925 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Ph. (203) 576-7400
bportlibrary.org

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Rescheduled date: June 17, 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 – in person
Marcie J. Patton – in person
Barbara A. Rogo – in person
Kathleen E. Turner – in person

Others Present:

Elaine Braithwaite, City Librarian – absent
Laura Matthews, Assistant City Librarian – in person
Margaret Girgis, Black Rock Branch Manager – in person

CALL TO ORDER: President O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT – No public comment.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA - No formal vote was conducted. The agenda was accepted by consent, with no objections or requests for changes from board members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A **MOTION** was made to approve the minutes of the previous board meeting as presented.

MOTION: Made by Director Rogo.
Second: Director Osborne-Gant
Abstained: Director Errichetti and Director Patton.
Result: Passed.

PAYMENT OF INVOICES

FY2026 Vouchers

The Board reviewed and approved vouchers totaling $7,103.56, including $6,903.56 in City funds for various FY2026 budgeted expenditures and $200.00 in non-levy funds for custom T-shirts purchased for the Library's outreach activities at Black Rock Day.

Director Errichetti made the **MOTION** to approve the FY2026 vouchers in the amount of $7,103.56.
Second: Director Turner.
Result: **MOTION** passed unanimously.

FY2027 Vouchers

The Board also reviewed vouchers totaling $1,564,642.91, consisting of $1,563,642.91 from City funds for various FY2027 budget line expenditures and $1,000.00 from non-levy funds for staff development.

MOTION: Director Clemons moved to approve the FY2027 vouchers in the amount of $1,564,642.91.
Second: Director Patton.
Result: **MOTION** passed unanimously.

PAYROLL VARIANCE FAVORABLE: $136,201.74.

LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS: No line-item transfers this month.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Status/Report on Council approval of Board Appointments - Several Board members referenced an email that they had received regarding board member appointments. It was further noted that the Ethics Commission is scheduled to meet on July 8 to address items and individuals included on their agenda.

Status/Report on Planning for the Burroughs-Saden Centennial: Planning efforts are ongoing, and a variety of ideas have been discussed, including the development of a timeline highlighting the history of the Bridgeport Public Library. Proposed programs and related initiatives were shared with the Board.

Board members discussed ideas for the Library's Centennial Celebration and suggested featuring photographs of patrons with their favorite library materials, including books, DVDs, and other library resources, as part of a commemorative campaign highlighting the Library's impact on the community. The Board also proposed a Library Card Design Contest for Bridgeport students, inviting them to submit original artwork for consideration on a series of limited-edition library cards celebrating the Library's 100th anniversary. Board members expressed enthusiasm for both initiatives and encouraged the Library to explore opportunities, including a partnership with the Board of Education, to support the development and implementation of the contest.

Status/re Library Card issuance and school coordination: The Board received a report on the student library card initiative, which was included in the Board packet. Two new initiatives were highlighted: the Citywide 3rd Grade Class Visits to neighborhood library branches and the Letters Are Characters program. Several other school-library partnerships, such as the Spelling Bee, had been active in previous years but appear to have diminished over time due to staffing changes and organizational transitions.

Summer Reading- The library has produced and distributed summer reading lists to the schools.

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS- The Board reviewed and discussed correspondence from the Aquarion Water Company.

City Librarian's Report Highlights – The report was not discussed.

A question was raised regarding the decision to outsource landscaping services. It was explained that the Maintenance Department is currently experiencing staffing shortages and has received complaints regarding the condition of the landscaping at several Library properties. In addition, maintenance staff are not trained landscaping professionals, and specialized expertise is needed to maintain the Library's grounds. Board members noted recent increases in fees for City services and inquired whether landscaping services could instead be provided through the City's Public Facilities Department.

Action Item: The Board requested that the Facilities Manager investigate the possibility of obtaining landscaping services through the City's Public Facilities Department and report back on available options.

Review of Monthly statistics and presentation by staff – Not discussed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings

Status/Action – East Side Branch Phase II Project and Funding Issues: The East Side Branch renovation project continues to make steady progress. A small number of items remain outstanding, including the installation of flooring on the first floor and completion of certain glasswork. The project is expected to reach substantial completion in July, with the remaining work to be finalized thereafter.

