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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Rescheduled date: July 22, 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 – via Zoom
Jeanette Muñoz-Allam – absent
Blanca Bermeo – via Zoom
Marcie J. Patton – via Zoom
Barbara A. Rogo – in person
Kathleen E. Turner – absent

Others Present:

Laura Matthews, Assistant City Librarian – in person
Sara Santos, Administrative Assistant – in person
Margaret Girgis, Black Rock Branch Manager – in person

CALL TO ORDER: President O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comments.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Director Osborne-Gant made the **MOTION** to adopt the agenda.
Second: Director Rogo.
Result: Passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

PAYMENT OF INVOICES

Vouchers totaling $37,858.85 in City funds were presented for approval, covering various line-item expenditures. Of this amount, $14,683.35 was charged to the FY26 budget, $22,825.50 to the FY27 budget, and $350 from Deaccession funds was allocated for the repair of the Frederick Hugh painting.

MOTION: Made by Director Errichetti.
Second: Director Osborne-Gant.
Result: Passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The gross payroll variance for FY26 is approximately $656,626. The following amounts were transferred to support expenditures:

- $103,657 for payroll-related obligations.
- $357,478 for additional operating expenditures.

After these allocations, an estimated surplus of $195,491 remains.

APPROVAL OF LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS: There were no line-item transfers this month.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Status/Report on Council approval of Board Appointments – The Ethics Commission has approved the reappointments of Directors O'Donnell, Osborne-Gant, and Turner. The appointments will now move forward to the City Council for consideration at the August 3rd meeting, with a potential referral to Miscellaneous Matters for further review at the August 6th meeting.

Status/Report on planning for centennial of Burroughs/Saden – The Board requested that Centennial Committee updates and meeting notes be shared at the Governance Committee meetings.

The Board discussed facility-related concerns at Burroughs-Saden Memorial Library, including the building's age, plumbing, HVAC systems, water damage, leaks, shelving, elevators, and other infrastructure needs. It was noted that maintenance staff continue to address repairs and operational issues throughout the library system.

Following the discussion, the Board reached a consensus to pursue a comprehensive facilities assessment to evaluate the building's condition, identify current and potential needs, and support long-term planning as the building approaches its 100th anniversary.

> ***Action Item:*** The Board directed the City Librarian to work with the Purchasing Department to issue an RFP for a comprehensive architectural and engineering assessment of the building and to keep the Board informed of the project's progress and timeline.

Status/Report re Library Card issuance and school coordination – The Board selected a preferred design, the lighthouse. Further progress on obtaining the cards is pending.

Status/Report on staff input for Strategic Plan - Key themes identified during Staff Development Day included additional staff development, community partnerships, marketing and outreach, literacy initiatives, multilingual resources, cross-training, onboarding, and leadership development.

The Board reviewed efforts to strengthen communication and coordination across library locations, particularly in the areas of outreach, programming, and community partnerships. Staff reported that tools, committees, and tracking systems are in place and continue to evolve to support collaboration. The conversation emphasized the importance of tailoring programs to meet the unique needs of each community.

Director Rogo commended staff and administration for a successful Staff Development Day, noting strong participation, meaningful engagement, and valuable feedback that will help advance Strategic Plan initiatives. She also appreciated the opportunity to connect with staff from across the organization and was pleased to see strong representation from all departments, along with active participation in the discussions.

The Board emphasized the value of investing in staff development and encouraging the sharing of knowledge gained through training opportunities. Suggestions included identifying staff areas of expertise, expanding peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and establishing a more formal process for sharing training outcomes with staff and the community. The conversation also addressed the funding and accessibility of professional development opportunities.

> ***Action Item:*** The Board requested that staff develop a draft layout of the Strategic Plan, including proposed graphic design and formatting elements. Once completed, the draft will be presented to the Governance Committee for review and feedback prior to finalization.

Status/Report on study for new signage for North Branch – Concerns were raised regarding the visibility of signage at the North Branch and other library locations. The Board discussed opportunities to improve signage throughout the library system, including consistency in design, placement, and the potential use of illuminated signs.

> ***Action Item*:** Director Errichetti will research signage options, potential locations, and associated costs. He will report his findings and recommendations to the Board.

