

**THE FERGUSON LIBRARY**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**June 18, 2024**

**Present:**

**Board Members:** E. Bromley (Chair); R. Mercede (Secretary); A. Livingston;  
M. Mays; L. Meyer; C. Paris

**Citizen Advisors:** A. Better-Wirz; S. Fitzgerlad; J. Freeman; R. Granata; A. LiVolsi;  
R. McManus; M. Metwally; J. Orlikoff; S. O'Shea; S. Perry;  
M. Sommer; B. Spaulding; D. Stein

**Staff:** A. Knapp; L. Avellar; C. Harper; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla; D. Lyles; E. McKay

**Guest:** Andy George

The meeting was held at the Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch, due to air conditioning issues at the Main Library.

Board Chair Ellen Bromley called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm. Andy George was introduced and will be voted in as a new trustee. Those present in person introduced themselves to Mr. George.

**Minutes**

A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2024 meeting.

**Treasurer's Report**

Cheryl Harper presented the treasurer's report and stated that the library is doing well during this transitional year with the Foundation. Grants are up as is pay-to-print. Wages and benefits are lower due to several open staff positions. The consulting line is over budget with the work done by Legacy Engineers for decarbonization studies, Harmony Business Solutions for IT upgrades, and Margaret Sullivan Studios for the board's May retreat. The library is in a good cash position, while still waiting for the ARAPA dollars from the state.

**CEO's Report**

Alice Knapp reviewed her April CEO report, which highlighted A Novel Affair. This year's event was the most successful ever with credit going to honoree Steve Frederick and Wofsey Rosen Kweskin & Kurianksy, as well as the hard work of the Novel Affair Committee. We are underway recruiting new committee members and trying to find ways to lower Novel Affair expenses. Ms. Knapp also spoke about recent conferences that staff attended - the Public Library Association conference and the Connecticut

Library Association conference. Key leadership members attended both and came away with several good ideas on security, facilities, and customer service.

The May CEO report centered on the library's work with non-profit organizations and the Stamford Youth Mental Health Alliance (YMHA), by offering a number of programs and developing collections centered on mental health awareness. Staff was also treated to two staff meetings, discussing our EAP Program and self-care, and relaxing techniques with counselor Fiona True.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee met earlier and reviewed the agenda for today's meeting.

### **Building Committee**

Ms. Knapp recapped the committee's recent meeting where they reviewed options for the library's much-needed mechanical repairs. The committee is recommending using an updated system that will transition the library away from fossil fuels, with federal tax rebates, Eversource zero-interest financing, and a federal ARPA grant towards this \$1.6 million cost. Ms. Knapp praised State Senator Patricia Billie Miller who has arranged for a \$400,000 ARAPA grant for this project. The committee agreed on using a heat recovery chiller.

### **Development Committee**

The Development Committee met on May 9 to review the results of the Annual Appeal and A Novel Affair, and to discuss the Charlie Guinta family donation. We are up substantially with our Annual Appeal at \$259,000, with fewer donors than last year but larger average gifts. A Novel Affair was our most successful yet with a gross of \$263,000. The Charlie Guinta Reading Nook is still in a developmental phase, but we plan to have the room dedicated before Charlie Guinta's 101<sup>st</sup> birthday in December.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

At the June 3 Long Range Planning Committee meeting the board's May retreat was discussed with favorable results. Ms. Knapp outlined the next steps with the committee.

### **Pension Committee**

Ellen Bromley discussed the May 14 Pension Committee meeting, noting that the pension and markets are performing well. She also spoke about USI Representative Pamela Minish, who gave a detailed analysis at the previous committee meeting.

### **Ferguson Library Foundation**

At its May 16 meeting the Foundation board reviewed the investment portfolio, the Annual Appeal and A Novel Affair. Revised bylaws were presented and approved.

At today's meeting, the Ferguson Library Board of Trustees voted on and adopted the Foundation budget for FY2024-2025.

## **Friends of Ferguson**

Margaret Metwally described the success of the new Book Shop Manager in coming up with ideas for the shop, sorting donations, selling and displaying merchandise, and connecting with area non-profits. Ms. Metwally also talked about the Friends' 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary and plans for a celebration in the fall.

## **Old Business**

### **2024-2025 Operating Budget Update**

The library's operating budget for FY 2024-2025 was presented, which included new positions for a manager of IT/Technology and a new position for a manager of operations/security. The operating budget for FY2024-2025 was voted on and approved.

## **Board Retreat**

A recording of the May 4 board retreat was made available on BoardEffect for today's meeting.

## **New Business**

### **2024-2029 Trustee Nominations**

The Nominating Committee recommended that Andy George be elected to the Board of Trustees to succeed outgoing Trustee Steven Frederick, for a five-year term, 2024 to 2029. The motion passed. Stephanie O'Shea was appointed by Mayor Simmons to the Board of Trustees for the 2024-2029 term, replacing outgoing member Michael Hyman.

### **2024-2029 Officer Nominations**

The Nominating Committee recommended Makeda Mays as the new Vice-Chair to replace outgoing Trustee Michael Hyman.

#### **Officers for 2024-2025**

|            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| Chair      | Ellen Bromley |
| Vice-Chair | Makeda Mays   |
| Treasurer  | Susana Vidan  |
| Secretary  | RJ Mercede    |

The slate of officers was approved.

## **Policies**

Alice Knapp presented several new policies for approval:

**Compliance & Reporting Policy**  
**Conflict of Interest & Confidentially Policy**

## **Display Policy Holiday Decorations Policy**

Corey Paris asked for the Compliance and Reporting Policy to include language that under Reporting Violations, an employee may also report to their union representative, their direct supervisor, or the Director of Human Resources.

With that new language to be updated in the Compliance and Reporting Policy, Ms. Bromley asked if there were any objections to the new policies. All voted in favor and the motions passed.

## **Bank Resolution**

Ellen Bromley presented the following bank resolution for approval. All approved and passed:

### **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.

## **Trustee Resolutions**

The following resolution for outgoing Board Member Michael Hyman was made, seconded, and approved:

**WHEREAS**, Michael Hyman has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for five years, 2019 – 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Hyman has served as Vice Chair for three years; and

**WHEREAS**, Michael Hyman has served as Chair of the DEI Committee, and as a member of the Building, Bylaws, Development, Executive, Nominating, and Pension Committees.

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

The following resolution for outgoing Board Member Steven Frederick was made, seconded, and approved:

**WHEREAS**, Steven Frederick has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for five years, 2019 – 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, Steven Frederick has served as Chair of the Building, Bylaws, and Personnel Committees, and as a member of the Development and Long Range Planning Committees; as well as Ferguson Library Foundation liaison;

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

### **Connecticut State Library Resolution**

The following resolution for a Connecticut state construction grant for HVAC repair was presented to the Board and approved:

I, RJ Mercede, 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 18, 2024, 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.

A motion was made and passed.

### **Board Meeting Schedule**

Future meeting dates for 2024-2025 were distributed. The next Board of Trustees meeting will be on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.

There being no further business, Ellen Bromley motioned to end the meeting. All approved and the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.

RJ Mercede  
Secretary