

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
June 21, 2022

Present:

Board Members: S. O'Shea (Chair); E. Bromley; R. Granata; M. Hyman; T. Lucero;
R. Mercede; P. O'Brien Morrow

Citizen Advisers: T. Bartley; A. Better-Wirz; S. Duarte; J. Freeman; D. Golden;
A. Livingston; S. Perry; M. Sommer; D. Souder

Staff: A. Knapp; L. Avellar; C. Hubbard; E. Joseph; S. LaPerla

Stephanie O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm. This meeting was held in person and via Zoom. Today's meeting was the Board of Trustees' annual meeting, which is being moved from September. The annual meeting will now take place in June.

Minutes

A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Showing a favorable revenue, Alice Knapp presented the financial activity through May 31, 2022. Due to the PPP loan and careful monitoring of library expenses, the library's cash position is good. Accounts payable reflect a record low and May's accounts are paid to date. Also, the year-to-date expenses are low due to a number of open staff positions. We are forecasting a modest surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

CEO's Report

In her April CEO report, Ms. Knapp reported on the success of A Novel Affair. We received a \$50,000 gift this year in recognition of our honoree, Ann Sexton. The event grossed the most ever and everyone agreed that was good to have Novel Affair back in person.

On her May CEO Report, Ms. Knapp asked Elizabeth Joseph to report on the library's English language literacy and multicultural programs. Ms. Joseph noted that 30% of the Stamford's residents were either born out of the United States or speak another language other than English. She described the many resources the Ferguson Library offers.

Executive Committee

Ms. O'Shea reported on the Executive Committee meeting, which was held the morning of June 21.

Development Committee

The Development Committee met on May 17, 2022. Linda Avellar reported that A Novel Affair was the most successful ever, with a gross of \$221,000. Over its 10-year history, A Novel Affair has raised \$2.1 million for the library. The Annual Appeal finishes in June with a final digital campaign before the end of the fiscal year. We are down about 20% from last year's appeal, which is consistent with what other nonprofits are seeing with the current economic uncertainty. Ms. Knapp and Ms. Avellar discussed their interviews with candidates for the fundraising audit, in particular Kevin Wallace from Campaign Counsel.

Financial Health Task Force Committee

On May 10, 2022, the Financial Health Task Force met to review budget costs across the branches. The committee is suggesting that the library conduct quarterly budget adjustments to reflect grants that are not recognized in the adopted budget.

Long Range Planning Committee

On May 12, Susan LaPerla and Elizabeth Joseph presented to the Long Range Planning Committee the next steps for the Strategic Framework, detailing initiatives and measured outcomes. This report was also presented at this Board of Trustees Meeting.

Pension Committee

Robert Granata reported on the June 20 Pension Committee meeting. The committee discussed the current economy and the volatility of the markets. Representatives from Hooker & Holcombe and Wells Fargo presented their reports and spoke of the downward trends for 401 pension plans. An RFP for a new investment consulting firm will be going out.

Foundation Board

The Foundation Board will try to hold a meeting in July or August as they were not able to meet in May. If there is no meeting an email vote will be conducted to approve and allocate funding from the Foundation to the library.

Friends of Ferguson

The Friends Board met on June 13, 2022. Deborah Golden spoke on their recent Purple Bus trip to Avon Public Library where the FFAR (Ferguson Friends Against Racism) was presented with an award from FOCL (Friends of Connecticut Libraries) to honor them for their work against racism. The Bennett Branch Book Shop is closed during the branch renovation and with lower foot traffic, May's book shop profits are

down. \$1,700 was raised from a June 11 Bag Sale. This year, the Friends have given \$136,769 to the library. Ms. Golden spoke about the success of CrimeCONN and the Joe Sexton Lecture with Marc Wortman, author of *Admiral Hyman Rickover: Engineer of Power*.

Ms. Golden talked about future Friends events, in particular author David Baldacci, who is speaking at the library July 13. This event is in-person only and the Friends are charging a small entrance fee, which includes a wine reception before the event.

The Friends are planning a virtual 5K Run called "Book It for the Ferguson Library" in September. The Pub Crawl will return in October. A Mini Golf event is in the works for February, 2023 at the Bennett Branch.

Old Business

Bargaining Unit Contract Negotiations

Connie Hubbard and Cheryl Harper said the current bargaining unit contract will remain in place until a new contract is settled and signed. The library is working on updating the contract language and issues around a new selected holiday schedule. Due to illnesses the June negotiations will be held in July.

Bennett Branch Renovation

The Bennett Branch auditorium has been soundproofed and painting will follow. The next phase is contingent on the arrival of the new furniture. The work is anticipated to be complete by the third week of August.

Richard Harwood Event

On May 23, 2022 Richard Harwood from the Harwood Institute conducted a public conversation on his report, *Civic Virus: Why Polarization is a Misdiagnosis*. It was a small but engaged turnout, with future meetings with the city planned.

