

## **Board of Trustees Minutes – November 15, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held in person and remotely via Zoom on November 15, 2022. Secretary Kenyetta Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:37 pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Mr. Ted Freedman (zoom), Ms. Kenyetta Jackson (zoom), Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lisa Torres, Lorraine Tidd (zoom), Ms. Earnestine Smith (Arrived 5:45 pm)

Absent: Mr. Eloy Delgado

Also present were Mary Faith Chmiel, Library Director; Assistant Director, Robert Barbanell; and Helen Speros, Office Manager, taking minutes.

### **MINUTES:**

It was moved by Mr. Michael Ojeda, seconded by Ms. Pearl Serratelli to accept the minutes from previous meeting.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- Mary Faith Chmiel announced the budget for FY 2023 will be 4.5 million dollars or \$375,000 per month.

It was moved by Mr. Martin Weingast and seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

### **PRESENTATION OF BILLS AS OF October 18, 2022:**

- Mr. Ted Freedman discussed the October monthly bills with concern for NJ Health possibly increasing by 20-25% and the impact this will have on the Library and its Employees. Mr. Martin Weingast stated there will be no formal notification until January 2023.

It was moved by Ms. Pearl Serratelli and seconded by Mr. Michael Ojeda, to approve the Bill List.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

### **PRESENTATION OF BILLS AS OF November 15, 2022:**

- Ms. Chmiel discussed Lakeside, Chestnut Hardware-repairs lawnmower; and USA Architect for three Library construction bond projects. Ms. Chmiel noted she would prefer a seamed metal roof at Elmora branch; however, that method is costlier than a shingle roof. There will be one space in the parking lot for the GWE van.
- Ms. Chmiel explained the larger than usual payment to Catholic Charities: Roel missed two payments and this is why it is high. They do not bill us. We need to remember to pay it monthly.
- Mr. Ted Freedman inquires about AmTrust North America. Ms. Chmiel replies this is for the Library's new insurance policies.

It was moved by Ms. Earnestine Smith, seconded by Ms. Lisa Torres to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

- Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Chair of the Nominating Committee: Calls Earnestine Smith as Secretary, Lorraine Tidd as Treasurer. Lorraine Tidd declines. Eloy Delgado as President. Open for VP and Treasurer. Ms. Chmiel asks for nominations from the floor. Mr. Weingast nominates Ms. Pearl Serratelli as V.P. Ms. Pearl Serratelli Accepts. Ms. Serratelli nominates Ms. Lisa Torres for Treasurer. Ms. Lisa Torres Accepts. Vote in December for January 2023 positions. It was recapped, one can only serve two years sequentially in the same title.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Consult your packet for the complete report.

- Ms. Chmiel reviews HVAC upgrades- the big chiller is gone. Only one heating unit is operating; Liberty Mechanical may need to call Daikin back to the site. This is a reason the heat is not operating 100%.
- Ms. Chmiel noted that funds for Architect/ Library Construction Bond may not be able to cover a desired seamed metal roof for Elmora as a shingle roof is more affordable.
- Ms. Chmiel affirms Robert is working with Roel on When I Work which is saving time and money; Robert agrees.
- Ms. Chmiel discusses Budget and sharing of the Union County Prosecutors Grant for addiction recovery. Mr. D'Agostino will bring in a social worker twice a week. There was concern the State will have Law enforcement get involved however it was established that Law enforcement will only speak with and train the staff, not patrons. In addition, we will hire our own social worker. We received over 30 applications which will be reviewed the week after Thanksgiving holiday. With our social worker, plus Community Access Unlimited (CAU) – \$50 hourly rate – and the Prosecutors Grant, the Library hopes to offer coverage around the clock, during all our open hours. Mr. Ted Freedman suggests we check with the City. Ms. Chmiel responds City pushed responsibility to the County. Christina Topolosky said there is nothing they can offer us. Ms. Chmiel assures Mr. Freedman the expense for a social worker will replace one of the unfilled Librarian positions included in the budget. FT Social Worker position approved by the Board previously. Looking for a vote to sign said Grant.
- Ms. Chmiel discusses cameras and bandwidth issues. Cameras take up a lot of bandwidth. Light Path said 100 mgs bandwidth -Edwin thought each location gets 100 but 100 is for all 4 locations. Maffey's came out and made some replacements and adjustments to the cameras. Current quote \$1,500. There are 5 cameras in the parking lot, 2 outside Elmora. On the issue of getting more cameras: There are Maintenance fees, and Licensing fees come in batches and more would be needed. Ms. Pearl Serratelli's concern we will run out of money in April is expressed.
- Ms. Chmiel addresses the concern for Budget. To save money, after a survey of all departments was taken and reviewed regarding visitors after 6pm, and since it is getting

colder and darker earlier, Ms. Chmiel suggested closing the Library at 6pm Monday through Thursday December 1 through April 1, 2022. Eport and LaCorte would continue to be closed Saturday. Option 2 was to pull funds from Reserved Funds.

