

**THE FERGUSON LIBRARY**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**June 20, 2023**

**Present:**

**Board Members:** S. O'Shea (Chair); E. Bromley; M. Hyman; S. Frederick; A. Livingston; T. Lucero; R. Mercede; P. O'Brien Morrow; S. Vidan

**Citizen Advisors:** T. Bartley; A. Better-Wirz; J. Block; S. Duarte; J. Freeman; R. Granata; D. Kooris; A. LiVolsi; M. Millan; J. Orlikoff; S. Perry; B. Spaulding

**Staff:** A. Knapp; C. Harper; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla

Ms. O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm. Today's meeting is the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.

**Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the April 25, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting. The motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report**

Susana Vidan gave the treasurer's report and noted that all is on target. The Passport Office is doing well and the Business Department is tracking expenses for wages, training and conferences. Electric and insurance coverage is rising. Thanks to the PPP loan, we have a surplus of \$430,080. The cash balance is over \$1 million and accounts payable shows \$20,000 in outstanding bills.

**CEO's Report**

From her April CEO report, Alice Knapp spoke of the success of *A Novel Affair*, which since its inception has raised more than \$2.4 million for the library.

On April 21, staff was treated to a riveting session from Curtis Zunigha of the Lenape Center who spoke about the Lenape heritage and guided us on writing a land acknowledgement. Mr. Zunigha stressed to not write an acknowledgement statement without first having a call to action, and the statement must be developed by the Ferguson Library itself.

Statistics year-over-year increased dramatically over FY2022, but the numbers are still lower than 2019 (pre-COVID). Physical book circulation rose slightly over last year and the adult digital collection showed a significant increase (20,000 more downloads this year).

The May CEO report focused on the facilities master plan and program implications.

### **Executive Committee**

Stephanie O'Shea provided an update on the Executive Committee meeting that was held earlier that day.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

Ms. O'Shea reported on the May 11 Long Range Planning Committee meeting, where the Strategic Framework and dashboard metrics were updated, noting circulation has increased along with visitors to the library. Work is being done on the facilities master plan with input from HMA2.

### **Pension Committee**

The Pension Committee met May 5 with Wells Fargo representatives who presented their proposal to administer the library's pension plan. On May 16, the Pension Committee met with representatives from Hooker & Holcombe, who presented their plan. After reviewing both proposals, the Pension Committee chose Hooker & Holcombe. On June 13, the Pension Committee met with Wells Fargo to receive their final pension plan report.

A motion was made to the Board of Trustees to accept Hooker & Holcombe as the new administrators of the library's pension plan. All in favor, the motion passed:

**Resolved:** that the management of the Ferguson Library Defined Benefit Pension Plan be transferred from Wells Fargo to Hooker & Holcombe, Inc. This will make Hooker & Holcombe both the Trustee as well as Actuarial of the Pension Plan.

### **Friends of Ferguson**

At the Friends June 12, board meeting Margaret Metwally was elected president, replacing Deborah Golden. Ms. Metwally is a past president of the Friends. New board members have also joined. The Gale Fund provided \$49,000 to the library this year and will underwrite book purchases.

### **Ferguson Library Foundation**

Foundation Chair Ellen Bromley spoke about the Foundation's investments, which are slightly underperforming compared to the benchmark. The Foundation is seeking new board members. Plans are in the works for fundraising to be transferred from the library to the Foundation.

### **Old Business**

#### **2023-2024 Operating Budget**

The library will receive state funding disbursed through the City of Stamford. This is good news since the library received no increase in this year's budget from the City.

## **2023-2024 Capital Budget**

With the departure of Sandy Dennies, City of Stamford's Director of Administration, we are unaware of the timing of the disbursement of the approved funds for the 2023-2024 capital budget. We do know that the boards approved funding for the Harry Bennett Branch renovation, the Main Library elevator project, and short-term capital for computer equipment.

## **Feasibility Study – HMA2**

A digital plan of the HMA2's feasibility study was shown at today's board meeting, The Harry Bennett Branch will be the priority and we will test some of the new ideas. More community space is planned.

## **Main Library Roof Replacement**

Silktown Roofing will start the Main Library roof replacement this fall.

## **Board Retreat**

On June 3, 2023 Carmen Hughes, the City's Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, conducted a board retreat in advance of the library's Board of Trustees formulating a DEI Committee.

