

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
October 22, 2024

Present:

Board Members: E. Bromley (Chair); S. Vidan (Treasurer); R. Mercede (Secretary);
A. George; A. Livingston; T. Lucero; L. Meyer; S. O'Shea

Citizen Advisors: A. Better-Wirz; S. Fitzgerald; S. Frederick; J. Freeman; R. Granata;
W. Hill; A. LiVolsi; R. McManus, M. Metwally; M. Moore; J. Orlikoff;
A. Riehl; D. Stein

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

At 4:32 pm, Board Chair Ellen Bromley called the meeting to order.

Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Board Treasurer Susanna Vidan reported that as we ended the first quarter of the fiscal year, the income statement showed a negative bottom line, which is a timing issue. We budgeted \$35,000 for our annual long-time corporate grant but only received \$2,000. (They have dramatically reduced their giving.) We expect to receive other grants throughout the fiscal year. Passport, pay to print and other revenue increased in the first quarter. Expenses are carefully monitored. The balance sheet shows that our cash position is steady, and we received \$166,000 from the city in October to reduce accounts receivable. Accounts payable of \$203,765 was paid in October. The library has a healthy balance sheet of \$1M on hand.

CEO's Report

For the September CEO report, Alice Knapp introduced two key staff members: Leshawn McFarlan (Adult Services Librarian for Career and Business Services) and Anthony Marrocolla (Manager of Information & Adult Services). They highlighted the library's extensive support for small businesses and workforce development through various programs and resources. The Small Business Resource Center offers cutting-edge tools, including a virtual reality lab, an adult makerspace, videoconferencing-equipped meeting rooms, and a small podcast production studio. Signature programs include TEDx Talks, hackathons, small business startup weekends, and workshops such as *How to Create Your Own LLC*.

Additionally, the library's Entrepreneur-in-Residence program provides personalized coaching for small business startups and hosts networking events. To further assist the community, the library has five staff members who are certified as notary publics. Last year, more than 660 documents were notarized, and this year, the team has already processed 300 notarizations.

Executive Committee

On October 21, the Executive Committee met, and reviewed today's board agenda.

Building Committee

The Building Committee meeting was held on October 1 to review funding for the Eastside Branch, and to discuss necessary HVAC repairs at the Main Library. Updates were given on the progress of the Guinta Room renovations, as well as the need to upgrade the AV systems at both the Main Library and Bennett Branch auditoriums.

Long Range Planning Committee

At the Long Range Planning Committee meeting on October 15, Susan LaPerla gave an update on the strategic plan with a dashboard that included input from library staff.

Pension Committee

On October 17 the Pension Committee met to review the Pension Discretion Plans 338. Ms. Vidan said the committee will not be involved in fund decisions and that USI Advisors will be handling investments. She also said that these committee meetings with USI are a valuable learning experience.

Ferguson Library Foundation

A motion was made and seconded, to approve Robyn Whittingham as a new Foundation board member. The motion passed.

Friends of Ferguson

Friends President Margaret Metwally discussed the importance of having members of the library leadership team participate in Friends committee meetings. On November 7, the Friends will host a special *Friendsgiving* celebration at the Bennett Branch to honor their volunteers and board members, while also commemorating the 45th anniversary of the Friends of Ferguson.

Additionally, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Denise Marcel, Erin Cody, and Susan DiMattia, the Friends have launched their first online newsletter, *Freedom2Read*. This publication aims to raise awareness about book banning

Old Business

Connie Hubbard spoke about the inaugural Staff Professional Development Day, scheduled for Friday, November 1. With all library facilities closed to the public, the retreat will take place at Stamford's First Presbyterian Church. The theme of the day, "The Power

of We," highlights collaboration and community. The event will feature a range of guest speakers, including keynote speaker Kelvin Watson, Executive Director of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, and will also honor staff achievements with recognition service awards.

New Business

Capital Budget FY2026 & 2026-2032 Capital Proposal Request

The 2026-2032 capital project request was presented to the Board for approval. Project requests include \$1 million to replace the Main Library's HVAC system. While the chiller was updated in 2008 the outdated pneumatic system remains, causing multiple summer days without air conditioning. These conditions rendered the library unusable as one of the city's designated cooling centers. The library is also requesting \$2 million to install a fully functional HVAC system at the Harry Bennett Branch, which only worked at 50% capacity during the summer months. A request for \$3 million is being made to build a new branch on the East Side. The library has already secured a \$3 million federal earmark from Congressman Himes for design and construction for the new branch. We are also requesting \$150,000 for the Advocate Historical Archives, spanning the years 2006 to 2018, which were not part of the original digitization project. For short-term financing, the library requests \$150,000 for computer equipment upgrades and improved, secure Wi-Fi coverage. And \$150,000 for an outreach vehicle enabling the library to extend its services to underserved areas of the community. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Capital Budget request as presented; all voted in favor to accept the budget request.

Review of Library Policies

Mobile Hotspot and Laptop Lending Policy

<https://www.fergusonlibrary.org/policies/mobile-hotspot-and-laptop-lending-policy>

This is a new policy on lending laptops and hotspots to library cardholders, with loan periods determined and return of equipment enforced. The motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the Mobile Hotspot and Laptop Lending Policy.

December Board Meeting & Reception

Our December 10 board meeting will be held at the Harry Bennett Branch, followed by a holiday dinner at the same location.

At 5:21 pm, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All approved and the meeting ended.

RJ Mercede
Secretary