

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 5, 2023

Present:

Board Members: E. Bromley (Chair); M. Hyman (Vice Chair); S. Vidan (Treasurer); R. Mercede (Secretary); S. Frederick; A. Livingston; T. Lucero; M. Mays

Citizen Advisors: A. Better-Wirz; S. Duarte; J. Freeman; S. Kim; R. McManus; M. Metwally; J. Orlikoff; S. O'Shea; M. Sommer; D. Stein

Foundation Board Members: A. Zucker (Treasurer); S. Greenberg

Staff: A. Knapp; L. Avellar; C. Harper; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla; J. Fulcher Anderson; D. Lyles

Today's meeting is being held at the Harry Bennett Branch.

Denise Lyles, Manager of the Harry Bennett and Weed Memorial & Hollander branches, welcomed the board to the branch.

Ms. Bromley called the meeting to order at 4:37 pm.

Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the October 24, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Vidan gave the treasurer's report ending October 31, noting that total expenses are at \$3,373,729 with a net surplus of \$26,843 of YTD Budget vs. YTD Actual. The Passport Office continues an upswing and is on target. And consultants' expenses are on track. The balance sheet shows just over \$1.3 million in cash, with accounts receivable/expenses at \$115,650. Ms. Vidan commented on the excellent job that Cheryl Harper, Director of Administrative Services, and the Business Office are doing managing the budget.

CEO's Report

Alice Knapp presented her October CEO report on community building by introducing new programming at the branches to help ease isolation for many individuals. Denise Lyles provided insights into some of these programs at the Bennett Branch, including a vibrant and dedicated group for the canasta and mah-jongg clubs. A local author series was launched at the Bennett Branch too, along with a variety of new book clubs, such

as a silent book club, social justice book club, short story and sci-fi, fantasy & horror book clubs. Also, the library has now organized evening in-person board games.

Ms. Knapp's November CEO report focused on the library's mental health initiative. At the February board meeting, Anthony Marrocolla will give more insight into our programming on this topic.

Ms. Knapp shared the October statistics and said the circulation of physical books is tracking with 2019 numbers, but use of e-book, e-audio, and e-movies is growing. Attendance in the buildings, overall, is up but program numbers are still lagging slightly.

Executive Committee

Ms. Bromley provided an update on the Executive Committee meeting that was held earlier that day.

Development Committee

The Development Committee and Foundation Board held a joint meeting on November 14 to discuss efforts put in place to move fundraising to the Foundation. Their next meeting will focus on strategies. Plans are being made for a donor reception on January 31. Steve Frederick and Wofsey, Rosen, Kweskin & Kuriansky, LLP will be honored at A Novel Affair.

Pension Committee

After the Pension Committee met on November 21, Hooker & Holcombe asked the committee to complete a survey for the investment policy. This survey was sent out through BoardEffect. Also, it was reported that we are now in compliance with our 60/40 allocation of funds.

Friends of Ferguson

Ms. Metwally gave updates on recent Friends events. Eighty people attended the Pub Crawl on November 15. The Pub Crawl was established seven years ago to raise friends as well as funds. Friends board member, Anna Gallegos has been translating many of the Friends promotional items into Spanish to reach a broader community. The Mini Golf event, sponsored by area businesses, will be held at the Harry Bennett Branch on February 10 and 11, and is another fun event which attracts about 600 kids and families over the weekend. Long-time Book Shop manager, Severa Drake, has left to start her own business in Vermont, but the volunteers have stepped up in her absence to keep everything running smoothly. The Book Shop Manager will now be a Ferguson Library staff position and no longer governed by the Friends.

Old Business

Our Comprehensive Plan was not adopted at the October Board meeting and was presented at today's meeting. A motion was made, and accepted, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That the Ferguson Library Board of Trustees adopt the Comprehensive Plan for the library system as presented by Henry Myerberg of HMA2 as the strategic direction and framework for moving forward our priorities on capital projects.

