

MINUTES
of the Board of Directors of the
Bridgeport Public Library and Reading Room
held at the Newfield Branch Library
1230 Stratford Avenue, Bridgeport CT
on Wednesday, March 22 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Directors O'Donnell, Baraka, Holden, Errichetti, Osborne-Gant, Christy, Brown, Cunningham, and Greenberg
City Librarian Baldino
Acting City Librarian Soltis
City Council Liaison Salter

Absent: None

Call to Order

President O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Adoption of the Agenda

Director Errichetti made a **MOTION** to modify the agenda to include public comment. The motion to approve the modified agenda was seconded by Director Holden and unanimously approved.

Public Comment

Librarian Bielawa addressed the Board of Directors to express his appreciation.

Approval of the Minutes

Director Holden made **MOTION** for the approval of the minutes of the February meeting, which was seconded by Director Cunningham and unanimously approved.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Errichetti informed the Board of Directors that there were still errors in the Munis figures and that he would be meeting with the staff on the City side to clarify the problem and access the menu option needed to run the necessary report. Also, Director Errichetti volunteered to contact Aquarion regarding the water bill for the East Main Street property.

Payment of Invoices

Director Errichetti presented vouchers in the amount of \$73,959.28 for payment. The amount did not include the final payment to Library Development Solutions. Directors questioned the reason for five separate payments to Staples for colored ink cartridges. They were told that HP printers only take HP cartridges and that Staples was on the state

library consortium list. A **MOTION** to approve payment of the vouchers was offered by Director Baraka, seconded by Director Holden and unanimously approved.

Unfinished Business

Director O'Donnell raised the issue of the completion of the Library Strategic Plan as soon as possible. Interim City Library Baldino informed the Board of Directors did not believe that the most current draft that was given to them for input was up to standard. A special personnel meeting was suggested for April 3 to resolve all remaining issues. Interim City Librarian Baldino said that staff would need more time for feedback. It was determined that the regularly scheduled Personnel Committee on April 12 would be devoted to resolving the remaining issues regarding the Strategic Plan.

Director Errichetti indicated that he was awaiting information from Director Baraka concerning the most appropriate procedure for auditing the appropriate expenditure of Library levy and non-levy funds.

Correspondence and Communication

Mr. Greenberg said that the Liskov family had inquired about the date for the dedication of the children's room at Burroughs-Saden in honor of former Library President Helen Liskov. Director O'Donnell indicated that he would attend to the matter.

Interim City Librarian's Report

Interim City Librarian presented a report to the Board of Directors. A lengthy discussion was held about safety issues for both patrons and staff in library buildings. Interim City Librarian Baldino informed the Board of Directors that Security personnel were not formally trained in dealing with disruptive issues and that the efficacy of security varied widely. Additionally, she indicated that she was looking for social service agencies that can provide professional development and strategies for staff in dealing with disruptions. Director Baraka underscored the difficulty in balancing the library as a safe space and a community library. Mr. Greenberg suggested that the current security staff be trained or that we hire professionally trained staff. Director Osborne-Gant suggested the creation of a community-mentor program at the library. Staff would engage neighborhood residents and diffuse potentially volatile situations. She volunteered to research the possibilities.

Interim City Librarian Baldino said that she had held a meeting with staff members to discuss such topics as philosophy, facilities, Burroughs, the collection of money, outreach and branding. She informed the Board of Directors that the staff shortage was getting even worse with the long-term absence of a Junior Librarian due to injury.

Librarian Soltis informed the Board of Directors that approval had been received for four new librarian 1's. Three were currently on staff and one would be assuming full time duty

in several weeks. He also stated the retroactive pay for promoted Acting Librarian two's and three's would be coming early in April. I said that retroactive pay would only be granted from February 1st the day the mayor signed for the position. He was informed the Board of Directors did not have the power to hire and that the Mayor was the Chief Labor official of the city. He also said that as Acting City Librarian his retroactive pay was denied since the City Librarian works directly for the Board of Directors.

President O'Donnell indicated that he had not heard back from City Attorney Christopher Meyer regarding his request for a meeting to address library operations and morale. He recommended that the library continue to press the issue and restated his belief that actions by the City were in conflict with State Statute. He restated the Board of Directors adamant opposition to any interference in its operation, especially as it impeded its operation and negatively impacted its staff.

