

Minutes

of the October 19, 2016 meeting
of the Board of Directors of the Bridgeport Public Library
held at 7 p.m. in the boardroom of the Burroughs-Saden Library

Present: Directors O'Donnell, Baraka, Errichetti, Holden and Cunningham (confirmed Directors) Directors Greenberg, Osborne-Gant, Christy, Brown (pending confirmation)

Absent: City Librarian Hughes
City Council Liaison Salter

Call to Order/ Adoption of Agenda:

The meeting called to order by President O'Donnell at 7:03 pm. He inquired if anyone had received a call from City Librarian Hughes. No one had. A **MOTION** was made by Director Cunningham and seconded by Director Errichetti to adopt the agenda. It was unanimously passed by all confirmed directors.

Approval of the Minutes:

A **MOTION** for approval of the September minutes pending corrections in attendance and the identification of participants was made by Director Cunningham, seconded by Director Errichetti and unanimously passed by all confirmed directors.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report / Payment of Invoices.

Director Errichetti presented the financial vouchers for payment in the amount of \$102,265.17. Vouchers primarily reflected programming and database costs. He highlighted a voucher in the amount of \$45,955.00 to Antinozzi Associates to be added to a purchase order for East Side and East End construction planning.

He also distributed a copy of the MUNIS budget for October 2016. He informed the Board of Directors that "these are not our numbers" and that OPM had not yet reallocated monies to align with the budget passed by the Board of Directors. He requested a line item transfer of \$40,000 to the subscription account. The **MOTION** was made by Director Errichetti, seconded by Director Baraka and unanimously approved by all confirmed directors.

Director Cunningham offered a Motion to authorize overtime payments for several staff members for participation in the planning of the professional development for teachers. She withdrew the Motion until the details of the program were more specifically worked out.

Unfinished Business

Library Assistant Santos informed the Board of Directors that City Librarian Hughes was taking a sick day. There was no information to update the Board on the progress of the Annual Report, nor City compliance with staffing and finance issues.

Director Errichetti indicated that Librarian Eaddy had given him numbers on programming attendance and that he would begin an assessment of cost effectiveness.

Director Baraka reported that Mr. Bobby Simmons agreed to review Library finances and offer an opinion of the type of audit that is needed.

Director O'Donnell reported that he still needed to clarify the set up charges for the commemorative plaque in honor of former Board President, Helen Liskov. Director Errichetti informed the Board of Directors that all donations made to the Bridgeport Public Library in honor of Ms. Liskov had been acknowledged.

Correspondence and Communication

None

City Librarian's Report

None

Report of the Facilities Committee.

The status of work on the lavatories at Burroughs-Saden Library was discussed. Work appears to have been completed and awaited the signatures of the invoices. The Directors also had questions about the reconditioning of the first floor tile at Burroughs-Saden.

Director Holden informed the Board of Directors that both he and President O'Donnell attended the monthly meeting of the East End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone to listen to community ideas for the Newfield Library. Director Errichetti asked if there was a record of the meeting. He was informed that staff from Antinozzi Associates took notes. Director Holden told the Board of Directors that community consensus wanted to keep the façade of the old Newfield Library despite the cost savings of a completely new structure. He mentioned Mr. Coleman's commitment that the Newfield Library will be the cornerstone of the Civic Block development and it has the complete support of the city.

Report of the Finance Committee

Director Errichetti reported that he has a meeting with city officials from the OPM and City Attorney's office on October 26th to clarify financial matters. He invited other Directors to attend.

Report of Governance (Nominations)

President O'Donnell reported to the Board of Directors that the individual letters for the reappointment of Directors O'Donnell and Holden and the appointment of Directors, Osborne-Gant, Greenberg, Brown and Christy had been submitted to the City Clerk's Office. They have been referred to the Miscellaneous Matters Committee of the Common Council and are expected to come before the full Common Council at their meeting on November 21st. Although close, action before the 23rd of November would comply with the provisions of the Saden Trust and hopefully secure interest revenues for Library Books and materials. He informed the Directors who were up for appointment or re-appointment that they were to appear at the Miscellaneous Matters Committee meeting at 6 pm. on October 24, 2016.

He also advised the Board of Directors that the Common Council had denied a resolution offered by Alderman Casco at their October 17 meeting to dissolve the entire Library Board and referred the resolution back to the Miscellaneous Matters Committee.

Report of Personnel Committee

Director Holden reported that the Personnel Committee met on October 12 as a Committee of the Whole to discuss the probationary status of City Librarian Hughes. He said that, although the meeting was duly noticed, City Librarian Hughes was not present. The Committee voted to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and that Director Baraka left the meeting citing a FOI violation. After discussion in Executive session, the confirmed directors unanimously voted to defer action on the probationary status of the City Librarian until the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors on the October 19, 2016.

Director Holden spoke of his and the entire Board of Directors' fiduciary responsibility to the Library and the citizens of Bridgeport. He said "we have an obligation to do what is best for the Library and that the action is based on evidence presented to this board over many months during which the City Librarian continued to be supported by the Board of Directors despite his evidenced unwillingness to perform his duties." Director Holden offered the **MOTION** that the employment of the City Librarian be terminated immediately. Director Cunningham seconded the motion.

