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**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors**  
**Rescheduled date: March 24, 2026**

ATTENDANCE-Board of Directors

James E. O'Donnell, President – in person  
Kenya Osborne-Gant, Vice President – in person  
Thomas R. Errichetti, Treasurer - in person  
Denise Clemons, Secretary – Absent  
Jeanette Muñoz-Allam – in person  
Blanca Bermeo – via Zoom  
Marcie J. Patton – in person  
Barbara A. Rogo – in person  
Kathleen E. Turner – Absent

Others Present:

Elaine Braithwaite, City Librarian – in person  
Laura Matthews, Assistant City Librarian – via Zoom  
Maria H. Pereira, City Council-138th District and Liaison to the Library Board – in person

CALL TO ORDER: President O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Library Board liaison Maria H. Pereira reported that the first meeting she attended was very informative. She stated that she was surprised to learn the library had lost the \$2.4 million state grant designated for the East Side Branch construction project. She noted that she has brought this matter to the attention of the council members representing the East Side Branch Library district to begin discussing how the City can support the Library in moving the project forward.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA - Although the formal motion to adopt the agenda was inadvertently omitted, the meeting proceeded by unanimous consent using the agenda as distributed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**MOTION:** Made by Director Errichetti.  
Second: *None noted in the record.*  
Abstained: Director Rogo.  
Result: Passed.

## PAYMENT OF INVOICES

Vouchers totaling \$13,648.54 from City funds were presented for approval for various line-item expenditures, along with \$1,041.25 from Non-Levy funds for parade T-shirts, Mah Jongg cards, and a "Build a Solar House" STEM program, for a combined total of \$14,689.79.

**MOTION:** Made by Director Errichetti.  
Second: Director Patton.  
Result: Passed.

**Action item follow-up from previous meeting:** The repairs approved at the last Board meeting for the North HVAC system were unrelated to the newly installed system.

PAYROLL VARIANCE FAVORABLE: \$35,978.95 (clarification needed).

## (2) LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS:

1. \$1500 from 55055 Computer Equipment to 59015 Printing Services.

**MOTION:** Made by Director Errichetti.  
Second: Director Rogo.  
Result: Passed.

2. \$8000 from 55055 Computer Equipment to 53720 Telephone Services.

**MOTION:** Made by Director Errichetti.  
Second: Director Rogo.  
Result: Passed.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Status/Report on Council approval of Board Appointments** - Nothing new to report on this matter.

**Status/Report on Planning for the Burroughs-Saden Centennial:** Planning is ongoing, but there are no new updates to report at this time.

**Status/re Library Card issuance and school coordination** –The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class school visits are continuing throughout the rest of the month. The Board discussed the issue of photographing students participating in Library programs and posting those images online. It was noted that photographs taken in a public space are generally permissible; however, concern was raised regarding the posting of such photographs on the Library's website or social media platforms, particularly when minors are involved. It was noted that participating schools have posted similar photographs on their own social media accounts.

## CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Two pieces of correspondence arrived: one was a thoughtful card from a young person requesting a Bridgeport Public Library card to add to her personal collection, and the other was a letter from a local

business owner asking for permission to use the East Side Branch Library parking lot during times when the library is closed.

**Action Item:** The Board President will follow up with the business owner to obtain additional information and will refer the matter to the Governance Committee for further consideration.

#### CITY LIBRARIANS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The Director provided a brief update on February activities, including continued planning for student library visits.

#### **Action item: E-Rate Contract Renewal**

The Director reported that Kellogg & Sovereign continues to manage the Library's E-Rate bidding process and that Board approval is required to renew participation in the next E-Rate cycle.

- The E-Rate contract operates on a five-year cycle.
- The new cycle will commence on July 1, 2026.
- The Library receives an estimated 90% E-Rate discount. As a result, the Library is responsible for covering 10% of the total cost.

Director Errichetti made the **MOTION** to approve the E-Rate contract that will be effective for 7-1-26.  
Seconded by: Director Patton.  
Result: Passed unanimously.

Please consult the City Librarian's full report for more information.

**Review of Monthly statistics and presentation by staff** – No staff presentations were given, and the monthly statistics were not reviewed.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Status/Action – East Side Branch Phase II Project and Funding Issues:** Director Errichetti stated that his recent visit to the East Side Branch showed the project is coming along nicely.

A brief update was provided regarding efforts to restore previously approved state grant funding related to the East Side Branch Library project. It was noted that a letter initiated through City Council sought legislative support for reinstatement of grant funds, and that outreach to state representatives and committees is ongoing. The Library Board has not yet identified a clear champion to lead the effort at the state level.

**Status/Action re Burroughs/Saden 1st Floor changes and acoustics** – This project is currently on hold.

**Status/Action re report of David Otero re other facility issues** - The installation of the soundproof wall in the community meeting rooms at both Beardsley and Newfield Branches has been completed, and initial feedback has been favorable. The Black Rock façade project will move forward using AZEK column material, which was confirmed to be visually suitable for the building.

Prior plumbing issues affecting the Maintenance Manager's office space were noted as resolved. No additional maintenance issues were reported.

A proposal is being reviewed that would relocate the teen area upstairs to the current fine arts section, with the fine arts materials moving downstairs. The plan includes using gaming pods to help contain noise, reducing the need for additional wall or ceiling construction.

There was also discussion about moving the piano to the pop room. Once the rear wall and platform stage are completed, the piano could be placed there for performances. The remaining portion of the fine arts room is being considered for a "library of things" or a makerspace, which would complement the teen area and support programming as well as nearby services.

There was a discussion regarding removing shelving at North Branch in order to enhance the teen space, but no action was taken.