Status/Report on hiring high school pages - The Board discussed library page positions and opportunities for high school students to gain work experience through employment. The discussion included the current role of pages, recruitment of students, and opportunities to recruit multilingual page staff to better support the language needs of the communities served. Administration noted that the current page position is primarily responsible for shelving and circulation-related tasks and any changes beyond existing page duties may require revised job descriptions and city approval.

> ***Action Item:*** Provide the Board with the current library page job description and information regarding available page positions.

REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
Note: The discussion arose during a related agenda item and was taken up by the Board without a formal reordering of the agenda.

The Board reviewed ongoing challenges related to the operation of the library garage book sale area, including organization, oversight, communication, safety, and long-term sustainability. Members discussed possible solutions, including volunteer support, student involvement, and integration with existing library services, as well as potential alternative uses for the space.

The consensus was that additional information is needed regarding usage, financial impact, volunteer capacity, safety considerations, and long-term management before any decisions are made. The matter will be revisited following further evaluation.

Status/Report on use of Library website for community events – The Board agreed that information about community events and organizations would be shared through links to external resources on the library's website. As the conversation evolved, members explored potential website enhancements, which led to a broader discussion about a future website redesign. It was noted that any redesign initiative would likely require a formal RFP process.

Administration noted concerns about managing multiple RFPs simultaneously and the potential impact on timelines. The Board acknowledged these concerns and indicated that the RFPs should be pursued concurrently rather than sequentially. No action was taken regarding a website redesign.

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS –No correspondences were received this month.

CITY LIBRARIANS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS – The City Librarian's report was enclosed in the Library Board packets; no discussion was held.

Review of Monthly statistics and presentation by staff – Statistics were reviewed, including library card registrations and circulation activity. It was noted that while library cards have increased significantly over time, a recent decline in active cardholders has been observed. Possible factors included expired library cards and reduced renewals among patrons served by the East Side branch. Additional analysis will be conducted to better understand the underlying causes of the change.

Circulation data by location was also reviewed. Attention was given to usage patterns at the Beardsley branch, where circulation levels were noted to be comparatively stronger relative to the size of the collection. It was observed that circulation figures may be influenced by patron requests and material transfers between locations, in addition to the branch's collection.

The statistics will continue to be monitored to identify trends and inform future planning.

The Board also considered opportunities to optimize library space by balancing collection areas with community and programming needs. Discussion included the potential for repurposing underutilized shelving and collection space to better support programs, meetings, and other patron activities.

The Board also explored the concept of centralized storage for lower-circulating materials as a way to preserve access to collections while increasing space for frequently used materials and public services at branch locations. Several facilities were identified as potential candidates for future space reconfiguration.

No action was taken. Further review of collection usage, patron needs, and available space will inform future planning discussions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

***Status/Action – East Side Branch Phase II Project and Funding Issues* -** It was reported that the elevator installation has been completed and approved following inspection. Flooring installation is approximately 80% complete, and exterior brickwork remains in progress. The renovation is anticipated to be completed in August, pending remaining work.

Status/Action re Burroughs-Saden First Floor Modifications and Acoustics – The project remains on hold pending the completion of the architectural study.

Status/Action re report of David Otero re other facility issues - An update was provided on facility-related projects across library locations. At Burroughs-Saden Memorial Library, steam pipe replacement and accessibility improvements, including repairs to automatic door opening systems, remain on the list of pending maintenance projects.

The need for additional study and meeting spaces at Black Rock Branch was discussed. Prefabricated study or meeting pods were identified as a potential option to address patron demand for private and small-group spaces.

Further research, site measurements, feasibility assessments, and evaluation of available options will need to be conducted before the matter can be brought to the Building Committee for review and consideration.

FINANCE

Review of 2025–26 budget planning and CAFR status – The Board was informed that the library's new budget amount is $14,124,867, excluding the $2.2 million that will be posted directly to surplus to provide the full 1.3 mills for the next fiscal year.

Budget adjustments were reviewed, including a $100,000 increase in healthcare costs added by the City. It was reported that the adjustment is attributable to additional personnel included in the budget and may be revised as new staff are hired and associated costs are finalized.