Interim City Librarian recommended that Librarian John Soltis be appointed to the position of Assistant City Librarian. Director Cunningham stated that the original appointment of Librarian Soltis to Acting City Library was made with the proviso that once an Interim City Librarian was appointed Mr. Soltis would return to return to the position of Librarian three and that any other promotions would be open to all qualified staff. Interim City Librarian Baldino reminded the Board of Directors that she could not do her job without help. Director Errichetti suggested that Ms. Baldino's recommendation be accepted. He offered a **MOTION** that Mr. Soltis promotion to assistant city librarian be made for a period of up to two months. Director Holden seconded the Motion. President O'Donnell called for a roll call vote. Directors Errichetti and Holden voted Aye; Directors Christy, Osborne-Gant, Brown, Baraka and Cunningham voted nay. President O'Donnell stated his full support and confidence in the performance of Librarian Soltis. Director Baraka offered a **MOTION** to post the position of Acting City Librarian for two weeks to internal candidates only, conduct interviews and select a suitable candidate. The Motion was seconded by Director Christy and passed with only Director Errichetti opposed.

Interim City Librarian Baldino recommended that the Newfield Branch be closed due to substandard facilities, break-ins and recurrent vandalism. She stated that she felt facilities were dangerous for both patrons and staff. She said that the branch had been broken into several times with theft of monies and equipment and vandalism of staff property. She said that she felt that with the demolition of the surrounding building for the civic block that the building and staff would be a "sitting duck". Several Board members expressed concern about the termination of service to a neighborhood greatly in need of the same. It was anticipated that the opening of the renovated Old Newfield Library would take several years and that there was no suitable or financially feasible site for relocation in the immediate area. Director Holden said he does not see "how we can protect the welfare of patrons and staff other than by closing the Newfield Branch." President O'Donnell directly asked Newfield Library Branch Manager Sweeney if she thought the branch should be closed. Branch Manager Sweeney acknowledged that the community needed the services.

She said the busiest time is between 3 and 5 o'clock and that computers are in high usage during those hours. Director Baraka offered a **MOTION** to use non-levy funds to install security grates and cameras at the facility. The Motion was seconded by Director Brown and approved by a vote of six to one with Director Holden dissenting. All directors agreed that the community deserves far better than this building and that the timeline for renovation will be closely monitored and that the search for feasible alternative facilities will continue.

Interim City Librarian Baldino informed the Board of Directors that she and her staff were preparing for a Meet and Greet for community and local leaders at 6 pm. on Thursday April 20 to showcase the services provided to the community by the library and its staff. The presentation will be based on the theme, "Libraries transform Lives". She presented the Board with the names of three firms that may provide professional marketing services for the library and its programs. Although she asked the Board of Directors for a possible budget, President O'Donnell felt that it was important for the Directors to clarify their marketing priorities. Director Holden offered a **MOTION** for the formation of a Marketing committee the motion was seconded by Director Cunningham and unanimously approved. President O'Donnell asked Director Osborne-Gant to head the committee, Director Cunningham volunteered and President O'Donnell would serve ex officio.

Report of Facilities Committee

A Director reported that he had been asked about Library participation in City Bike. He asked the Directors to consider the idea.

Report of Finance Committee

Director Errichetti asked if there had been any new information on the 2017-2018 city budget. President O'Donnell expressed concern regarding the inclusion of capital additions for the branches.

Report of Governance (Nominations) Committee

Director Holden made a **MOTION** to appoint Mr. Donald Greenberg to the Library Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Director Errichetti and unanimously approved. President O'Donnell asked Director Errichetti to forward Mr. Greenberg's paperwork to the Common Council for approval.

Report of Personnel Committee

It was determined that the regularly scheduled Personnel Committee on April 12th will be devoted to completing revisions to the Strategic Plan. It was expected that staff input would be available by that date.

City Librarian Search Committee none

Report of the Friends of the Library-none

New Business

In lieu of an Executive Session President O' Donnell asked all three directors who terms are up in June to submit their paperwork for re-appointment. He explained that this was in response to litigation and might lead to a resolution.

Adjournment

Director Errichetti made a **MOTION** to adjourn that was seconded by Director Baraka and the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Anne Cunningham
Ass't Secretary