## FINANCE

**Review of 2025–26 budget planning and CAFR status** – The City released its budget this afternoon, but it has not yet been fully reviewed. According to the preliminary figures, the Library's allocation reflects an increase of just under \$2.3 million. The City also adjusted the administrative fee, raising it from \$150,000 to slightly under \$180,000, marking the first change to this line in several years.

A portion of the surplus—approximately \$113,000—was assigned to salaries, though the basis for this allocation is unclear. Fringe benefits increased by roughly \$361,000, which was unexpected. The remaining funds were applied to bring the total increase to \$1.6 million. If the Library does not receive the additional \$2.4 million in grant funding, these funds may need to be used to support new salary obligations.

## GOVERNANCE

**Status/Action – Strategic Plan Revision:** A strategic plan framework was distributed to the board as a guiding outline rather than a complete draft. Members were encouraged to review the document in advance of the next Governance Committee meeting. The framework includes updated sections on the Library's history, future direction, assessment of community needs, and strategic priorities, drawing from earlier staff-developed materials. Specific objectives were intentionally excluded at this stage to allow for diverse perspectives on how objectives should be defined. Increasing library cardholders was cited as a potential objective area, with acknowledgment of the extensive outreach efforts currently underway.

Following review of the strategic plan framework, it was discussed aligning marketing efforts directly with the strategic plan. It was agreed that the strategic plan should establish overarching goals and purpose, while the marketing plan would focus on implementation strategies. To support this alignment, the board discussed coordinating governance and marketing discussions at a future meeting to allow for a deeper review of the strategic plan and the development of corresponding marketing goals.

**Action Item:** Members were asked to review the strategic plan framework and provide feedback, including edits and refinements, in advance of a more detailed discussion at the next Governance and Marketing Committee meeting.

**Status/re proposed policy revisions - Library Card Policy** - The committee briefly revisited the ongoing work on the library card policy. No new proposals or revisions were presented at this meeting.

**Action Item:** *Piano Policy* - Feedback from the library board is needed to determine the appropriate direction for the policy before further revisions are made.

*Meeting Room Policy* – Feedback was received from the original author of the draft policy, and the committee will review the comments to decide whether to incorporate the suggested revisions or keep the current language.

## MARKETING COMMITTEE

**Status/Action re promotional marketing options** – The Marketing Chair also addressed marketing performance measurement and reporting. Topics discussed included:

- Library card outreach
- Use of the library app
- Review of existing data and reporting methods

While current data collection was described as robust, the Chair noted that the lack of formal benchmarks limits the Board's ability to evaluate growth and progress. The need to establish standardized benchmarks and present data in a clearer, more accessible format was emphasized. Development of a dashboard-style report for consistent monthly review was suggested. Establishing formal marketing metrics in advance of FY27 was identified as a priority to allow for more effective assessment of initiatives and timely course correction when necessary.

There was a discussion regarding the development of new library card graphics, including designs commemorating the library's 100th anniversary. The potential for community engagement through partnerships with local organizations or schools, as well as the possibility of hosting a design contest, was also discussed.

It was noted that while a design contest or other public design process may be appropriate for future or commemorative library cards, the immediate priority is to replenish the library's supply of standard cards, as current inventory is low. The City Librarian emphasized the need to proceed promptly to ensure new library cards are produced within the fiscal current year. Updating the card design will also allow the library's mobile app, which currently displays an outdated card image, to be updated and ensure consistent branding across platforms.

## PERSONNEL

**Status/Action re table of organization / job descriptions** – A question was raised regarding the availability of part-time librarians in the local area and whether expanded hours could be supported through increased use of part-time staff rather than additional full-time positions. The discussion noted that utilizing part-time employees may provide greater scheduling flexibility, reduce benefit-related costs, and allow coverage during peak or extended hours, such as evenings. The possibility of staff working split schedules or across multiple branch locations was also discussed. The City Librarian stated that part-time employees may work up to 19 hours per week and are currently used to cover schedule gaps, including lunches, evenings, and extended hours. The Board discussed the goal of achieving consistent system-wide hours, particularly extending weekday hours to Monday to Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., and noted that clearer, more consistent hours may improve public use. The importance of evaluating staffing models and public demand in conjunction with expanded programming and services was emphasized. No action

was taken, and the topic was identified for further exploration as part of ongoing operational and staffing planning.

The Board discussed recent incident reports, noting that the Beardsley Branch continues to account for a higher number of incidents compared to other branches. The City Librarian reported that additional security coverage has been implemented at Beardsley due to increased need and that conditions have shown some improvement. Repeat incidents involving the same individuals were noted, and established procedures, including police involvement, when necessary, remain in place.

The role and visibility of the library social worker was also discussed. It was noted that efforts are underway to improve public awareness of available social services, with informational materials in development.

#### REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

- Transportation costs for third-grade classes are still being finalized and may be shared between the Library and the Friends if the cost exceeds the estimated amount.
- Volunteer outreach was discussed in recognition of April as Volunteer Month, with inquiries routed through the Library's website to both organizations.
- Potential community engagement initiatives were noted, including a food & book-themed event planned for April 25 at North Branch.

Non-Agenda Item: A lengthy grant funding discussion was had, it is to be continued at the next Finance Committee meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS

***Plan All-Staff meeting for strategic plan review and discussion*** – The Board discussed the Strategic Plan and the importance of staff involvement. It was noted that staff input had previously been gathered and that additional opportunities for feedback would be considered once the draft objectives and strategies are finalized. Planning an all-staff meeting related to the Strategic Plan will proceed, with administrative staff taking the lead.

***Review and approval of the E-Rate bid with Kellogg & Sovereign for FY2027*** – This was reviewed and approved during the City Librarian's Report.

With no further discussion, a **MOTION** was made to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. by Director Errichetti. Seconded by Director Patton and Director Rogo. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Sara Santos, Administrative Assistant