

**THE FERGUSON LIBRARY  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
February 27, 2024**

**Present:**

**Board Members:** E. Bromley (Chair); M. Hyman (Vice Chair); S. Vidan (Treasurer);  
R. Mercede (Secretary); S. Frederick; T. Lucero; M. Mays

**Citizen Advisors:** S. Duarte; S. Fitzgerald; R. Granata; D. Kooris; R. McManus;  
M. Metwally; M. Millan; J. Orlikoff; S. O'Shea; M. Sommer; D. Stein

**Staff:** A. Knapp; L. Avellar; C. Harper; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla; A. Marrocolla

Ellen Bromley called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

**Minutes**

The minutes of both the December 5, 2023 and January 31, 2024 board meetings were approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

Susana Vidan presented the Treasurer's Report and income statement as of January 31, 2024. There were a few variances with donations from the Ferguson Library Foundation down by \$153,377 and from grant money received. The Passport Office is on track and paid-to-print is slowly coming back to pre-Covid levels. The City of Stamford is waiting for the \$250,000 state grant that they are securing for the library. Expenses are on target, there are still some open staff positions to be filled and the Maintenance Department is performing several in-house jobs, bringing expenses down from the budgeted \$259,000 to \$220,000 expended. The budget has allowed library staff members to attend professional conferences.

**CEO's Report**

The December CEO report focused on the strategic framework and dashboard for 2022-2025. Susan LaPerla, Director of Public Services, went through the dashboard, which indicates that library use is up. There is also more demographic diversity in our users as well. Some programs are filled, and we are looking at partnering with several different organizations. As a follow-up to an earlier board meeting, Anthony Marrocolla, Manager of Information and Adult Services, spoke about the Mental Health & Wellness Series that the library developed from a \$10,000 grant from the National Library of Medicine. We provided more than 75 programs, with over 600 attendees.

The January 2024 CEO report centered on Connecticut state representatives' efforts to pass legislation that book publishers must adhere to if they wish to lease e-books to libraries. Currently, publishers limit the number of times a library can loan e-books, making the cost prohibitive. This has limited our ability to meet community demand. Alice submitted letters of support for this new legislation and received positive feedback from several of our state representatives.

### **Executive Committee**

Ellen Bromley said the Executive Committee met on February 26 and reviewed what the board will discuss at this meeting.

### **Building Committee**

The Building Committee met on January 18 and was told that the \$2 million dollar grant from the CT State Library construction program was not approved. The Main Library's roof repair and the replacement of new carpeting in designated areas have been completed. Future repairs are being planned for the Weed Branch roof, Main Library HVAC, and design development for the Bennett Branch.

### **Development Committee & Foundation Board Joint Meeting**

The Development Committee and Foundation Board met jointly on January 11. The Annual Appeal has raised \$225,000 to date, which is substantially higher than last year. The library received some generous restricted gifts including \$12,000 for a Pulitzer-prize winning author series, and \$5,000 for the library to create a reading nook in honor of long-time board member (and past chair) Charlie Guinta. We also received a donation for concept designs of the East Side Branch. Novel Affair sponsorships are doing well, and we hosted a donor reception January 31 at the Harry Bennett Branch.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

On December 12, the Long-Range Planning Committee held a meeting to go over the Dashboard assessment figures. A board retreat on the future of libraries is being planned for May 4, 2024.

### **Pension Committee**

Ms. Vidan reported that the Pension Committee meeting was held on January 24 with USI Consulting Group/Hooker & Holcombe to review the investment pension statement. She said the market is doing well and the pension plan had a high return.

### **Ferguson Library Foundation**

The Foundation Board has met twice since December. On January 25, the Foundation was presented with some restructuring options from Elisabeth Pimentel of Garfunkel Wild. She suggested our options were: to remain a private foundation; transition to a publicly supported charity; or to transition to a Type 1 supporting organization. The

Foundation Board met again on February 15 and agreed that a Type 1 supporting organization is the best configuration for the board. Foundation bylaws will also need to be modified.

The following resolution was presented, passed, and accepted to have the Ferguson Library Foundation assume the library's fundraising efforts:

**RESOLVED:**

WHEREAS, the Ferguson Library (the "Library") has determined that it is in the best interests of the Library to have the Ferguson Library Foundation, Inc. (the "Foundation") assume most, if not all, of the Library's fundraising efforts; and

WHEREAS, in order to effectuate this intent, the Foundation has been advised by counsel that it should be organized and operated as a "Supporting Organization" under relevant laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, in order to organize and operate the Foundation as a "Supporting Organization," the Foundation has been advised that the Library will need to exercise a substantial degree of direction and control ("Oversight") over the policies, programs, and activities of the Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the Foundation has been advised that the most effective way to grant this Oversight is to have the Library serve as the Foundation's sole member.

Based on the foregoing, it is:

RESOLVED, that the Library hereby agrees to serve as the Foundation's sole member; and it is further

RESOLVED, that Alice Knapp, in her capacity as CEO of the Library, is authorized to execute and deliver all such further instruments and documents and to do all such further acts as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of the foregoing resolution.

**Friends of Ferguson**

Friends President Margaret Metwally said it's a year of change for the Friends with the hiring of a new manager for the bookstore. Susie Draper ran a retail store and worked for ELLE magazine, and she brings new ideas for the bookshop. The library has assumed the salaries of the bookstore manager and volunteer coordinator, which frees up the Friends to give more funding to the library. The library's IT Department is updating Friends' technology. The February Mini Golf was a great success, and Tamron Hall, TV host and author, will be at the Main Library on March 14.

## **Old Business**

We submitted the capital and operating budgets and are waiting on the mayor's recommendation to be presented at a joint public hearing on March 6. It is anticipated that the library will not receive its entire request.

## **New Business**

### **2022-2023 Audit Reports**

Chris Eck from Eck Tax & Accounting presented in-person the library's audit ending June 30, 2023. A motion was made, accepted, and passed to approve the audit.

### **Weed Branch Roof**

A resolution was presented, passed, and accepted to approve the low bidder, Greenwood Industries, Inc. for the Weed Memorial and Hollander Branch roof repair:

#### **Resolved:**

That the Library CEO be authorized to execute a contract with Greenwood Industries, Inc. of 640 Lincoln Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, the low bidder for the Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch Roof Replacement Project, for a cost not to exceed \$130,000.

And that up to \$30,000 may be used from the operating budget to pay for this project.

### **Novel Affair**

Linda Avellar, Director of Development & Communication, reported on A Novel Affair and said 110 have already registered for the event. Early pricing will end on March 15.

## **Executive Session**

Ms. Bromley moved to enter into executive session at 5:47 pm.

The board came out of executive session at 6:02 and a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

RJ Mercede  
Secretary