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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
May 20, 2026

ATTENDANCE-Board of Directors

James E. O'Donnell, President – in person
Kenya Osborne-Gant, Vice President – in person
Thomas R. Errichetti, Treasurer - absent
Denise Clemons, Secretary – absent
Jeanette Muñoz-Allam – via Zoom
Blanca Bermeo – in person at 6:03 p.m.
Marcie J. Patton – absent
Barbara A. Rogo – in person
Kathleen E. Turner – in person

Others Present:

Elaine Braithwaite, City Librarian – via Zoom
Laura Matthews, Assistant City Librarian – in person
Sara Santos, Administrative Assistant – in person
Nykia Eaddy, Head of Technical Services – via Zoom
Breta Hasimi, Library Assistant I – via Zoom
Maria H. Pereira, City Council Member 138th district & Library Liaison – in person

CALL TO ORDER: President James E. O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The **MOTION** was made by Director Rogo to adopt the agenda.
Seconded by: Director Osborne-Gant.
Result: passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The **MOTION** was made by Director Rogo to approve the previous board meeting minutes as presented.
Second: Director Turner.
Result: Passed unanimously.

PAYMENT OF INVOICES

Director Osborne-Gant made the **MOTION** to approve vouchers totaling \$26,178.60 from the General Fund for various line-item expenditures. For clarification, MAC Industrial Services was added at the last minute, which is why it appeared at the bottom of the list, and the expense will also be paid from the General Funds.

Second: Director Rogo.

Result: Passed unanimously.

- ★ Action Item: The Library Board requested statistics on the income generated from the copiers and printers by location.

PAYROLL VARIANCE: Favorable in the amount of \$468,916.61.

(4) LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS:

1. \$15,500.00 from 51000 FT Earned Pay to 56180 Other Services.

MOTION: Made by Director Gant.

Second: Director Rogo.

Result: Passed unanimously.

2. \$4,500.00 from 53605 Membership/Registration to 54705 Subscriptions.

MOTION: Made by Director Rogo.

Second: Director Turner.

Result: Passed unanimously.

3. \$4000.00 from 56055 Computer Services to 54705 Subscriptions.

MOTION: Made by Director Turner.

Second: Director Rogo.

Result: Passed unanimously.

4. \$4000.00 from 55145 Equipment Rental/Lease to 56160 Marketing Services.

MOTION: Made by Director Turner.

Second: Director Rogo.

Abstained: Director Rogo.

Result: Passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Status/Report on Council Approval of Board Appointments: The status of the board appointments remains unchanged. It was noted that recent revisions to the Charter increased membership of the Ethics Commission from five to seven members, establishing a quorum requirement of four. Due to a recent

resignation, the Ethics Commission currently has only three active members and therefore is unable to meet quorum requirements.

Status/Report on planning for the Centennial of Burroughs/Saden: A committee has been formed and has begun generating a wide range of potential ideas for the celebration. The group is currently exploring all possibilities; at the next meeting they plan to narrow the list to the most feasible options. The target date for the celebration remains April 20, 2027.

Status/re Library Card issuance and school coordination – The Library reported ongoing monthly meetings with the schools, with additional sessions held as needed. A recent meeting focused on the “Letters Are Characters” program, in which the schools will now also participate in. The Library and BOE representatives are coordinating the next steps for collaboration on this initiative.

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS – No correspondence or communications were received.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORT HIGHLIGHTS – The East Side Branch furniture orders are in progress. Although there have been some delays, both vendor orders are expected to be finalized by the end of the month. A purchase order from WB Mason is still pending. The Building Facilities Manager reported that Bismark remains on schedule to complete construction by July 1st, which would allow for an opening window between late August and early September.

Staffing plans for the East Side Branch include filling two long vacant positions—a Library Assistant III and a Librarian II—and adding a Librarian I to provide professional coverage for the second-floor children’s area.

The current security guard services contract expires in June, and the library has issued a new bid for those services.

