

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
February 15, 2022

Present:

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

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

Guest: Dino Reda of Van Brunt DuBiago & Company

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

Stephanie O'Shea called the meeting to order. This meeting was held in person and via zoom.

Alice Knapp announced a new Citizen Adviser, Lauren Meyer, who is the Special Assistant to the Mayor of Stamford and Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs.

Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the December 7, 2021 meeting. Motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report

Sopong Kim and Cheryl Harper reported on the year-to-date financials for the month ending December 31, 2021. Both noted a favorable month with increased grant donations. Ms. Harper made a note that the library stayed within expenses with a favorable revenue of 5.2%. The year to date expenses are nearly in line with the budget with a bottom line of \$300,168 dollars.

CEO's Report

Alice Knapp announced that Elizabeth Joseph won the 2021 Everyday Democracy Aicher Civic Leadership Award.

From her December's CEO report, Ms. Knapp reported on the Stamford Digital Navigators program that was formed from a \$100,000 IMLS grant and is in partnership with NDIA (National Digital Inclusion Alliance) and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act). Our library is only one of 4 libraries in the state to pilot this program. Our multi-lingual navigators will assist with a variety of information and technology needs such as operating online devices and providing hotspots for internet connections.

The January CEO report focused on another IMLS Grant, the Laura Busch 21st Century Librarian Program where the Ferguson Library is only one of 39 to receive this nationwide grant. The grant will help train library professionals to support people with visual disabilities through the use of new technology. We will partner with Benetech, representatives from across the country and a steering committee to develop a training module that will be available to library staff to increase their knowledge of ebook formats and technology devices.

Executive Committee

An update on the morning's Executive Committee was given by Stephanie O'Shea.

Building Committee

The Building Committee met on February 1, 2022 and approved an MOU with Nick Everett from AP Construction. An RFQ is being worked on to be sent out to hire a contractor for the Main Library and Weed Memorial Roof projects. The city's Planning Board added an additional \$100,000 dollars for the Harry Bennett modernization plan. And the city included \$50,000 for a feasibility study for library branches on Stamford's east and west sides of town.

Development Committee

At the Development Committee's February 8, 2022 meeting it was announced that the Annual Appeal is progressing well with 19% increase over last year's donations. A \$50,000 donation was given in honor of Ann Sexton who is being honored at this year's Novel Affair. Ms. Sexton is also being honored on February 23 with the dedication of the Board Room in her name. The committee is working on a RFQ for a fundraiser consultant who will conduct an audit on our development procedures to help streamline our message for donations.

Pension Committee

On February 9, 2022 the Pension Committee met with our Wells Fargo Advisors to discuss LDI (Liability Driven Investments). LDI plans are used to cover the current and future liabilities through asset acquisitions. LDI will be discussed further at the March Pension Committee meeting with representatives from Hooker & Holcombe, our actuaries. The Pension Plan's total portfolio as of February 8th, is at \$13.2 million, with 60% invested in equities, 30.6% in fixed income, and 9.5% in alternative investments.

Foundation

The Ferguson Library Foundation discussed ways to grow and increase their revenue at their February 3, 2022 board meeting. At this time, the majority of donations go to the library for operating expenses. The library has not asked for the annual 5%, which in the past has been used for staff development and early childhood reading. Instead the Foundation will be asked to underwrite the Development Consultant and/or the

Feasibility Study. It was announced that Anderson Livingston has been appointed to the Foundation Board.

Friends of Ferguson

Deborah Golden spoke on the Friends of Ferguson Board Meeting that was held on February 14, 2022 and reported that the Friends currently have 161 members. The February 23rd Author Series will feature Alafair Burke and Erica Katz. And on March 3rd Bobby Valentine and Peter Golenbock will present their book *Valentine's Way, My Adventurous Life and Times*.

The Friends Board is overjoyed that Ann Sexton is being honored at this year's Novel Affair. Ms. Sexton has served as President of the Friends for 4 terms.

Old Business

Capital & Operating Budgets

The City of Stamford's Planning Board has added \$150,000 for the library's capital projects; \$100,000 for the Harry Bennett modernization plan and \$50,000 for a feasibility study for library branches. Both the Capital and Operating Budgets have yet to be approved by Mayor Simmons.

Financial Health Task Force

Alice Knapp stated that the first meeting of Financial Health Task Force will be held on March 1, 2022. A draft of the library's audit ending June 30, 2021 will be presented and discussed.

Board Room Dedication

The Board Room dedication will be held on February 23, 2022. It will be named The Ann Sexton Board Room in honor of Ms. Sexton who has given a generous donation of \$200,000 for the board room upgrade.

New Business

2020-2021 Audit Report

Dino Reda of Van Brunt DuBiago & Company was introduced and presented a detailed review of the library's audit for year ending June 30, 2021. Mr. Reda noted that the library ended with a strong cash position that allowed us to move \$150,000 to the Foundation with the understanding that we can move those funds back to the library for operating expenses if needed. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the auditor's report. Mr. Reda was acknowledged and given thanks for his 36 years of service as the library's auditor.

Connecticut Library Association

The Connecticut Library Association has issued a statement on their stance on intellectual Freedom Against Censorship.

The following Resolution was passed by the Library's Board of Trustees in support of CLA's statement.

Resolved that the Board of Trustees of the Ferguson Library supports the Connecticut Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Statement Against Censorship.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Robert J. Granata
Secretary