

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
February 28, 2023

Present:

Board Members: S. O'Shea (Chair); E. Bromley; M. Hyman; S. Frederick; A. Livingston; R. Mercede; L. Meyer; P. O'Brien Morrow; S. Vidan

Citizen Advisors: T. Bartley; A. Better-Wirz; S. Conley; S. Duarte; S. Fitzgerald; J. Freeman; D. Golden; R. Granata; A. LiVolsi; S. Perry; B. Spaulding

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

Guest: Henry Myerberg, Principal & Founder of HMA2 Architects

Ms. O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm. The meeting was held in-person and via Zoom.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ellen Bromley and seconded by Susana Vidan to accept the minutes of the December 6, 2022 meeting along with the minutes of the special February 2, 2023 board meeting. Motion passed to accept both sets of minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Susana Vidan reported on financial activity through January 31, 2023, noting that donations are down but will pick up with Novel Affair contributions. Passport activity is doing well compared to year-to-date. Our expenses are under budget but this is due to staff shortages. Fundraising expenses are higher than budgeted and the conference and training line is also higher due to staff attendance at conferences. We currently have \$1.4 million in cash.

CEO's Report

In her December and January CEO reports, Alice Knapp said that statistics for circulation and program attendance are beginning to return to pre-Covid levels. The Youth Services Department hired two new librarians and, as a result, we are beginning to see an increase in programs. The adult program, *Driving the Green Book*, brought in 200 people. Overall, circulation of physical items is up compared to the previous year. In particular, circulation has been climbing for HBB and Weed. Compared to 2019, circulation of materials is about two-thirds of "normal," while in-person attendance is still slightly down.

Ms. Knapp reported that the Digital Navigator program far exceeded expectations. Due to budget restraints, we are not able to provide equipment but there is still a need.

Other

Anthony Marrocolla, the new Supervisor of Adult & Information Services, spoke about his first 60 days. Mr. Marrocolla is working on being transparent with his staff and is meeting with each of them individually to discuss their goals. The Digital Navigator team has been moved to the second floor, freeing up the Rotary Room. Mr. Marrocolla has reduced hours on the first floor information desk during slow times, scheduled part-time staff to work on special projects and introduced monthly team meetings. The new DVDs were moved back to the third floor, which has opened up the Main Library New Materials Room. It has become more of a reading room, with the daily newspapers here too. Our new 3D printer was relocated near the front door to give our Makerspace more visibility. We are also planning new book clubs and more humanities programming.

Executive Committee

Chair Stephanie O'Shea reported on the Executive Committee meeting held earlier in the day. The Executive Committee met with Christopher Eck, the library's new auditor. Once the audit is complete, a special board meeting will be held to review the audit. A board retreat planned for April 26 will now be held on May 17 and will be conducted by Carmen Hughes, Stamford's IDEA Officer (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility Strategies).

Old Business

Building Committee

Steve Frederick spoke about the January 19, 2023 Building Committee meeting and their recommendation to hire HMA2 as the architect for the library's feasibility study. A special Board of Trustees meeting was held on February 2, 2023 and a motion approved to give Alice Knapp the authority to sign a contract with HMA2.

DEI Committee

On February 23, 2023, a meeting was held with the newly formed DEI Committee. Ms. Knapp provided background about the library's recent DEI activities and solicited comments for future work. She stressed the need for a written plan.

Pension Committee

The Pension Committee met January 24 with the library's investment advisors to discuss the portfolio. We are in breach of the current investment policy, which states that allocation of equities should be around 60%. The committee has approved being out of compliance due to the volatility of the market. An RFP went out to investment firms, and selection of a new firm is targeted for April 1.

Ferguson Library Foundation

The Ferguson Library Foundation Board met February 9 to review its investment portfolio, noting 2022 was a difficult year for investments. The analysis is that the market will recover. There was a discussion around how to move forward with Campaign Counsel's recommendations. In the short term, the Foundation will create a fundraising subcommittee. The Foundation has agreed to re-gift \$150,000 to the library to help underwrite the HMA2 master plan.

Friends of Ferguson

Friends President Debbie Golden reported on their December meeting with Carmen Hughes. In response to requests, the Harry Bennett Branch Book Shop will now accept donations at least once a month. The Mini Golf event held on February at the Bennett Branch was a big success.

New Business

2021-2022 Audit Report

On the morning of this board meeting, the Executive Committee met with the library's new auditor, Christopher Eck of Eck Tax & Accounting, LLC. Mr. Eck will have the audit ready for submission with the library's budget to the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives.

HMA2 Architecture Firm

Henry Myerberg, Principal and Founder of HMA2, joined the meeting remotely at 4:46 pm. HMA2 will work on a 10-year master plan with an assessment of all facilities for improvements and maintenance. Mr. Myerberg touched on the need for more meeting spaces, placement of books and digital materials. There was talk of soliciting community input and Dr. Tamu Lucero suggested getting input from Stamford students.

Novel Affair

Linda Avellar reported on the upcoming Novel Affair gala. Sponsorships and ticket sales are coming in at a good pace and the committee is soliciting auction items. The library will close early on this day to prepare for the event.

There being no further business, Ms. O'Shea motioned to end the meeting. All approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Ellen E. Bromley
Secretary