During the discussion that followed Director Baraka expressed concerned about such action. She said that City Librarian Hughes "had made major changes in the library. We have more money and resources than we have ever had. He was the face of the Library. We represent the city." "I am very concerned," she continued, "about the impact on our children and community. It will have a negative impact. I am extremely upset and I object to everything that was done and said. This has carried on so long everyone is discouraged and disappointed."

Director Holden responded, "I don't make this motion lightly. The reason this has gone on so long is this board's determination to support the efforts of the City Librarian. The fact is he hasn't done his job. I move the motion reluctantly."

Director Baraka's expressed concern about compliance with Freedom of Information procedures. She made a **MOTION** to refer the matter back to the Personnel Committee for action. There was no second.

Director Baraka asked for a roll call vote on the **MOTION** to terminate the employment of the City Librarian effective immediately. President O'Donnell concurred and the roll call was held. (Director Holden, Aye; Director Errichetti, Aye; Director Cunningham, Aye; Director Baraka, Nay; Director O'Donnell, Aye) President O'Donnell remarked, "Although it is not usual for the President to vote except in case of a tie, he wanted his position documented for the record." The Motion passed.

Director Holden offered several additional motions 1) **MOTION** that Mr. Hughes be allowed to come in to remove his personal items and return security tags etc. The motion was seconded by Director Cunningham and passed by a vote of three affirmative votes (Holden, Cunningham and Errichetti) and one abstention (Director Baraka) 2) **MOTION** that President O'Donnell notify Mr. Hughes, Offices of Labor Relations/Civil Service and OPM of the Board action as expeditiously as possible. This motion was also seconded by Director Cunningham and approved by a vote of three affirmative votes (Holden, Cunningham and Errichetti) and one abstention. (Director Baraka) 3) **MOTION** that President O'Donnell contact the benefits office or civil service to determine what compensation Mr. Hughes may be entitled to for sick and vacation days. Director Cunningham also seconded this motion which was approved by the same vote, 3 affirmative votes (Holden, Cunningham and Errichetti) and one abstention (Director Baraka).

Director Cunningham made a **MOTION** to form a search committee, chaired by Director Holden, to conduct a National search for qualified candidates to serve a City Librarian. The composition of other members of the committee and its budget will be determined at a later date. The motion was seconded by Director Errichetti and approved by Directors Holden, Errichetti and Cunningham. Director Baraka abstained.

In the meantime, the Directors expressed the need for the appointment of an Interim City Librarian who might serve for 6 to 12 months until a candidate can be chosen from a National search. The Interim City Librarian would have all of the powers and responsibilities of the City Librarian and receive compensation as such. Director Errichetti made a **MOTION** that the Board of Directors seek out and appoint an Interim City Librarian while conducting a National Search. The Motion was seconded by Director Holden and approved by Directors Holden Errichetti and Cunningham. Director Baraka abstained.

Director Errichetti offered a **MOTION** that the City be contacted regarding a Request for Proposals for the National Search for a new City Librarian. The Motion was seconded by Director Holden and approved by Directors Cunningham and O'Donnell. Director Baraka abstained.

Aware of the immediate daily needs of the Library and the need to communicate what has happened to library staff, Director Errichetti offered a **MOTION** to appoint John Soltis from among the branch managers to serve as Acting City Librarian until such time as the Interim City Library shall be chosen and installed. The Motion was seconded by Director Holden and approved by all appointed Directors. The Directors asked Mr. Soltis to arrange a whole staff meeting on the following Friday morning at 9 am. to inform them of the changes and to hear their concerns.

Report of the Friends

Director Errichetti reported that the Friends of the Bridgeport Library were scheduled to hold their annual meeting at the North End Branch at 7pm on October 20.

New Business

The lack of exterior lighting and safety issues for patrons and staff at the Newfield Branch was discussed. Branch manager, Nancy Sweeney, said she was told to continue to keep regular closing hours despite the lack of adequate exterior lighting. When the UI was contacted to turn on the exterior lights, staff was informed that the bill had not been paid. Director Errichetti explained that the exterior lights were on a different circuit than Library lights and that the Library utility bill was current. Max Perez, of OPM, was contacted and was working to rectify the situation. Director Baraka made a **MOTION** to temporarily change the closing time of the Newfield Branch to 5:30 pm through the end of Daylight Savings time on November 6 and to 4:30 pm thereafter if the lighting situation is not rectified. Director Holden seconded the Motion. The motion was unanimously approved by all confirmed Directors. Acting to ensure the safety of the community and library patrons, Librarian Sweeney was directed to immediately notify the school, daycare facilities, NRZ and other community organizations. She was instructed to post it on the Library webpage and at the facility.

Executive Session:

At 8:25 pm. Director Errichetti made a **MOTION** for all Directors to enter into executive session to discuss pending litigation. The Motion was seconded by Director Holden and approved by all confirmed Directors. At 8:42 pm the Directors came out of Executive Session

Director Errichetti offered a **MOTION** to hold a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors on October 25 at 5:30 pm. to address any financial or other issues related to the dismissal of the City Librarian. The motion was seconded by Director Cunningham and unanimously approved by all confirmed directors.

Adjournment

At 8:46 pm Director Holden made a Motion for adjournment that was seconded by Director Baraka and unanimously approved by all confirmed directors. President O'Donnell adjourned the meeting at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Anne Cunningham
Ass't Secretary.