

**THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 6, 2022**

Present:

Board Members: S. O'Shea (Chair); E. Bromley; M. Hyman; A. Livingston;
R. Mercede; L. Meyer; P. O'Brien Morrow; S. Vidan

Citizen Advisors: T. Bartley; A. Better-Wirz; J. Block; S. Duarte; S. Fitzgerald;
J. Freeman; D. Golden; M. Mays; J. Orlikoff; S. Perry

Staff: A. Knapp; L. Avellar; C. Harper; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla
J. Gott-Jones; A. Marrocolla; L. McFarlan

Ms. O'Shea called the meeting to order at 4:36 pm. The meeting was held in-person and via Zoom.

Minutes

A motion was made by RJ Mercede and seconded by Polly O'Brien Morrow to accept the minutes of the October 25, 2022 meeting. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Harper gave a report on the YTD financials as of October 31, 2022. Wages are in a favorable position due to open positions. Insurance expenses are high due to workers compensation claims and utility costs are also on the rise.

CEO's Report

The November CEO report centers on the role of the public library and its important function as a facilitator and protector of civic society. Ms. Knapp reported on the Book Sanctuary Movement started by Chicago Public Library to counter rising book challenges nationwide. She also reported that at the November staff meeting, staff members were honored for milestone years of service. Judy Gott-Jones, a guest at today's board meeting, was recognized for 40 years of dedicated service to the library. Photos on the renovated Harry Bennett Branch circulation area and holiday lights at the Weed Hollander Branch were also shown.

October's CEO Report focused on an analysis of adult programs across the library to better understand staffing needs and programmatic impact. Anthony Marrocolla and Leshawn McFarlan, guests at today's meeting, spoke on their efforts to develop library programs and events. Ms. McFarlan's presentation outlined what the Information and

Adult Services Department does for career/job seekers, education, financial literacy and helping young adults prepare for college.

Executive Committee

Chair Stephanie O'Shea reported on the Executive Committee meeting held earlier in the day.

Development Committee

The Development Committee met on November 1, 2022. Linda Avellar said the Novel Affair Committee is working on the April 20, 2023 event. The Annual Appeal mailing went out in November and Giving Tuesday was held on November 29 with donations of \$7,500. Novel Affair sponsorships are currently at \$55,000. A small group meeting was held with Campaign Counsel on November 9. In addition, a Benefactors Circle dinner is being planned for January 22, 2023.

Long Range Planning Committee

The Long Range Planning Committee discussed the RFP architectural feasibility study at its November 30 meeting. The Building Committee's work on a master plan for the library facilities will also impact the Long Range Planning Committee's work. At the meeting, Ms. Knapp presented a one-page Strategic Framework summary.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee met on November 15, 2022 to review the union contract.

Ferguson Library Foundation

The Ferguson Library Foundation Board met October 27, 2022 and reviewed the Foundation's investment portfolio, which continues to show market volatility. From Campaign Counsel's recent fundraising audit, it is suggested that the Board of Trustees act as governing body while the Foundation will focus on fundraising.

Friends of Ferguson

Deborah Golden reported on three recent Friends programs: author Fiona Davis spoke on November 10, which brought in 75 paid attendees. In conjunction with Darien Library, Royal Biographer author Andrew Morton spoke on November 15 with 275 in attendance. And on December 4, a program with celebrity Chef Jacques Pepin drew 265 ticketed guests, and grossed over \$9,000.

Revenue at the Main Library Book Shop is up, while the Bennett Branch Shop saw a decline in sales due possibly to slimming down the inventory there. A bag sale is planned at the Bennett Branch. The Friends will hold their Mini Golf event February 11 and 12 at the Bennett Branch.

Old Business

2023-2030 Capital Budget

Ms. Knapp announced that the library has received a \$250,000 grant from the state of Connecticut for Main Library boiler repairs.

Bargaining Unit Contract Negotiations

At today's meeting, the Board of Trustees went into executive session to discuss the union contract.

Harry Bennett Branch Renovation

Most of the work has been completed for this phase of the renovation.

Diligent/Board Effect Implementation

For today's meeting, Trustees and Citizen Advisers were able to view meeting material on the online platform, Diligent/Board Effect.

New Business

2023-2024 Proposed Operating Budget

The trustees reviewed the proposed 2023-2024 operating budget, which requests a six percent increase. This will allow us to increase our spending on materials and help bring our staffing levels back to where they should be. A motion was made and approved to accept the 2023-2024 operating budget.

Campaign Counsel

Campaign Counsel will conduct a fundraising training for library boards on January 17.

Benefactors Dinner

On January 22 the library will host a dinner for major donors at the Main Library. It is a thank you event, rather than a fundraiser.

Book Sanctuary

In her November report, Ms. Knapp spoke of the book sanctuary movement and of the need for Ferguson Library to become a book sanctuary. As a book sanctuary the library would commit to collect and protect endangered books, make them accessible, host book talks, events, and conversations about diverse characters and stories, and educate others on the history of book banning and burning.

Urban Library Council Declaration of Democracy

In November, the Urban Library Council Declaration of Democracy was presented to the board. The declaration reads in part:

Democracy is under siege throughout the world and close to home. Daily, we witness assaults on basic freedoms and human rights we've long cherished as books are banned, programs and events are canceled, disinformation and misinformation spread unchecked and racism is institutionalized. Democracy's future is diminished when people's access to power, information, a diversity of voices and the ability to influence policy are restricted. As cornerstones of democracy, it is incumbent upon libraries to stand up against all efforts to impede the democratic process and limit the full participation in civic life.

Ms. O'Shea asked for a motion from the Board agreeing that the library become a book sanctuary and adopt ULC's Declaration of Democracy. Polly O'Brien Morrow seconded the motion, and all in voted in favor.

Executive Session

A motion was made to enter into executive session. At the conclusion of the executive session, a motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the union contract.

The meeting ended at 5:33 pm. Trustees and Citizen Advisors adjourned for a holiday dinner at Blackstone's Steakhouse.

Ellen E. Bromley
Secretary