RFQ/P for Architectural and Engineering Assessment – Burroughs Building: The library is seeking a comprehensive architectural and engineering assessment of the Burroughs building. While an initial opinion was previously obtained regarding potential layout changes—such as relocating the marketplace to the first floor and moving the teen area upstairs—a full study is needed to evaluate these options and to guide long-term planning.

The assessment will also help identify and prioritize major building repairs. Staff noted ongoing issues including steam and water leaks, window deterioration, HVAC problems, elevator replacement needs, and other structural concerns. Although the Building Facilities Manager has gathered information through vendor feedback, a professional evaluation is necessary to develop a complete and accurate list of capital projects. With additional budget resources anticipated, the committee emphasized the importance of establishing a clear priority list to determine which projects should be addressed first and which can be scheduled for future years. This work will form the basis of a master facilities plan for Burroughs-Saden like the recent public facilities master plan completed by the Board of Education and will support future capital budget requests.

For more information, please read the complete City Librarian’s report.

Review of Monthly statistics and presentation by staff – Circulation remains steady compared to the same period last year. Library card registrations have declined slightly, which may be related to the

compared to April of last year, indicating increased in-person visits and new patrons coming into the building.

Staff noted that most usage trends follow consistent seasonal patterns, so comparisons are typically made to the same month in the prior year.

A question was raised about upcoming summer programs. The programming committee has finalized the schedule, and information will be posted on the website, shared with the schools, and announced publicly.

There was a discussion about how the library's marketing vendor can support program promotion. Staff will need to provide clear direction on which materials and messages should be highlighted.

Concerns were raised about the lack of translated social media content. Staff noted that a new committee is being formed as part of the strategic plan to strengthen outreach to multilingual communities. This work will include targeted communication and expanding materials in additional languages.

Further discussion focused on improving language accessibility. A suggestion was made to better highlight the website's language-change feature, so patrons know they can view content in other languages. While some elements translate automatically, most website and social media content remains in English, and a more consistent approach is needed.

It was acknowledged that not all materials can be translated into every language, especially on social media. However, targeted translation—based on the audience for specific programs or locations and supported by community data—was identified as a practical approach. This would require deliberate planning to determine which communities should be prioritized for translated marketing materials, whether printed or online.

The broader challenge of reaching non-library users was also discussed, with an emphasis on meeting people where they are rather than relying solely on existing communication channels.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Status/Action – East Side Branch Phase II Project and Funding Issues - The East Side Branch construction is expected to be completed in July, putting the branch on track for a soft opening shortly after Labor Day.

Status/Action re Burroughs/Saden 1st Floor changes and acoustics – This is on hold until the architectural and engineering study is completed.

Status/Action re report of David Otero re other facility issues – No other facility issues were discussed. One question was raised, has the East Side Branch elevator been installed? Unclear.

FINANCE

Review of 2025–26 budget planning and CAFR status – It was noted that the City of Bridgeport has corrected its earlier funding allocation and adjusted the library's rate from 1.0 mil to 1.3 mil. The Board Treasurer is confident the revised amount is accurate, though additional clarification will be needed when he is present.

Some concern was expressed about how the adjustment was applied, as the increase came through end-of-year funds rather than a direct application of the full 1.3 mil rate.

Questions were also raised about the capital plan. It was noted that the City of Bridgeport manages capital bonding but that the library is responsible for the debt service on its capital projects. Further clarification will be sought for the upcoming fiscal year beginning July 1.

GOVERNANCE

Status/Action re Strategic Plan Revision - A copy of the board approved Strategic Plan draft was handed out so it can be shared with staff.

Status All-Staff meeting for strategic plan review and discussion - An all-staff meeting will be scheduled to gather feedback, with the week of June 19 suggested as a possible date, pending staff availability. As part of preparing the strategic plan for staff review, it was noted that staff should also be asked to help with the document design and formatting, including adding photos and improving the layout to create a polished final version.

