

Minutes
of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the
Bridgeport Public Library and Reading Room
held August 19, 2015
Burroughs-Saden Library

The meeting was called to order at 7 P.M. by Vice President Baraka

Present: Directors Baraka, Errichetti, Holden, Greenberg, Christy, Brown, Cunningham and President O'Donnell (via conference call)
City Librarian Hughes

Absent: Director Osborne-Gant

A **MOTION** was made by Director Errichetti and seconded by Director Greenberg to adopt the agenda and was unanimously approved

Public Comment:

Mr. Joseph Ercolano of the Connecticut Small Business Development Center addressed to Board of Directors concerning the Ice House Entrepreneurship Program, a pilot program designed to cultivate business entrepreneurship. He requested permission to pilot the six class program at the Burroughs-Saden Library. It was deferred for discussion under New Business.

Mr. Robert Foley spoke to express his support for the Bridgeport History Center's digitization initiative. He mentioned many of the current series available on the BPL website and emphasized the educational and economic benefit.

Mr. Steve Nelson, a member of the 135th district addressed the Board of Directors to advocate for library facilities in his North End district. He emphasized the proximity of three public schools: Park City Magnet, Wilbur Cross and Hallen and spoke of the lack of crosstown transportation for student. He identified a Community Center close to Trumbull Gardens as a possible site.

Approval of the Minutes:

A **MOTION** for the approval of the Minutes of the July 15th meeting was offered by Director Errichetti and seconded by Director Greenberg. He also offered a **MOTION** for the approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors which was held August 17th. Director Greenberg also seconded this motion. Both motions were unanimously passed.

Approval of Treasurer's Report:

Director Errichetti requested that the Board of Directors approve the payment of vouchers for the month of July in the amount of \$928,134.41. He highlighted utility vouchers for gas and electricity in the amount of \$45,000.00 and \$146,800.00 respectively. Vouchers also included several capital expenditures for appraisals etc. that had been authorized at the Special Board Meeting on August 17th. His **MOTION** for approval of payment was seconded by Director Baraka and unanimously approved.

Unfinished Business:

City Librarian Hughes reported that he had just received a draft policy outline for the development of a uniform procedure for the protection on non-levy cash funds from Librarian Boyd and had not had time to review it.

Correspondence and Communication:

City Librarian Hughes indicated that he had received a letter from the Fire Marshal regarding the inspection of the Burroughs-Saden Library. He said that the letter had been sent to Facilities Director Jorge Garcia in May and that he had just received it. Director Baraka suggested that Mr. Garcia be contacted to have the Fire Marshall update his records and address all communications to Mr. Hughes. City Librarian Hughes indicated that he would review the Fire Marshall's letter with the Supervisor of Maintenance and report back to the Board of Directors.

There also was a letter from an attorney regarding a bequest which Director O'Donnell said he would take care of.

City Librarian's Report:

City Librarian Hughes informed the Board of Director's that he had been in contact with Raisah Gupta of the City Grants Office, Michael Ayles of Antinozzi Associates and Chris Smith regarding the BPL's application for a State of Connecticut Library Construction Grant. He informed the Board of Director's that he had forwarded the Grant narrative and application which he had shared with the Directors via email, He indicated that he would make the necessary correction in form used and that everything was on target to make the September 1st filing deadline. He also informed the Board of Directors that additional filings (i.e. schematics) could be sent up until September 30th without prejudice.

He said he had two meetings with the small business center whose presentation was given during the public comment session. He also had two meetings with Michelle Kwan of Fairfield University regarding a collaboration for service learning which aligned with our strategic plan and programming.

He informed the Board of Directors that there had been a good clean-up of the newly acquired Newfield Property and that they were working on getting the electricity restored to the facility.

He asked the Directors to save the dates of August 24th for the presentation of the Library Bonding request to the Common Council Budget and Appropriations Committee and the September 8th for the draft resolution for Common Council approval.

He has scheduled an All Staff meeting for September 11th at 9 am.

City Librarian Hughes indicated that he had not attended the Mayor's Department Head Meeting and was unsure if a meeting had been held.

