

Bridgeport Library  
Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, December 20, 2023

**ATTENDANCE:** James E. O'Donnell, President; Kenya Osborne-Gant, Vice President; Thomas R. Errichetti, Treasurer; Marcie J. Patton; Barbara A. Rogo; Kathleen E. Turner.

**STAFF:** Elaine Braithwaite, City Librarian; Laura Matthews, Assistant Librarian; Tanara Smith; Vivian Bordeaux; Robert Jefferys; David Morales

**OTHERS:**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**\*\* DIRECTOR ROGO MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**  
**\*\* DIRECTOR PATTON SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- NOVEMBER 14, 2023

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023.**  
**\*\* DIRECTOR PATTON SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION.**

**APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORTS / PAYMENT OF INVOICES / APPROVAL  
OF LINE TRANSFERS**

Director Errichetti directed everyone to the page regarding Tentative Board Vouch for December 20, 2023 under the finance tab. The grand total is \$25,747.06; \$19,747.06 of that is from tax levy funds and the other \$6,000 is from non-levy funding sales. The most expensive line would be the furniture for the Beardsley Branch at \$8,945.22.

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE VOUCHERS OF  
\$25,747.06**

**\*\* DIRECTOR PATTON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There is a year to date favorable payroll variance of \$43,435.12 after paying out retirees.

A line item transfer of \$10,000.00 from Special Services to Outside Programming is needed to cover the cost of the joint Library and Klein Memorial Auditorium presentations.

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF  
\$10,000 DOLLARS.**

**\*\* DIRECTOR ROGO SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**❖ Status/Action re: Library Programming with Klein**

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews, shared that all the branches have the tickets and flyers to promote the Rhonda Denet Concert scheduled for February 9, 2024 at the Klein. A flyer for the event has been created.

The other two events are Dungeons and Dragons scheduled for January 29, 2024 and the Phoenix Performance Dance and Music presentation for March 20, 2024. The Klein staff is taking the lead of promoting the Dungeons and Dragons event. The Library needs to reach out to the Asian community for the other performance.

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews mentioned there is a staff member who owned an Asian market and she can reach out to him to help with the translation.

Other promotional possibilities were discussed.

**\*\*CITY COUNCIL, 137 DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE, MARIA VALLE JOINED  
THE MEETING\*\***

Maria Valle is one of two newly appointed liaisons to the Library. Jazmarie Melendez, 138<sup>th</sup> City Council Representative is the other liaison from City Council.

**❖ Status/Action re: Review Library Hours of Operations**

President O'Donnell asked if the changes of hours of operations will still take place in February. Ms. Matthews responded they are still on track for the February 1, 2024 start date.

**❖ Status/Action re: volunteer opportunities**

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews, shared they are hung up on background checks for volunteers. President O'Donnell asked if there is anything they can do from their end. Ms. Matthews replied having bilingual volunteers would be helpful for the library; but, they need to designate someone to coordinate their involvement and who also speaks Spanish. Literacy volunteers are also needed.

Director Errichetti said to send anyone interested in tutoring to Suzanne Solensky and those students looking for community service can be referred to Patty Shields.

Director Errichetti added they have set up a system for background checks.

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews, mentioned they also brought back the system Mango, a software program popular with the ESL community, to assist in learning English.

**❖ Status/Action re: proposed donation of piano**

President O'Donnell indicated no decisions have been made regarding the donation of a piano to the Library.

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews, added the Music for the Youth Program was looking for a piano. Director Rogo mentioned they currently bring in a keyboard for the program at the North End location.

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Director Errichetti mentioned the Saden property was sold and they reached out to the attorney for an update as to when the net proceeds will be available. Our distribution from the sale of the property will be decreased by the capital gains tax due on the sale; as well as, any outstanding liabilities of the Estate.

### **CITY LIBRARIAN REPORT**

#### **❖ Review of monthly statistics**

Ms. Braithwaite mentioned that construction grant by the Connecticut State Library Board was not approved. Ms. Braithwaite will be working with staff member, Mr. Morales, to start the bid process on the construction and will work closely with the Bridgeport Purchasing Department. They will also be drafting a request for a 6 month extension for the bond and the CT State Library Board to send it out before the end of December to begin the bid and start the renovations.

Ms. Braithwaite will soon be sending the reappointment applications to the City to be in sync with the other appointments. If any issues or concerns arise, she will have President O'Donnell mediate the problem.

An additional \$50,000.00 of building repairs above currently budgeted expenses is expected.

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED, SUBJECT TO THE PAPERWORK FOLLOWING A TRANSFER OF \$50,000.00 FROM SPECIAL SERVICES FREEZE TO BUILDING MAINTENANCE TO COVER ANTICIPATED BUILDING REPAIRS THROUGH THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR.**

**\*\* VICE PRESIDENT OSBORNE-GANT SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **❖ Presentation by staff**

Ms. Braithwaite shared a workshop on customer service was held at the Burroughs location for staff on November 16, 2023. The presenter, Andrew Sounderback, was recommended by the Director of New Haven Free Public Library. The staff was very engaged and a recording of the presentation was shared to those staff that weren't in attendance. It is suggested to have him present at each of the Branches for staff.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **❖ Buildings**

#### **1. Status/Action re: East Side Branch Phase II Project**

Director Errichetti mentioned that the grant was denied for additional State funds; but, that allowed them to start the bid process through the Purchasing Agent of the City.

