

**THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 10, 2024**

Present:

Board Members: E. Bromley (Chair); M. Mays (Vice Chair); S. Vidan (Treasurer); R. Mercede (Secretary); A. George; A. Livingston; T. Lucero; L. Meyer; S. O'Shea

Citizen Advisors: S. Fitzgerald; J. Freeman; W. Hill; R. McManus, M. Metwally; M. Millan; M. Moore; J. Orlikoff; S. Perry; A. Riehl; D. Stein

Foundation Board Members: M. Hyman; P. O'Brien Morrow

Staff: A. Knapp; C. Harper; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla; D. Lyles; E. McKay; A. Marrocolla;

This Board Meeting was held in the Harry Bennett Branch auditorium. After some technical difficulty was resolved with connecting remote attendees, Board Chair Ellen Bromley called the meeting to order at 4:43 pm.

Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Board Treasurer Susanna Vidan discussed the YTD October 31, 2024 income statement, saying that spending is on track. Printing and passport revenue are up, and the balance sheet reflects a healthy figure.

CEO Reports

From her October report, CEO Alice Knapp shared that circulation figures are steadily climbing back to pre-COVID levels, with increased circulation of both physical books and digital materials. Public Services Director Susan LaPerla provided updates on the library's strategic framework, including the development of whitepapers and an analysis of how Ferguson Library compares to other libraries nationally.

The Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) Program continues to thrive, with significant growth in participation and engagement across various segments of the Stamford community. Thanks to a \$7,500 grant from First County Bank, we have introduced new and diverse cultural offerings, such as a Japanese cultural program, performances by a concert

pianist, and live theatrical events in partnership with the NAACP. These initiatives have driven substantial interest, with attendance at cultural programs increasing from 1,800 last year to more than 3,800 this year.

In November's CEO Report HR Director Connie Hubbard highlighted the success of the library's inaugural Professional Development Day. Ms. Hubbard described the event as energizing and inspiring, with a focus on inclusion under the theme "*The Power of We*". The day featured staff members showcasing their talents, insightful presentations by external speakers, and team building activities. A video capturing the day's events was shared, underscoring its success. Plans are already underway to host this event again next year.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on Monday, December 9, 2024, and reviewed the Board agenda.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee met on December 4, 2024. The meeting centered on the professional pay scale for the leadership team.

Foundation Development Committee Meeting

On November 14, 2024, the Foundation Board met to review its investments and discuss market growth. The Foundation Board has three new committees: Governance/Nominating, Development, and Finance. The Development Committee will meet December 11. Finance and Governance committees will meet in January/February, 2025.

Friends of Ferguson

Margaret Metwally, President of Friends of Ferguson Library, gave a report on the November 7 Friendsgiving celebration for their volunteers and Friends 45th Anniversary. The Book Shops are doing well with Facebook promotions of book sales at the Harry Bennett Branch. We have a new process to give books away to area nonprofits and were able to give Person-to-Person 400 books from Scholastic.

Old Business

2026-2032 Capital Budget

The capital budget, adopted at the October Board of Trustees meeting, was presented at November's Planning Board meeting. Along with this capital budget, Ms. Knapp also presented conceptual drawings for an East Side Branch.

HVAC Update

We presented to the Planning Board a \$1M request for the HVAC project, which has now gone out to bid. The low bid was \$600,000. We should be able to proceed with the first phase of this project.

M&T Bank Resolution

A resolution to establish a relationship with M&T Bank was presented. The following resolution was presented, moved, and approved:

That the officers of the Board of Trustees, as well as the CEO of the Library, be authorized for, and on behalf of, this corporation to transact any, and all, business with the following banks:

M&T Bank
First County Bank

That the Library be given the authorization to transfer \$5,000 from First County Bank to M&T Bank.

And that the CEO of the Library is authorized to sign all documents necessary to effectuate the transfer.