Ms. Knapp mentioned that there will be a Comprehensive Building Plan Zoom meeting scheduled for December 7 and that the Development Committee, Friends Board, and Novel Affair Committee members were invited to attend.

The Main Library roof replacement is nearly complete, and we no longer have leaks from the older flat roofs. We did exceed our budget for this project but not so much that additional Board approval was needed.

The 2024-2025 capital budget update included the announcement that we did not receive the \$2 million CT State Library Construction grant.

New Business**2024-2025 Operating Budget Request**

The 2024-2025 operating budget was presented at today's meeting with a status quo aim of two significant increases: a 3% increase from the City of Stamford, and an increase in giving from the Friends of Ferguson. These increases include the cost of copier use, staff salary increases to comply with the union contract, and increases due to salary upgrades and step increases. A motion was made, moved, and accepted to approve the 2024-2025 operating budget.

Supplier Diversity Policy

In agreement with our DEI Policy, and to comply with the CT State contracts, a Supplier Diversity Policy was presented at today's meeting. With this policy, the library will be reviewing not only the lowest bidder but also those whose businesses are minority or women owned. All voted in favor of accepting the Supplier Diversity Policy. A motion was made, and seconded, to adopt this policy.

Supplier Diversity Policy**Policy Statement:**

The Ferguson Library is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in its procurement practices. We believe that a diverse supplier base enhances our ability to provide high-quality products and services, promotes economic development, and contributes to the overall well-being of our community.

A diverse supplier is a business that is at least 51% owned and operated by an individual or group that is part of a traditionally underrepresented or underserved group.

This includes but is not necessarily limited to businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, LGBTQ+, disabled individuals, and other underrepresented groups.

Objective:

The primary objective of our Supplier Diversity Policy is to actively seek and engage with suppliers that reflect the diversity of our community.

Guiding Principles:

1. **Inclusivity:** The library is committed to ensuring that its procurement procedures maximize responses from diverse suppliers.
2. **Equal Opportunity:** The library will provide equal opportunities for diverse suppliers to participate in the procurement process and compete for business with the library.
3. **Education and Outreach:** The library will actively engage in education and outreach efforts to inform diverse suppliers about our procurement process and encourage their participation.
4. **Networking and Collaboration:** The library will actively seek opportunities to collaborate with diverse suppliers through networking events, partnerships, and other initiatives.
5. **Tracking and Reporting:** The library will establish systems to track and report on the diversity of our supplier base, regularly assessing our progress toward diversity and inclusion goals.

Implementation:

1. **Supplier Registration:** The library will maintain a supplier registration database, encouraging all potential suppliers to register, with a specific focus on those from diverse backgrounds.
2. **State & Connecticut Library Council:** When possible and appropriate, the library will use those suppliers who are on the State and Connecticut Library Council qualified bidders list.
3. **Outreach Programs:** The library will implement outreach programs to identify and engage with diverse suppliers, providing them with information on how to do business with the library.
4. **Evaluation Criteria:** The procurement process will include criteria that assess a supplier's commitment to diversity, including diversity in ownership, workforce, and business practices.
5. **Partnerships:** The library will explore partnerships with organizations and initiatives that support supplier diversity.

Review and Evaluation:

The Supplier Diversity Policy will be periodically reviewed by the Administration Team and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. Adjustments will be made to this policy as necessary to achieve the library's goals for diversity and inclusion in procurement.

Communication:

The Ferguson Library will communicate its commitment to supplier diversity internally and externally through various channels, including the library's website, publications, and public announcements.

Responsibility:

The Ferguson Business Office will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and compliance of this Supplier Diversity Policy.

Holiday Board Meeting

Board members took a tour of Harry Bennett Branch to see recent upgrades after the meeting, then enjoyed the board holiday dinner in the auditorium.

Ms. Bromley motioned and all voted in favor to adjourn the meeting at 5:12 pm.

RJ Mercede
Secretary