Status/Action re Burroughs/Saden 1st Floor changes and acoustics – This matter is tabled pending the completion of the building's architectural study.

Status/Action re report of David Otero re other facility issues

- Black Rock façade repair scheduled for June 18.
- North Branch chiller needs repair.
- Well lights at both Black Rock and Newfield are expected to be repaired on June 18th.

Library signage was also discussed. An initiative to evaluate and improve signage at library branches may be considered as part of the FY27 planning process, with the goal of increasing visibility and helping residents more easily identify branch locations.

The need for updates to the North Branch bathrooms was also noted. In addition, concerns were raised regarding pedestrian safety when crossing the street on Madison Avenue, particularly from the southbound lane. Fast-moving traffic and limited visibility caused by the curve in the roadway were identified as factors contributing to potentially hazardous crossing conditions. A board director will reach out to the Police Department to discuss these safety concerns and explore potential measures to improve pedestrian safety in the area.

Building Assessment Planning: The Board requested a report that clearly prioritizes and distinguishes immediate operational repairs from long-term renovation projects, while maintaining a comprehensive list of deferred maintenance items for future review and planning. It was noted that the Facilities Manager is currently overseeing multiple renovation projects across the library system while also addressing staff shortages and ongoing maintenance needs. Given these competing demands and resource constraints, it was acknowledged that the earliest anticipated timeline for presentation of this report is September.

FINANCE

***Review of 2025–26 budget planning and CAFR status* -** A staffing analysis was reviewed and showed that projected salary costs remain within the approved budget. Additional estimates were prepared to assess the potential impact of wage increases currently under negotiation. The analysis indicated that the proposed changes could add approximately $200,000 to payroll costs while providing about 160 additional staff hours. It was noted that some costs may be offset by reduced benefit expenses. Updated staffing and budget projections will be reviewed at a future meeting.

GOVERNANCE

Status/re proposed policy revisions - The Board discussed the status of several policy matters currently under consideration. The Meeting Room Policy remains under review, and a proposed Piano Policy is expected to be presented at the next Governance Committee meeting. No additional policy revisions were identified at this time.

Status All-Staff meeting for strategic plan review and discussion – The **MOTION** was made to close all library locations to the public on *July 10* and *September 9* for staff development days.

Motion: Made by Director Clemons.
Second: Director Patton.
Result: Passed unanimously.

The July staff development session will focus on the Strategic Plan and provide an opportunity for all staff to review and discuss goals, priorities, and implementation. An update was also provided on the Strategic Plan document design. Revisions to the draft, including a cover featuring a map and branch locations, were completed and distributed for staff review.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Status/Action re promotional marketing options – The Board received an update on matters discussed at the recent Marketing Committee meeting. Topics included the status of the library card redesign, with revised designs expected to be available for review at an upcoming committee meeting. The Board also discussed plans for a presentation on annual marketing activities and performance metrics.

Report on marketing metrics and consultant dashboard – Board members requested that marketing and dashboard reports be provided in advance of the next meeting to support a more informed discussion of library performance, trends, and future initiatives. It was noted that the dashboard includes both marketing metrics and broader operational performance measures. The Board expressed interest in reviewing the year-end data and looks forward to the upcoming presentation from Marketing Row, which will provide an overview of key metrics and an opportunity to discuss marketing priorities and strategies for the coming year.

PERSONNEL

Status/Action re table of organization / job descriptions – An update was provided regarding the Social Worker's schedule. Her schedule has been revised to support both the City's and Library's needs. The Social Worker is now assigned to City Hall for two half-days each week, with the remainder of the workweek spent providing services at library facilities throughout the system. This arrangement is intended to maximize accessibility and support for library patrons while maintaining coordination with City services.

No updates have been received from Labor Relations regarding the proposed reclassification of the Librarian II position to Archivist, the expansion of library hours, the status of union contract negotiations, or whether the Library Board Directors can be present during the negotiation process. No changes have been made to the current Table of Organization.

The Board was also informed of ongoing collaborative initiatives between the Library and Bridgeport Public Schools.

The most recent personnel changes include one retirement, two resignations, and the appointment of Alexis Young to the position of Newfield Branch Manager.

