

Bridgeport Library  
Board of Directors  
Regular meeting  
Wednesday, December 20, 2023

**ATTENDANCE:** James E. O'Donnell, President; Kenya Osborne-Gant, Vice President; Thomas R. Errichetti, Treasurer; Marcie J. Patton; Barbara A. Rogo; Kathleen E. Turner.

**STAFF:** Elaine Braithwaite, City Librarian; Laura Matthews, Assistant Librarian; Tamara Smith; Vivian Borgeau; Robert Jefferies; David Morales

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**\*\* DIRECTOR ROGO MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**  
**\*\* DIRECTOR TURNER SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- NOVEMBER 14, 2023

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023.**  
**\*\* DIRECTOR PATTON SECONDED.**  
**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR (O'DONNELL, PATTON, ERRICHETTI, ROGO, TURNER, OSBOURNE-GANT) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (PATTON).**

**APPROVAL OF TREASURER REPORTS / PAYMENT OF INVOICES / APPROVAL OF  
LINE TRANSFERS**

Director Errichetti directed everyone to the page regarding Tentative Board Vouchers for December 20, 2023. The grand total is \$25,747.06; \$19,747.06 of that are from tax levy funds and the other \$6,000.00 are from endowment funds. The most significant expense would be the furniture for the Beardsley branch at \$8,945.22.

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE VOUCHERS OF  
\$25,747.06**

**\*\* DIRECTOR PATTON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There is a year to date favorable payroll variance of \$43,435.12 after paying out retirees.

A line item transfer of \$10,000.00 from Special Services to Outside Programming is needed to cover the cost of the joint Library and Klein Memorial Auditorium presentations

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF \$10,000  
.00**

**\*\* DIRECTOR ROGO SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**❖ Status/Action re Library Programming with Klein**

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews shared that all the branches have the tickets and flyers to promote the Rhonda Denet Concert scheduled for February 9, 2024 at the Klein. A flyer for the event has been created

The other two events are Dungeons and Dragons scheduled for January 29, 2024 and the Phoenix Performance Dance and Music presentation for March 20, 2024. The Klein staff is taking the lead on promoting Dungeons and Dragons event; the Library needs to reach out to the Asian community for the other performance.

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthews mentioned there is a staff member who owned an Asian market before, she can reach out to him to help with the translation.

Other promotional possibilities were discussed.

**\*\*CITY COUNCIL, 137 DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE, MARIA VALLE JOINED THE MEETING\*\***

Maria Valle is one of two newly appointed liaisons to the Library. Jazmarie Melendez, 138<sup>th</sup> City Council Representative is the other liaison from the City Council.

**❖ Status/Action re review Library Hours of Operations**

President O'Donnell asked if the changes of hours of operations will still take place in February 2024. Ms. Matthew responded they are still on track for the February 1st, 2024 start date.

**❖ Status/Action re volunteer opportunities**

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthew shared they are hung up on background checks for volunteers. President Ms. Matthews indicated that having bilingual volunteers would be helpful for the library but they need to designate someone to coordinate their involvement, who also speaks Spanish. Literacy volunteer tutors are also needed

Director Errichetti said to send anyone interested in tutoring to Suzanne Solensky and those students looking for community service can be referred to Patty Shields.

Director Errichetti added they have set up a system for background checks.

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthew mentioned they also brought back Mango, a software program popular with the ESL community, to assist in learning English.

**❖ Status/Action re proposed donation of piano**

President O'Donnell indicated no decisions have been made regarding the donation of a piano to the Library.

Assistant City Librarian, Ms. Matthew added the music for the youth program was looking for a piano. Director Rogo mentioned they currently bring in a keyboard for the program at the north end location.

### **CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Director Errichetti mentioned the Saden property was sold and he reached out to the attorney for an update when the net proceeds will be available. Our distribution from the sale of the property will be decreased by capital gains tax due on the sale as well as any outstanding liabilities of the Estate.

### **CITY LIBRARIAN REPORT**

#### **❖ Review of monthly statistics**

Ms. Braithwaite mentioned they did not get approved the construction grant by the Connecticut state library board so Ms. Braithwaite will be working with staff member Mr. Otero to start the bids process on the construction working closely with the Bridgeport purchasing department. They will also be drafting a request for a 6 month extension for their bond and the CT state library board to send it out before the end of December to begin the bid and start the renovations.

Ms. Braithwaite will be sending the reappointment applications to the city soon to be in sync with the other appointments. If any issues or concerns arise, she will have President O'Donnell mediate the problem.

An additional \$50,000.00 of building repairs above currently budgeted expenses is expected.

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI MOTIONED, SUBJECT TO THE PAPERWORK FOLLOWING, A TRANSFER OF \$50,000.00 FROM SPECIAL SERVICES FREEZE TO BUILDING MAINTENANCE TO COVER ANTICIPATED BUILDING REPAIRS THROUGH THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR.**

**\*\* VICE PRESIDENT OSBORNE-GANT SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## ❖ Presentation by staff



Braithwaite shared a workshop on customer service that was held at the Burroughs location for staff on November 16, 2023. The presenter, Andrew Sounderback was recommended by the director of New Haven free public library. The staff was very engaged and a recording of the presentation was shared to those staff that wasn't in attendance. It is suggested to have him present at each of the branches for staff.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### ❖ Buildings

#### **1. Status/Action re East Side Branch Phase II Project**

Director Errichetti mentioned that the grant was denied for additional state funds but that allowed them to start the bid process through the purchasing agent of the city.

