reach the mid-80's we have to close for safety reasons.
- Staff elevator modernization: we needed smoke detectors in the new elevator. It is a big project as a smoke detector is needed on each floor 5 feet from the elevator. Today the ADT tech explained the process and how the process can delay staff elevator for 2-3 months. We hired an elevator Consultant but he did not explain this clearly nor how long it takes. MaryFaith is frustrated with that. Our current smoke detectors are not addressable but the upgraded ones will be. Cost is approximately \$25k. Everything has to be hard-wired in. It would make sense to upgrade **all** smoke detectors at this time, not just the ones that must be done for the elevator. Edwin hooked up the phone line in the elevator. There are minor issues upstairs in the machine room. The new equipment was installed so that you have to go *over* the equipment to get inside the room and there is a hazard with a large window. We have had to re-inforce the window with a metal grid for safety reasons.
- Broad Street doors: The staff forgot how to do properly lock it. They thought an Allen wrench was needed. A key is needed and the staff were retrained with hands-on approach. A security guard arranged for a temporary lock with a chain. Ms. Pearl Serratelli said we get new people all the time and the people here a long time forget. MaryFaith said during Covid, we did not have some things going on, so we needed a refresh.
- Usha is concerned about leaks at Elmora- MaryFaith asked the architect twice about the bid packets and has been told "soon."
- Lots of people are attending the Computer classes and Citizenship class. IRC was here and is expected to host 25 people weekly.
- Art work-shops are popular with all departments and summer reading is starting soon.
- Mr. Ted Freedman asks about BrainFuse. We overspent on computer database. We will adjust audio/visual with fewer DVDs & increase Streaming services. We will look to see what streaming services we can afford. MaryFaith received a call from a rep at BrainFuse who said usage was really good and if we paid for actual usage we would pay 60k instead of 11k. There are many services Freegal, a music source, and HOOPLA,

which bases cost not on population size but usage. Usage can always be capped. Hoopla is for entertainment and BrainFuse is educational with live tutoring and practice tests for GED and Citizenship. We have the service from 2pm-11pm. Students struggling can go on-line to BrainFuse and there is a live tutor who will guide them. We cannot afford 60k. MaryFaith has asked if the school district can partner with us and share in the expense for BrainFuse. MaryFaith can go back to City Hall as well. People are using and accessing BrainFuse and we would run up to the cap quickly. Mr. Michael Ojeda wonders if it is possible to get data on the number of students using the service. MaryFaith notes that only the total number of sessions is available. MaryFaith suggests we may have to cap usage at \$15,000 per year, spread across 12 months. MaryFaith notes that the contract expires at the end of June.

- Mr. Martin Weingast asks what kind of accounts the library money is kept in; he notes rates for CDs are 3.65 % at Valley Bank and 4.65% for regular checking account. We could earn about 17k in interest. MaryFaith said we have the bulk of the money, \$800k, in a Money Market account. Ms. Pearl said we can do CDs for 3-6months at a time. Interest rates are low at this point. MaryFaith said as of April \$125 in interest has been earned. Lisa Torres said put part of the money in a higher interest bearing account. MaryFaith said we can make a resolution next month.

MaryFaith asks if there are any questions about her report? It was motioned by Ms. Pearl Serratelli to accept the Director's Report and seconded by Ms. Martin Weingast.

AYES: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:

Nesbitt Plaque Language: *For her nine years of service as the first African-American on the EPLBoard of trustees; for her kindness and benevolence to Elizabeth residents in need; and for the example she set as a businesswoman and community leader. This space is hereby dedicated to Carrie Lucretia Nesbitt May 2023.* Mr. Martin Weingast suggest her years be added to it. We are also planning a plaque dedication for the pergola at the Elmora branch paid for by friends of a nurse who passed away.

Mr. Martin Weingast makes the motion to accept the Nesbitt language and is seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd.

AYES by Acclamation: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NA

NEW BUSINESS: NA

CLOSED SESSION:

It was motioned by Ms. Pearl Serratelli and seconded by Ms. Earnestine Smith.

AYES by Acclamation: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

OPEN SESSION: NA

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Pearl Serratelli asks if there is any business that needs to be discussed that was not discussed?

It was motioned to adjourn at 6:50pm by Ms. Lorraine Tidd and seconded by Ms. Earnestine Smith.

AYES by Acclamation: Ted Freedman (zoom), Michael Ojeda, Martin Weingast (zoom), Lisa Torres, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd. NAYES: none

Absent: Eloy Delgado, Kenyetta Jackson

Submitted by Helen Speros