

**THE FERGUSON LIBRARY**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**September 28, 2022**

**Present:**

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

**Citizen Advisers:** A. Better-Wirz; J. Block; S. Duarte; S. Fitzgerald; D. Golden;  
R. Granata; A. LiVolsi; M. Mays; M. Millan; J. Orlikoff; S. Perry;  
M. Sommer; B. Spaulding

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

Ms. O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom. Ms. O'Shea noted that this was the first meeting of the new Board Year with a number of new Citizen Advisers attending. She asked that those in attendance to introduce themselves.

**Minutes**

A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of the June 21, 2022 meeting.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Vidan met with Ms. Knapp and Ms. Harper on August 17<sup>th</sup> to go over finances. She stated that the library was able to stay within the budget allotted for the last fiscal year and that it is in good financial standing. Operating expenses were down for the year (i.e., utilities and security) at all locations. Passport revenue continues to exceed budget.

Ms. Knapp reported that a Sub-Committee of the Financial Task Force Committee had met during the summer. This sub-group consisted of Laura Burwick, Jay Fountain, and Susan Duarte, each had unique experience that helped us as we devise an internal document showing the costs for operating each branch. As a follow-up to a previous Financial Task Force meeting we also discussed how to reflect grants received during the fiscal year.

In June 2021 the Pension Liability was 97% funded with a \$7 million gap. This gap will shrink as new employees will no longer be offered the Defined Benefit Pension Plan.

**CEO's Report**

Ms. Knapp reviewed her written reports. Ms. LaPerla commented on the June 2022 Report noting that we are trending back to normal with a variety of programs.

The July CEO Report focused on Intellectual Freedom, and Ms. Knapp briefed the Board with respect to threatening messages received in reaction to a recent Drag Storytime noting that other libraries including Fairfield, Westport and Greenwich have experienced similar problems in regard to their materials and/or programs.

Illustrating the August CEO Report, Ms. Knapp and Ms. Harper showed before and after photos of repairs and landscaping performed by our maintenance staff.

Ms. Hubbard is focused on recruiting for a number of full-time and part-time staff openings. The result of both voluntary and involuntary attrition.

### **Executive Committee**

Ms. O'Shea reported that the Executive Committee had met on the morning of September 20<sup>th</sup>. The Committee's agenda mirrored the agenda before the full Board. She mentioned that the Executive Committee typically meets on the morning of the day of the full Board meeting, but that the current Board meeting had been rescheduled so as not to conflict with the retirement celebration for Juanita James, the CEO of Fairfield County Community Foundation, a strategic community partner.

### **Building Committee**

Mr. Frederick provided a report on the August 19<sup>th</sup> Building Committee Meeting that was held at the Harry Bennett Branch. He reported that a number of projects are underway.

### **Foundation Board**

The Foundation Board met on September 8, 2022. The impact of the Library's governance structure on fundraising, and whether and how a restructure – potentially affecting Board, Friends and Foundation – might help maximize same are pending. It is expected that this work will be informed by the consulting work recently completed by Kevin Wallace and Campaign Counsel. A presentation in connection with same is scheduled to be presented to the Board on October 14, 2022 at 11:00 AM.

### **Friends of Ferguson**

Ms. Golden reported on the Friends first board meeting of the season that was held on September 12, 2022. The Harry Bennett Branch Book Shop is closed for branch renovation.

The Friends FFAR (Ferguson Friends Against Racism) Committee is adopting an anchor statement regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, which allows the Board and its committees to begin using the statement in its promotional materials.

Adopted: The Friends of Ferguson Library's (FOF) programs, priorities and activities support the Ferguson Library in its educational and literary outreach and its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Author Program with David Baldacci was held on July 13 and attracted 175 attendees and netted \$2,000. The Friends Pub Crawl is back this year and will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Mini Golf is planned for February 11 and 12, 2023 at the Bennett Branch.

## **Old Business**

### **2022-2023 Operating Budget**

The Operating Budget is on target this year.

### **Bargaining Unit Contract Negotiations**

There has been considerable time and effort on “cleaning up” contract language for clarity and consistency.

### **Harry Bennett Branch Renovation**

An update on the Harry Bennett Branch renovation was given and on the new lighting that has been installed. Looks fabulous!

### **Diligent/Board Effect Implementation**

Board Training on Board Effect is tentatively planned for a date in November.

## **New Business**

### **CT State Library Grant Application/Resolution**

Ms. Knapp presented a resolution for the Connecticut State Library Grant Boiler Replacement and it was passed and approved.

### **2021-2022 Annual Report**

Ms. Avellar presented a draft copy of the 2021-2022 Annual Report and asked the Board to review the list of donors to ensure donor accuracy.

### **Internal Control Policy and Policy & Procedure on Capital Assets**

Ms. Knapp said with the hiring of new auditors, the library has been asked to approve two new policies: Internal Control Policy and Policy & Procedures on Capitalization of Capital Assets. A motion was made, seconded and passed to approved these two new policies.

### **New Board/Citizen Adviser Orientation**

Ms. Knapp spoke of the Orientation for new Citizen Advisers and Board Members scheduled for October 20, 2022 at 8:30 AM. The Orientation will be held via Zoom and will include Board Chair Stephanie O’Shea, Friends President Deborah Golden, Ellen Bromely representing the Foundation, and Tom Cassone will speak on intellectual

freedom and democracy in the library. The orientation will be recorded for those who cannot attend.

### **Dr. Robert Livingston – Board Retreat**

Ms. Knapp discussed Dr. Robert Livingston's Board Retreat scheduled for October 3, 2022. Ms. Knapp became aware of Dr. Livingston's Book "*The Conversation: How Seeking and Speaking the Truth About Racism Can Radically Transform Individuals and Organizations*" from Ms. Hubbard. Due to the relevance of this topic the EDI Council and Leadership Team met and discussed the book in detail. As a continuation of the "Conversation" the entire staff is now reading the book. Dr. Livingston will be conducting a Board Retreat and community discussion on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Other**

The September 29<sup>th</sup> staff meeting will have guest speaker Carmen Hughes, the City's first director of IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Strategies).

There being no further business, Ms. O'Shea motioned for adjournment. All in favor, the meeting ended at 5:30 pm.

Ellen E. Bromley  
Secretary