Annual Performance Evaluation **-** Board members were reminded to submit their comments and feedback regarding the Director's annual performance goals and evaluation. It was noted that individual responses would be compiled into a consolidated narrative, consistent with the process used in prior years. Board members were encouraged to review the existing goals and provide updated feedback reflecting progress, accomplishments, and priorities for the coming year. The Chair emphasized the importance of timely submission of comments to facilitate completion of the evaluation process.

REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY - The report noted ongoing efforts to strengthen the organization's leadership capacity and volunteer base, with particular emphasis on recruiting individuals with skills in organizational management, administration, and volunteer coordination. While previous volunteer recruitment initiatives have attracted interest, additional outreach and engagement strategies are being explored to encourage greater involvement in leadership and administrative roles. The report also emphasized the importance of developing a more structured recruitment and outreach plan to support the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the organization.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominations for Directors and Officers to be elected - The Chair noted that, pursuant to the bylaws, the annual election of directors was required. The terms of Directors Clemons, Muñoz-Allam, and Bermeo are scheduled to expire on June 30, 2026, and each had indicated a willingness to serve an additional term if reappointed.

The Chair opened the floor for nominations. Director O'Donnell made the **MOTION** to nominate Directors Clemons, Muñoz-Allam, and Bermeo for reappointment. The **MOTION** was seconded by Director Rogo.

Hearing no further nominations, Director Errichetti MOVED to close nominations, seconded by Director Osborne-Gant. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

A **MOTION** was made to have the Secretary cast a single ballot for the election of the nominated directors to additional three-year terms expiring June 30, 2029.

Motion: Made by Director Rogo.
Second: Director Patton.
Result: Passed unanimously.

The Chair reminded the reappointed directors to complete and submit the required appointment forms. It was noted that notary services were available at all library branches, and background checks would be initiated promptly to facilitate timely processing of their reappointments.

Election of Directors and Officers

The Board proceeded with the annual election of officers. A **MOTION** was made to nominate the following slate of officers:

- President: Director James E. O'Donnell
- Vice President: Director Kenya Osborne-Gant
- Treasurer: Director Thomas Errichetti
- Secretary: Director Denise Clemons

Motion: Made by Director Rogo.
Second: Director Patton.
Result: Passed unanimously.

Director Clemons made the **MOTION** to close nominations, seconded by Director Patton. The **MOTION** carried unanimously.

Director Rogo moved the **MOTION** for the Secretary to cast a single ballot for the election of the proposed slate of officers. The **MOTION** was seconded by Director Errichetti. The **MOTION** passed unanimously to elect the nominated individuals to their respective offices for the upcoming term.

Discussion/Action re new signage for North Branch – Discussed earlier in the meeting under Buildings.

Discussion/Action re policy for hiring high school pages – There was a lengthy discussion regarding the page positions and updating the job description.

FIFA World Cup Game Screenings and Community Event Promotion

It was noted that five FIFA World Cup matches will be shown at the Klein Memorial Auditorium. The Board requested that the Library assist in promoting these events through its social media platforms, website, and distribution of flyers.

The Board also discussed the broader issue of promoting community events through Library communication channels. Members expressed concerns about balancing community engagement with staff capacity, avoiding confusion regarding event sponsorship or ownership, and ensuring that information shared by the Library remains current and accurate. Several board members noted that community organizations typically maintain their own event calendars and promotional platforms, and that the Library should remain focused on promoting Library-sponsored programs while providing links or limited support for community events when appropriate.

The discussion ended with referring the matter to the Governance Committee for further review and the possible development of guidelines governing the promotion of community events through library communications.

Next Board Meeting Date Change: Due to a conflict in schedule the **MOTION** was made to move the July 15th board meeting to July 22nd.

Motion: Made by Director Errichetti.
Second: Director Rogo.
Abstained: Director Turner.
Result: Passed.

The Chair stated that the City Clerk would be notified of the change to the date of the regular July Board meeting, from July 15 to July 22. It was further noted that committee meetings would remain scheduled during the preceding week in accordance with the established meeting calendar.

With no further discussion, a **MOTION** was made to adjourn at 7:23 p.m. by Director Clemons.
The **MOTION** was seconded by Director Patton.
MOTION passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Sara Santos, Administrative Assistant