

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
April 26, 2022

Present:

Board Members: S. O'Shea (Chair); E. Bromley; R. Granata; M. Hyman; S. Fredrick;
T. Lucero; R. Mercede; P. O'Brien Morrow; S. Vidan

Citizen Advisers: S. Arnold-Rossetti; T. Bartley; A. Better-Wirz; J. Block; T. Cassone;
S. Duarte; S. Fitzgerald; D. Golden; A. Livingston; S. Perry;
M. Sommer; D. Souder

Staff: A. Knapp; L. Avellar; C. Harper; E. Joseph; S. LaPerla

Stephanie O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm. This meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the February 15, 2022 meeting. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Cheryl Harper presented the financial activity through March 31, 2022, noting a rise in passport revenue in February and March. Salary wages and benefits are under budget due to staff vacancies; security staff has also been reduced due to Covid remission. There are savings in the utilities line from the new lighting project.

CEO's Report

Alice Knapp discussed the EDI (Equity Diversity and Inclusion) activities of the library staff. Notably staff members presented a short Black History Month celebration every weekday morning online in February. Ms. Knapp shared a video showcasing some of these presentations. The Leadership Team along with the library's EDI Council finished a six-month in-depth discussion on Robert Livingston's book *The Conversation* which will be an all-staff read and discussion. We are working with the Urban Libraries Council Edge 360 Project for benchmarking with other public libraries; it is a pilot project to test measurable outcomes for anti-racism and EDI initiatives.

From her March CEO report, Ms. Knapp discussed efforts being taken for the 2022-2025 strategic framework.

Reporting on the statistics, Ms. Knapp sited circulation for children's material is up while adults are downloading more material. Since the city's mask wearing requirement was lifted, we are seeing more children and teens coming to the branches.

Executive Committee

Stephanie O'Shea provided an update on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on April 26, 2022.

Financial Health Task Force Committee

The first meeting of the Financial Health Task Force was held on March 1, 2022. Ms. Knapp and Ms. Harper presented an overview of library expenses and they received great feedback on how to reduce our expenses. Another Sub-Committee meeting is planned for May 10, where expenses for each branch will be broken down and examined.

Long Range Planning Committee

The Long Range Planning Committee met on March 29, 2022. Susan LaPerla and Elizabeth Joseph presented the Strategic Framework Community Needs Profile which was favorably received.

The Strategic Framework showed detailed results from this 18-month project. A resolution to adopt the strategic framework was made and approved.

Nominating Committee

On March 16, 2022, the Nominating Committee met to discuss the new Annual Board Meeting date. Starting this year, the Board of Trustees Annual Meeting and election of new officers and trustees will be held in June, not September.

Pension Committee

The Pension Committee met on March 22, 2022, with our actuaries Hooker & Holcombe to discuss the option of LDI (Liability Driven Investing). The library will put out an RFP for a new investment consulting firm.

Friends of Ferguson

Deborah Golden reported that The Friends of Ferguson's Board met on March 14, 2022. The Friends revenue is up 33% due to increase of foot traffic, and will increase more once children programs are back in person. The Harry Bennett Branch book shop will be closed during renovations at the branch.

Upcoming Friends Author event on May 25, 2022, will feature author John Searles in a conversation with author Kate White. The 37th Literary Competition Awards Ceremony

will be held on Sunday, May 1, and on June 4 we will host CrimeCONN in partnership with the Mystery Writers of America, New York Chapter.

Old Business

2022-2023 Operating Budget Update

Ms. Knapp reported that there were no cuts in our capital budget from the Board of Representatives. A 2.9% budget increase was approved by the City.

Building Committee

A motion was made and approved to accept the following resolution for the Harry Bennett Branch Improvement project:

RESOLVED:

That the Library CEO be authorized to execute a contract with Titan Enterprises, Inc. of 540 Main Street, Ansonia, Connecticut, the low bidder, for the Harry Bennett Branch Interior Improvement Project, for a total price not to exceed \$100,000.00.

New Business

Novel Affair

Linda Avellar reported that this year's Novel Affair was the most successful yet with a gross revenue of \$261,000. Mel Klugman's donation of \$50,000 and 73 sponsors put us over previous years' totals. The silent auction raised \$8,600. Tom Cassone, as always, did an excellent job as MC. We raised \$2.1 million over the last 10 years from A Novel Affair galas.

Bargaining Unit Contract Negotiations

The Personnel Committee will be meeting on May 9, 2022, prior to the Bargaining Unit Negotiations meeting, to discuss recommendations for increases in benefits and salaries, as well as gender neutral language and changes to the selected holidays.

Mary Gail Malloy Rotary Room Dedication

The Mary Gail Malloy Rotary Room Dedication is planned for Sunday, May 15, 2022. We are expecting a good turnout in remembrance of past board member Gail Malloy.

Susan Baldwin Memorial Garden

At the Harry Bennett Branch, a memorial garden and fountain will be dedicated on Sunday, May 22, 2022 for Susan Baldwin, who was a long-time supervisor of the Harry Bennett Branch, as well as the Weed Memorial Hollander Branch. Her husband Gary Gepner is underwriting the cost of the memorial.

Bequests to the Library

The Board of Trustees approved the following resolutions in regard to several bequests that were received by the library. From the Estate of Rosemarie Molinari \$85,000 will be transferred to the Foundation and the remainder will be used to upgrade the furniture at the Harry Bennett Branch.

Therefore, the following resolution was made and approved:

RESOLVED:

WHEREAS, The Ferguson Library (“Library”) has received memorial gifts (bequests) from the Estate of Jack B. Goldstein (\$2,892.42); Frances L. Amico Revocable Trust (\$5,000.); Estate of Rosemarie Molinari (\$115,563.51);

AND WHEREAS, the Ferguson Library Foundation has been established to receive and administer gifts for literacy, educational and public library purposes;

AND WHEREAS, the Library will contribute all monies received from the Estate of Jack B. Goldstein and Frances L. Amico Revocable Trust; and contribute \$85,000 from the Estate of Rosemarie Molinari to the Ferguson Library Foundation;

THEREFORE; be it resolved that the Library hereby contributes \$92,892.42 from these gifts (bequests) to the Ferguson Library Foundation, and expressly forgoes any and all interest in these funds.

The Board also approved that any future bequests that the library receives will be transferred to the Foundation.

Therefore, the following resolution was made and approved:

RESOLVED, from this date forward, if and when The Ferguson Library receives memorial gifts and bequests, all such funds received will be contributed to the Ferguson Library Foundation. The Ferguson Library expressly forgoes any and all interest in these funds.

Other Business

On May 23, 2022 the Library and the City of Stamford will be hosting Richard Harwood from the Harwood Institute for a public conversation from his report on *Civic Virus: Why Polarization is a Misdiagnosis*.

The Library's Leadership Team will participate in a retreat on May 2, 2022, conducted by Chuck Presbury of Presbury & Associates. Future workshops are being planned on team communication and collaboration.

The Joe R. Sexton Memorial Lecture will be held June 9, 2022, and will present Marc Wortman author of *Admiral Hyman Rickover: Engineer of Power*.

The Library is working with Diligent/BoardEffect on new software to streamline sharing board meeting documents. A demonstration of their product is planned for the June Board Meeting.

There being no further business, Ms. O'Shea motioned to end the meeting. All approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Robert J. Granata
Secretary