Ms. Valle added she works with senior citizens in the neighborhood and has brought them to the library to get free memberships and one issue she saw was the parking. Director Errichetti responded they recently paved the lot off of Shelton Street which holds 12 cars; 5 would be for staff and 7 would be for visitors.

President O'Donnell added they were looking at other properties in the area but the owners were asking too much. Ms. Valle recommended if they ever need support to reach out to her or anyone on the city council and they will help them.

Director Errichetti said they are addressing the outdoor lighting and ramp situation at the location as well.

#### **2. Status/Action re solar project for Burroughs/Saden and North**

Director Errichetti said the solar panels were delivered to the Burroughs location and for the North branch the panels will have to be removed to replace the roof.

Ms. Braithwaite there has been leaks coming into the Burroughs location after the few rainstorms that have occurred.

### **3. Status/Action re Burroughs/Saden 1st Floor redesign and windows**

Director Errichetti mentioned the 1st floor redesign is complete. They will be moving the teen center into that area then moving the new materials from the second floor to the first floor.

Ms. Matthews said she did receive a layout of how the public service director and children's librarian would like to see the area but she is waiting on additional details from them to share for the next meeting.

Ms. Braithwaite suggested adding a wall to the western side of that room helping with the sound. This change, coupled with sound deadening materials (possibly fabric art by local artists) will address the acoustic issue of the now smaller but adequate community room.

Director Errichetti went on to speak on the windows, the committee has decided to defer the replacement project due to the other projects coming in at high priority. Director Errichetti recommends applying for the state grant to cover the window replacement next year.

### **4. Status/Action re Black Rock façade, flooring and flooding issues**

Director Errichetti shared that the façade at Black Rock is rotted. There were some drain issues that caused many things to be replaced, including the columns. It is believed not to be a liability issue but should be addressed sooner than later.

### **5. Status/Action re: report of David Otero re other facility issues**

Director Errichetti reviewed David's report, which was included in the information packet.

## **❖ Finance**

Director Errichetti reviewed the endowment fund balances, both principal balances and spendable balances. All of the traditional endowment funds are invested at Morgan Stanley; the Saden funds are at M&T Bank and Wilmington Trust.

Most of the endowment funds restrict how the funds can be spent.

Ms. Matthew asked how often the library gets donations through the website. Director Errichetti replied not often but they receive from time to time donations below \$500.00.

Director Errichetti added the next re-evaluation for the city of Bridgeport will be on October 1, 2025 and they must consider how possible changes to the taxation of automobiles might impact library funding.

### ❖ **Governance**

President O'Donnell shared with the resignation of Judge Holden, and indicated that we needed to find an appropriate time to present an award for Judge Holden works within the Bridgeport Libraries.

There are three director applications that are being reviewed and would like an extension to accept more applications. The application deadline will be extended to January 15, 2024.

Ms. Valle asked how many board members are on the board. President O'Donnell mentioned there are 9 seats on the board.

Director Rogo suggested they recognize Judge Holden at the event in February at the Klein Memorial Auditorium.

President O'Donnell added that staff is working on updating policies, including policies regarding unattended children and use of the new Podcast equipment at Beardsley.

### ❖ **Marketing Committee**

President O'Donnell mentioned Director Allam was not in attendance due to sickness.

Ms. Braithwaite added they sent various documents and photo files. They previously sent the strategic plan so a follow up meeting with True North will be getting scheduled.

## ❖ Personnel

President O'Donnell shared that Elaine and Tom are working together to resolve some issues and will have a report for the next meeting.

### **REPORTS OF FRIENDS IN THE LIBRARY**

Director Errichetti added Suzanne is rebuilding the tutoring program and asking the volunteers to consent to a background check.

Ms. Valle asked if they coordinate with the surrounding universities for volunteers. Director Errichetti replied they usually have high school student and people coming in from the court system looking for volunteer work.

As mentioned earlier in the report, anyone interested in tutoring should be referred to Suzanne Solensky and other volunteer interest to Patty Shields.

Ms. Turner added her husband works at Sacred Heart and they can reach out to student who is looking for volunteer work.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### ❖ Review/Approval of 2024 calendar of meetings

**\*\* VICE PRESIDENT OSBORNE-GANT MOTIONED TO APPROVE PROPOSED AGENDA AND ALLOWING PRESIDENT O'DONNELL SERVE AS SECRETARY IN THE ABSENCE OF MS. CLEMONS TO CERTIFY IN FRONT OF CITY CLERK.**

**\*\* SECONDED BY DIRECTOR ROGO.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### ❖ Discussion re signage/enhancements of Burroughs/Saddens

Director Errichetti asked if they can get the electronic signage at all the branches like at the Beardsley branch in their lobby. Ms. Braithwaite added they are working on that for all branches, currently at Beardsley and the Newfield branch.



❖ **Discussion re options to engage community in civic literacy**

No discussion was the matter at this time.

❖ **Discussion re brainstorming for excellence in experiencing BPL**

Director Errichetti shared he went to the flute program at Beardsley and would like to suggest the Library host a free holiday concert celebrating all the celebrations of the season at the Klein for next year.

President O'Donnell spoke with the Colon Family about hosting a “niches de trios” celebration next year. Ms. Valle indicated that happens after thanksgiving, about a week or two into December. The last celebration was hosted at the Klein, and prior at Sacred Heart and Fairfield University.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* VICE PRESIDENT OSBORNE-GANT MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* DIRECTOR ERRICHETTI SECONDED.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Rivera,

Telesco Secretarial Services