Possible cover ideas were discussed, such as using a map of library locations, though concerns were raised about overly busy graphics or implying that proposed future locations are imminent. Additional design options will be explored and shared.

- ★ **Action item:** Notify the board once the all-staff meeting date is set so board members can plan to attend.

Status/re proposed policy revisions – The piano use policy was discussed, including questions about how to balance access for trained pianists with opportunities for youth or beginners. Staff feedback suggested placing the piano in the old POP Room once that space is fully set up for performances, as it would allow for use without disturbing the public and could also support lessons. The Newfield Branch piano remains available as well.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Status/Action re promotional marketing options- Marketing activities for FY2027 are in progress and will be shared with the board before the next Marketing meeting, allowing time for review and comments so they can be finalized at that time.

Report on marketing metrics and consultant dashboard - The annual marketing consultant review will take place in late July to allow time to collect data after the fiscal year ends on June 30. Committee members will be reminded of this timeline, and the review will include the data points requested at last week's meeting.

PERSONNEL

Status/Action re table of organization / job descriptions - It was noted that the Personnel Chair was unable to attend this meeting but emailed materials to all board members, including a request for feedback on the City Librarian's goals, the deadline is June 10th.

Social Worker- The City Librarian reported that the social worker's schedule was last updated in March. She now works at the Department of Social Services on Tuesdays and Thursdays and visits Newfield and Black Rock library branches in the afternoons.

The board discussed the need for clear signage in each library to inform patrons that social work services are available and to display the schedule. A poster-sized sign with space for branch specific hours was suggested.

A question was raised about why the social worker is not scheduled to visit the Beardsley Branch. Staff noted that this may relate to prior concerns about the space and privacy requirements for social work interactions. The City Librarian will review the issue and confirm whether Beardsley can be included in the rotation.

REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY- No Friend's report this month.

NEW BUSINES

Confirm Annual Meeting for June 17, 2026 - Confirmed.

Request for Nominations for Directors and Officers to be elected - The board will nominate and elect directors to fill seats with expiring terms which are Directors Clemmons, Muñoz-Allam, and Bermeo. Members with expiring terms are asked to notify the chair of the Governance Committee if they wish to stand for another term, and any additional nominations should be submitted for consideration.

Officer elections will also take place at the annual meeting. Members interested in serving in an officer's role should inform the committee by the next Governance Committee meeting.

A **MOTION** was made to add an agenda item under new business.

The **MOTION** was moved by Director Rogo.

Second: Director Osborne-Gant.

Result: passed unanimously.

New Agenda Item - The idea of expanding summer programming to support families seeking structured activities for children when school is out. While the library's summer reading program appropriately focuses on literacy, it was noted that many parents may also be looking for daytime programs to keep children engaged. The suggestion included exploring a "library boot camp" model offering a few hours of daily activities.

Additional ideas were discussed, including potential partnerships with local education programs or internships, as well as ensuring any program involving adults or volunteers would require appropriate staffing, supervision, and background checks. Broader adult-focused programming, such as library-use workshops, was also mentioned as a possible complement.

It was noted that any expanded summer program would require consideration of staffing, union classifications, and operational capacity.

Digitization of the CT Post - An update was provided regarding the inquiry from a previous meeting about the Connecticut Post's request for payment to digitize microfiche materials. Follow-up with a local contact is still underway. Preliminary information suggests that when the newspaper relocated from Bridgeport to Norwalk, archival materials may not have been retained, and the publication may no longer possess the historical content in question.

Concerns were raised about the feasibility of paying for materials the newspaper may not actually hold, as well as the expectation that the library would then pay again for patron access once digitized. Additional clarification is being sought, including whether older issues—potentially more than 70 years old—may fall outside copyright restrictions. A further update will be provided once more information is received.

With no further discussion, a MOTION was made to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. by Director Rogo.

Second: Director Osborne-Gant.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Sara Santos, Administrative Assistant