The Board reviewed budget line items and agreed to maintain Publications at $415,000 and Subscriptions at $320,000. An unallocated surplus of approximately $2.7 million remains available.

It was explained that the proposed budget allocation schedule would be submitted to OPM, allowing expenditures to be charged directly to the appropriate budget lines rather than requiring multiple line-item transfers throughout the year. Although transfers from the unallocated surplus may still be necessary as needs arise, having funds available provides greater flexibility than in the previous year.

Discussion followed regarding staff development and training initiatives identified during strategic planning discussions. It was noted that these expenses have traditionally been funded through non-levy sources.

Director Errichetti made the **MOTION** to allocate $10,000 from the unallocated surplus to the appropriate budget line for staff development and education.
Seconded by Director Rogo.
Result: **MOTION** passed unanimously.

GOVERNANCE

Status/Action re proposed policy revisions - Discussion was held regarding the meeting room and piano policies. It was noted that draft versions of a piano policy would be circulated for review, including examples from other organizations. Staff expressed concerns about allowing individuals to sit down and play the piano without oversight. Beyond those concerns, staff had limited feedback on the proposal. One suggestion was to place a piano in the Pop Room as part of a future renovation or enhancement of that space. The piano could then be incorporated into library programming, including lessons, performances, or other organized activities.

Status/Action to finalize Strategic Plan review proposed policy revisions - The Board requested that staff prepare a draft of the Strategic Plan incorporating feedback and ideas generated during Staff Development Day, along with graphics and visual elements, such as library locations and photographs, to highlight key initiatives and priorities. The draft is to be presented at the next Governance Committee meeting for review and discussion.

No formal Governance Committee meeting was held, as the Committee is awaiting staff feedback regarding the strategic plan. Therefore, there were no additional items to report.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Status/Action re promotional marketing options - The Committee Chair was not present, and no formal report was available. Discussion was limited to the invitation process and attendance at the Marketing Committee meeting with Marketing Row, the library's marketing consultant. It was noted that some individuals were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts and access-related issues.

Report on Marketing metrics and consultant dashboard – Not discussed.

PERSONNEL

Status/Action re table of organization / job descriptions – Not discussed.

Status/Action re City Librarian annual review – The Chair reported that not all Board member evaluations had been received. Accordingly, the evaluation process will remain pending until all responses have been submitted and reviewed.

REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY - The matter was raised and discussed earlier in the meeting during the discussion of *Status/Report on Hiring High School Pages*.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Action re Newsbank proposal to digitize newspaper collection - The Board discussed a proposal from NewsBank to digitize historical editions of the Connecticut Post and related newspapers using the library's microfilm collection. They reviewed the potential benefits of expanding public access to historical newspaper content and discussed project costs, ownership and access rights, as well as ongoing subscription requirements. While there was general agreement that a digitized archive would be a valuable resource, staff were asked to obtain a formal proposal, clarify access and ownership terms, and present additional information to the Board for further review and consideration.

Discussion/Action re Board retreat - The Board considered a retreat focused on self-assessment, Board effectiveness, and Strategic Plan implementation priorities. Members expressed support for the concept and emphasized the importance of a clear agenda. Potential scheduling options and locations, including an off-site venue, were reviewed. The Chair will circulate additional information, including proposed objectives, agenda items, and scheduling options.

No formal action was taken.

A **MOTION** was made to amend the agenda to include discussion of the Grand Opening of the East Side Branch Library.

MOTION made by Director Errichetti.
Second, by Director Osborne-Gant.
Result: **MOTION** passed unanimously.

The Board discussed timing the East Side Branch Library Grand Opening to coincide with Library Card Sign-Up Month or another significant library event to enhance community participation. Planning will continue pending confirmation of the project completion schedule.

Announcement: The Board extended its condolences to the City Librarian, Elaine Brathwaite and her family on the passing of her mother, Lolita Brathwaite.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, a **MOTION** was made to adjourn at 8:04 p.m. by Director Clemons.
Second, by Director Osborne-Gant.
Result: **MOTION** passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Sara Santos, Administrative Assistant