## **New Business**

### **2023-2028 Trustee Nominations**

The Nominating Committee recommended that Makeda Mays succeed outgoing Trustee Polly O'Brien Morrow to a term on the Board of Trustees for 2023 to 2028. The motion was unanimously approved. Ellen Bromley reported that Corey P. Paris was appointed by Mayor Simmons to the Board of Trustees for the 2023-2028 term and is replacing outgoing member Stephanie O'Shea.

### **2023-2028 Officer Nominations**

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

#### **Officers for 2023-2024**

Chair	Ellen Bromley
Vice-Chair	Michael Hyman
Treasurer	Susana Vidan
Secretary	RJ Mercede

A motion was made to accept the new officers, and all voted in favor.

## **Program Policy**

The library held a Drag Storytime on June 10 and a few board members came out to demonstrate their support. There were also some protestors in front of the library. Leading up to the program, we had numerous complaints that arrived via voice mail or email. In response, we drafted the attached program policy as well as the following statement:

### **Statement on Drag Storytimes**

Drag Storytime is a special program that we sponsor with Stamford Pride to coincide with their events. Stamford Pride is a nonprofit organization that engages, inspires, supports and celebrates LGBTQ+ members and allies through initiatives that educate, connect, and enrich our diverse community.

During a drag storytime, storytellers, dressed in drag, inspire a love of reading while teaching lessons on diversity, inclusion, tolerance, self-love, and self-expression. It is a wonderful event and one that is suited to public libraries, which provide an inclusive and safe place for such messaging.

This event is just one of our many programs, workshops and classes that we offer to the entire Stamford community. As with any program, drag storytimes align with our vision to help individuals and organizations achieve success in an effort to build a strong, vibrant and inclusive community.

As a place of public accommodation, we adhere to the Connecticut human rights statute: Connecticut State Statutes Chapter 814c, Human Rights and Opportunities, Sec. 46a-63.

The Board of Trustees voted to adopt the program policy as well as the Statement on Drag Storytimes. All voted in favor and the policy was approved.

## **Advocacy/Marketing Committee**

The library is restructuring the library board to serve as a governing and advocacy body without fundraising responsibilities. There is a need to develop the scope of work and messaging for the new Advocacy/Marketing Committee. Ms. Knapp asked if any board members or citizen advisors are interested in serving on the committee.

## **Bank Resolution**

The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

**Resolved:**

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.

**Connecticut State Library Resolution**

The following resolution for a state construction grant for the Harry Bennett Branch Youth Services area was presented to the Board and approved:

I, Ellen Bromley, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Ferguson Library, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Ferguson Library duly held and convened on June 20, 2023, at which a constituted quorum of the Board of Trustees was present and acting throughout and that such resolution has not been modified, rescinded or revoked and is at present in full force and effect.

**RESOLVED** that Alice S. Knapp, the duly appointed CEO of the Ferguson Library, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of this organization a certain contract with the Connecticut State Library, State of Connecticut, for a State Public Library Construction Grant.

**Trustee Resolution**

The following resolution for outgoing Board Member Stephanie O'Shea was made, seconded and approved:

**WHEREAS**, Stephanie O'Shea has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for five years, 2018 – 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, Stephanie O'Shea has served as Board Chair for two years; Vice-Chair for one year, and Treasurer for one year, and

**WHEREAS**, Stephanie O'Shea has served as Chair of the Executive, Long Range Planning, and Nominating Committees, and as a member of the Building, Financial Health Task Force and Personnel Committees; as well as Board Liaison to the Ferguson Library Foundation and the Friends of Ferguson Library Board of Directors;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the Ferguson Library hereby extends its sincere appreciation to Stephanie O'Shea for her distinguished service.

The following resolution for outgoing Board Member Polly O'Brian Morrow was made, seconded and approved:

**WHEREAS**, Polly O'Brien Morrow filled a Board vacancy and has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for three years, 2020 – 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, Polly O'Brien Morrow has served as a member of the Building, Development, and Long Range Planning Committees;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the Ferguson Library hereby extends its sincerest appreciation to Polly O'Brien Morrow for her distinguished service.

### **Board Meeting Schedule**

A schedule of Board meeting dates for 2023-2024 was distributed with the next meeting planned for Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

There being no further business, Ms. O'Shea motioned to end the meeting. All approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Ellen Bromley  
Secretary