Diligent/Board Effect Implementation

Ms. Knapp made use of Board Effect's module for presenting material at today's meeting. More extensive use of Board Effect is planned for future meetings. Board members will have access to meeting material online, eliminating the need for paper copies and handouts.

2022-2023 Operating Budget

The city's budget reflects a 2.9% increase from last year. The Friends' contribution is planned for \$145,000 to fund MakerSpace, the Summer Reading Club and a \$4,000 grant for an October 3 event featuring Dr. Robert Livingston. Grants will be more transparent in the revenue and expense category. And staff salaries have yet to be determined due to ongoing bargaining unit negotiations. Most security at the branches

has been eliminated while at the Main Library we have removed one security guard position. A motion to approve the 2022-2023 budget was accepted and passed.

2022-2027 Trustee Nominations

The Nominating Committee recommended that Anderson R. Livingston succeed outgoing Board Member Robert J. Granata to a term on the Board of Trustees for 2022 to 2027. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. O'Shea reported that Lauren Meyer was appointed by Mayor Simmons to the Board of Trustees for the 2022-2027 term. Ms. Meyer will succeed outgoing board member Sopong Kim.

2022-2027 Officer Nominations

The Nominating Committee made the following recommendation for officers for 2022-2023:

Officers for 2022-2023

Chair	Stephanie O'Shea
Vice-Chair	Michael Hyman
Treasurer	Susana Vidan
Secretary	Ellen E. Bromely

All voted in favor of the new Board of Trustees officers.

New Audit Firm Resolution

The following resolution was made and approved for a new audit firm:

That the independent certified public accounting firm of Berkow Schechter & Company be appointed as auditors for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Further, resolved that Alice S. Knapp, CEO of The Ferguson Library, as well as Cheryl B. Harper, Director of Administrative Services, be authorized to execute any documents necessary to implement this action.

Study Room Policy

A Study Room Policy was presented and accepted, with the following purpose:

The Ferguson Library makes study rooms available to library users as a service and a resource. This policy will ensure that study rooms are made available to all in a fair and equitable manner.

Cybersecurity Policies

Ms. Knapp presented two new cybersecurity policies: Clean Desk Policy and Password Protection Policy. Both policies are to ensure cyber safety for our staff and users. The Board approved both policies.

Bank Resolution

The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

That the officers of the Board of Trustees, as well as the CEO of the library, be authorized for, and on behalf of, this corporation to transact any and all business with the following bank:

First County Bank

and that

the Director of Administrative Services be eligible to authorize disbursements (checks, ACHs, wire, etc.) from the library's operating and grant accounts;

operations and grant checks and ach/wire disbursements in excess of \$5,000 will require signatures of both the CEO of the library and the Director of Administrative Services;

the Assistant Accounting Manager be authorized to initiate interaccount transfers and ach disbursement for payroll and related deductions and taxes, subject to the approval of either the CEO or Director of Administrative Services.

Trustee Resolution

The following resolution for outgoing Board Member Robert J. Granata was made, seconded and approved:

WHEREAS, Robert J. Granata has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for five years, 2017 – 2022; and

WHEREAS, Robert J. Granata has served as Secretary for three years; and

WHEREAS, Robert J. Granata has served as Chair of the Pension Committee, and as a member of the Financial Health Task Force and Personnel Committees;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of The Ferguson Library hereby extends its sincere appreciation to Robert J. Granata for his distinguished service.

The following resolution was made, seconded and approved for outgoing Board Member Sotong King:

WHEREAS, Sotong Kim has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for five years, 2017 – 2022; and

WHEREAS Sotong Kim has served as Treasurer for two years; and

WHEREAS, Sopong Kim has served as a member of the Building, Development, Financial Health Task Force, and Pension Committees;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of The Ferguson Library hereby extends its sincerest appreciation to Sopong Kim for his distinguished service.

Elizabeth Joseph Resolution

The following resolution and recognition was given to Elizabeth Joseph, Associate Director of Community Engagement:

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Joseph started her career with the Ferguson Library on September 27, 2004 as Librarian in Information & Adult Services; promoted to Supervisor of Information & Adult Services on February 6, 2012; and promoted again to Coordinator of Information & Adult Services on May 25, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Joseph has served as Associate Director of Community Engagement for the Ferguson Library since June 3, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Joseph has ably and diligently performed her duties with integrity and dedication; and has received numerous awards and honors during her time with the Ferguson Library;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Ferguson Library hereby extends its sincere appreciation to Elizabeth Joseph for her distinguished and dedicated service.

Ms. Knapp announced that following today's board meeting, a reception will be held in the auditorium to honor Elizabeth Joseph in recognition of her 18 years of service to the library.

There being no further business, Ms. O'Shea motioned to end the meeting. All approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Directly following adjournment, the physically present Board of Trustees members were asked to stay for a group photo.

Robert J. Granata
Secretary