New Business

2025-2026 Proposed Operating Budget Request

The proposed 2025-2026 Operating Budget was presented at today's meeting, showing a 5% increase in our budget. While this proposal moves us closer to our funding goals, it still falls short of Ms. Knapp's target of \$10 per capita for library materials. Discussions also highlighted the importance of advocating for our budget during public budget hearings and underscored the critical role and value of maintaining a free and accessible public library for our community.

A motion was made, moved, and accepted to approve the 2025-2026 operating budget.

Review of Library Policies

The following library policies were presented.

Proctoring Policy

The library shall provide a designated space for the administration of exams. There shall be no charge for this service, unless otherwise specified by the library.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the library and make an appointment to take the proctored test.

We agree to allow students to take exams at the library subject to the following restrictions:

- This service is for Stamford residents only.
- If a room is needed, reservations are required.
- Before the student enters the exam room, the librarian on duty will read all the instructions provided by the vendor.
- Under no circumstances will the librarian(s) be responsible for physically monitoring the exam. All students taking exams are strictly on the honor system. We provide only the space, and a signature to verify that the exam has been taken on the premises.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Library Records Policy

The library is committed to protecting the privacy of all library users. Connecticut law (General Statutes of Connecticut, Chapter 190, Section 11-25) provides that:

1. Records maintained by libraries that can be used to identify any library user, or link any user to a library transaction, regardless of format, shall be kept confidential, except that the records may be disclosed to officers, employees and agents of the library, as necessary for operation of the library.
2. Information contained in such records shall not be released to any third party, except (A) pursuant to a court order, or (B) with the written permission of the library user whose personal information is contained in the records.
3. No provision of this [law] shall be construed to prevent a library from publishing or making available to the public statistical reports regarding library registration and use of library materials, if such reports do not contain personally identifying information.

The library uses reasonable management, technical, and physical measures to protect the confidentiality and security of users' personal information. However, we cannot guarantee that these measures will fully safeguard privacy, especially given the open nature of the internet.

Collecting Social Security Numbers

The Ferguson Library will not collect social security numbers from patrons. Acquisition and retention of social security numbers from vendors is limited to those vendors to whom the library must issue an IRS Form 1099 at the end of the tax year. This information is maintained in the business office in lockable filing cabinets and access to such information is limited to administrative and business office personnel.

Vacation Pay Out Policy

For Leadership Team and Business Office Staff

Policy Overview

This policy outlines the specific situations under which vacation time may be paid out to an employee. The Ferguson Library Vacation Payout Policy may apply for the following reasons:

Vacation time will generally not be paid out unless one of the following exceptions applies:

1. Connecticut FMLA Approved Leave
2. Workload demands with sensitive timelines, staffing coverage issues.
3. Other extraordinary family or personal emergencies.

Conditions for Payment

Vacation pay will be calculated based on the employee's regular rate of pay at the time of the payout and will not include any overtime, bonuses, or other forms of compensation.

Additional Notes

- Employees are encouraged to use their vacation time during the course of the year to maintain work-life balance.
- Any request for vacation time payout under these exceptions must be submitted in writing to the HR department and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The company reserves the right to modify, change, or revoke this policy at any time, with or without notice, in accordance with changing business needs or legal requirements

A motion was made and seconded to accept these three policies. The motion passed.

Charles & Jane Guinta Reading Room

Ms. Knapp announced the upcoming December 20 dedication of the Charles & Jane Guinta Reading Room. The room is named after Charlie Guinta, a long-time former board member, who will celebrate his 101st birthday on December 15. The new reading room, on the second floor of the Main Library, will be dedicated in his honor. We are planning a reception with many Guinta family members in attendance.

Date of Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 4:30 pm.

Ms. Bromley asked for the meeting to adjourn, in order for the holiday dinner to be set up in the Harry Bennett auditorium. All voted in favor and the meeting ended at 5:28 pm.

RJ Mercede
Secretary