City Librarian Hughes informed the Directors that the Strategic Plan was the intellectual property of Library Development Solutions and that any update must be done through them. He also informed the Board of Directors that contracting with them to conduct a search for an Assistant City Librarian would cost an additional \$8,000.

Mark Halstead addressed the Board of Directors regarding the progress on the renovations of the First Floor restrooms at Burroughs-Saden. He said that renovations have been halted due to the discovery of asbestos and that they were awaiting a proposal for its remediation. He indicated that December 31st was still a credible date for completion of the project. He reminded the Board of Directors that this project has been in the works for three years and that he has spent a considerable amount of extra time managing the project and attending meetings of the construction team. He presented the Board of Directors with a proposal for increased compensation for his services given the extended time and extra hours needed to transcribe meeting minutes. Director Errichetti introduced an **MOTION**, seconded by Director Greenberg, to refer Mr. Halstead's proposal to the Facilities Committee for recommendation. The Motion was unanimously passed.

For the first time, the Board of Directors conducted a formal discussion of a Mill Rate Referendum. City Librarian Hughes suggested that a modest .25 mill rate increase for the library be presented to the voters as a referendum in the November election. Mr. Hughes indicated that he had been talking to voters and that they overwhelmingly supported increased funding for the library and that he had already secured 300 signatures on a petition for the referendum. In fact, he explained, several people had registered to vote just so that they could vote for the referendum.

Several Directors spoke out against the referendum initiative during this election cycle. They felt that the Library must have "something substantive to show" before asking the people of Bridgeport for increased financial support. They maintained the expansion and modernization of Library facilities, as stipulated in the BPL

facilities plan, would provide tangible evidence of the prudent use of financial resources for the public good. After further discussion Director Greenberg offered the following **MOTION**: “The Library Board of Directors do not request, approve or support the placement of a mill rate referendum on the November (2015) election ballot; furthermore, let it be known that should any citizen or group of citizens place such a referendum upon the ballot they do so without the support or approval of the Bridgeport Library Board of Directors.” The **MOTION** was seconded by Director Cunningham and carried by a vote of five to three.

Report of the Personnel Committee

Director Holden commended the efforts of Director Errichetti and President O’Donnell in advancing the goals of the BPL Facilities Master Plan through the identification and impending acquisition of three potential sites for new library facilities on the East End/East Side of the City.

Director Greenberg informed the Board of Directors of the lack of clearly define procedures for the elimination of library positions and the evaluation of staff. He offered the recommendation of the Personnel Committee that the services of an attorney versed in municipal affairs be retained to clarify the issues of Library autonomy over its table of organization and its personnel. After some discussion it was decided that Directors would seek out counsel who would be able to address Board concerns in this area.

Report of Facilities Committee

Director Errichetti informed the Board of Directors that PSE&G had offered to replace the roof at the North End Branch, in addition to the installation of solar panels at the North End and Burroughs-Saden facilities. The installation of solar panels had received prior approval from the Board of Directors. The matter was referred to Facilities for further clarification and discussion.

Report of Governance Committee None

Report of the Friends of the Bridgeport Library

Director Errichetti advised the Library Board that the Annual Meeting of the Friends will be held in October with President O’Donnell as guest speaker highlighting the new Facilities Initiative. Director Errichetti’s suggestion that the meeting might be held in one of the new facilities was met with some concern regarding liability issues.

New Business

Director Baraka requested that a new item be added to the agenda concerning the salary increase for the city librarian. The agenda addition was approved.

City Librarian Hughes stated that he would facilitate the Ice House Entrepreneurship on Mondays the Burroughs-Saden Library. When it was pointed out that the library closed at 6 P.M. on Mondays. City Librarian Hughes said that he would confer with the program officials to design a more feasible schedule.

Director Baraka raised a concern that City Librarian Hughes had yet to receive a pay increase that was approved by the Board of Directors in June. The matter was referred to the Personnel Committee for further action.

Adjournment

A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Director Greenberg, seconded by Director Errichetti and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne M. Cunningham