Ms. Valle added she works with senior citizens in the neighborhood and has brought them to the library to get free memberships. One issue she saw was the parking. Director Errichetti responded that they recently purchased and paved the lot off Shelton Street which holds 12 cars. 5 spots would be for staff and 7 would be for visitors.

President O'Donnell added they were looking at other properties in the area; but, the owners were asking too much. Ms. Valle recommended if they ever need support to reach out to her or anyone on the City Council and they will help them.

Director Errichetti said they are also addressing the outdoor lighting and ramp situation at the location.

#### **2. Status/Action re: solar project for Burroughs/Saden and North**

Director Errichetti said the solar panels were delivered to the Burroughs location. The North Branch panels will have to be removed to replace the roof.

After the few rainstorms that have occurred, Ms. Braithwaite stated there have been leaks coming into the Burroughs location.

#### **3. Status/Action re: Burroughs/Saden 1st Floor redesign and windows**

Director Errichetti mentioned the 1st floor redesign is complete. They will be moving the Teen Center into that area and moving the new materials from the second floor to the first floor.

Ms. Matthews said she did receive a layout of how the Public Service Director and Children's Librarian would like to see the area; but, she is waiting on additional details from them to share for the next meeting.

Director Errichetti went on to speak on the windows. Due to the other projects coming in at high priority, the Committee has decided to defer the window replacement project. Director Errichetti recommends applying for the State grant next year to cover the window replacement.

#### **4. Status/Action re: Black Rock façade, flooring and flooding issues**

Director Errichetti shared that the façade at Black Rock is rotted. There were some drain issues that caused many things to be replaced, including the columns. It is believed not to be a liability issue; but, should be addressed sooner than later.

#### **5. Status/Action re report of David Otero re other facility issues**

Director Errichetti reviewed David's report, which was included in the information packet.

### **❖ Finance**

Director Errichetti reviewed the Endowment Fund balances, principal and spendable balances. All of the traditional Endowment Funds are invested at Morgan Stanley. The Saden Funds are at M&T Bank and Wilmington Trust.

Most of the Endowment Funds restrict how the funds can be spent.

Ms. Matthew asked how often do they get donations through the website? Director Errichetti replied that they at times receive donations below \$500 dollars.

Director Errichetti added the next re-evaluation for the City of Bridgeport will be on October 1, 2025 and they must consider how auto taxes in the state will be removed. The grants may increase but the insurance cost will also go up.

### **❖ Governance**

President O'Donnell shared with the resignation of Judge Holden we needed to find an appropriate time to present an award to Judge Holden for his work within the Bridgeport Libraries.

There are three Director applications that are being reviewed and he would like an extension to accept more applications. The application deadline will be extended to January 15, 2024.

Ms. Valle asked how many Board members are on the Board? President O'Donnell mentioned there are 9 seats on the Board.

Director Rogo suggested they recognize Judge Holden at the Rhonda Denét event in February at the Klein Memorial Auditorium.

President O'Donnell added that staff is working on updating policies, including policies regarding unattended children and the use of the new Podcast equipment at the Beardsley Branch.

#### ❖ **Marketing Committee**

President O'Donnell mentioned Director Allam was not in attendance due to sickness.

Ms. Braithwaite added that they sent various documents and photo files. They previously sent the Strategic Plan; so, a follow up meeting will be scheduled.

#### ❖ **Personnel**

President O'Donnell shared that Elaine and Tom are working together to resolve some issues and will have a report for the next meeting.

### **REPORT OF FRIENDS IN THE LIBRARY**

Director Errichetti added Suzanne is rebuilding the Tutoring Program and asking the volunteers to consent to a background check.

Ms. Valle asked if they had coordinated with the surrounding Universities for volunteers? Director Errichetti replied that they usually have High School students and people coming in from the court system looking for volunteer work. As mentioned earlier in the report, anyone interested in tutoring should be referred to Suzanne Solensky and other volunteer interest should be directed to Patty Shields.

Ms. Turner added her husband works at Sacred Heart and they can reach out to students who are looking for volunteer work.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **❖ Review/Approval of 2024 calendar of meetings**

**\*\* VICE PRESIDENT OSBORNE-GANT MOTIONED TO APPROVE PROPOSED AGENDA AND ALLOWING PRESIDENT O'DONNELL TO SERVE AS SECRETARY IN THE ABSENCE OF MS. CLEMONS TO CERTIFY IN FRONT OF THE CITY CLERK.**

**\*\* SECONDED BY DIRECTOR ROGO.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **❖ Discussion re: signage/enhancements of Burroughs/Sadens**

Director Errichetti asked if they can get the electronic signage at all the Branches like the one at the Beardsley Branch in their lobby? Ms. Braithwaite added they are working on that for all Branches. The signage is currently at the Beardsley and Newfield branches.

### **❖ Discussion re: options to engage community in civic literacy**

No discussion.

### **❖ Discussion re: brainstorming for excellence in experiencing BPL**

Director Errichetti shared he went to the Flute Program at the Beardsley and would like to suggest the Library host a free Holiday Concert celebrating all the celebrations of the season at the Klein for next year.

President O'Donnell spoke with the Colon Family about hosting a “noches de trios” celebration next year. Ms. Valle indicated that happens after Thanksgiving - about a week or two into December. The last celebration was hosted at the Klein and has previously been held at Sacred Heart and Fairfield Universities.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* VICE PRESIDENT OSBORNE-GANT MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI SECONDED.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.



Respectfully submitted,

Kenya Osborne-Gant  
Secretary Pro Tem