- Ms. Chmiel discusses the need for a vehicle with a plow attached. Insurance paid \$6,700 for the old Jeep plus another \$20,000 from Reserved Funds. Looking for a vehicle with a closed cab which holds 4 people as it will also be used to transport staff. Mr. Ojeda suggests the City has equipment to plow. Ms. Chmiel said you have to beg to get the service. The City plows Elmora because they keep equipment there. LaCorte is plowed and Eport is part of Catholic Charities, therefore only the Main branch is in need. Ms. Chmiel states we are down to one vehicle from four. Mr. Weingast suggests a biddable item, best to use state contract. Ms. Chmiel will look into it. Motion on budget for vehicle with plow. Ms. Smith said table it. In the meantime, if it snows, beg the City.
- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board the Handicap lift still not working- Jersey elevator needs a call.
- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of the flooding issue in the boiler room. Liberty Mechanical bill plus this flood bill. The valves are old and need replacing.
- Ms. Chmiel is delighted the City finally removed the tree from the Elmora branch driveway.
- Ms. Chmiel informs the Board, Elmora has self-check-out set up starting November.
- Ms. Chmiel noted the LHR is running out of space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Churches are closing and donating their archives to us. Aimee Fernandez-Puente requires more space be cleared in the subbasement for donations.
- Ms. Chmiel noted the Union County Fresh Start showers were a success and much needed. This is run by the County who provides all the water used. There was food and supplies in addition to showers, bathroom, and laundry service. Over 1,000 people came. We would like to do this once a month.
- Ms. Chmiel informs the Board we have Health and Wellness centers in Adults and Teens Depts. Read Andy Borowitz on homelessness.

It was moved by Ms. Pearl Serratelli, seconded by Mr. Martin Weingast to accept the Director's Report.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Ms. Chmiel confirmed truck with plow was tabled. She will continue to look for other options.
- Ms. Chmiel notes the thank you card from Ms. Pearl Serratelli for the gift the Board sent to her.
- Mr. Chmiel discussed Rita Staglione and Tony Zengara's hand-written note on check stub for 2023 Budget will be 4,500,000.
- Ms. Chmiel announces MILO is back in the building.
- The Board of Trustees discussed options for closing earlier. Still contemplating.

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the Jersey Elevator bid, pending the approval of the Legal Department.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Ms. Chmiel advised that fan coil units will eventually need to be replaced.

Ms. Chmiel reviews the changes in the Employee Policy regarding Cell phone usage, security, and drug usage. Mr. Freedman asks if the Parking Lot is part of the premises. Ms. Chmiel answers yes.

It was motioned to accept all changes to the Personnel Manual by Mr Michael Ojeda, seconded by Ms. Pearl Serratelli.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

## NEW BUSINESS

- Ms. Chmiel revealed the 2023 Board Meeting dates.

It was moved by Mr. Martin Weingast, seconded by Mr. Ted Freedman.

- Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd.  
NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado
- Ms. Chmiel revealed the 2023 Holiday schedule which was the same as 2017.

It was moved by Mr. Michael Ojeda, seconded by Ms Lorraine Tidd.

- Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd.  
NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado
- Ms. Chmiel discussed Fingerprinting for the staff and who will pay for it. Mr. Martin Weingast stated Passaic uses name-only which is not as thorough however less expensive and will provide the link. All agreed to table this for now.
- Ms. Chmiel discussed 2022 Holiday Party to be held on Friday December 16, 2022 in the auditorium between the hours of 12pm and 2pm, and will be a pot luck spread.
- Michael Ojeda states his contact information: Address 315 Vine street Elizabeth NJ 07202 Home phone 908-418-7574.
- Ms. Chmiel confirms Grant from Prosecutors Office is approved; Fingerprinting has been tabled; By-Laws update for Covid and electronic meeting to be Sunset-ed. Trustees will revert back to the original By-Laws which allows for some leniency in Article 2 page 2, stating every effort will be made to attend; if physically unable then Zoom or Phone is allowed.

These items were moved for approval by Ms. Earnestine Smith seconded by Ms. Lisa Torres.

- Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd.  
NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado.

- Ms. Chmiel requests to motion on closing earlier Monday through Thursday from December 1, 2022 through March 1, 2023:

Ms. Pearl Serratelli motions for 6:30pm closing, seconded by none.

- Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd.  
NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado.
- Ms. Chmiel states 6:30 pm is off the table.
- Mr. Ted Freedman states we are always changing hours and it should stay consistent, 830am-8pm always. The city gives us 4.5 million to stay open these hours.

Mr. Ted Freedman motions for 7pm, seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd.

- Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd.  
NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado.
- Ms. Chmiel states 7:00 pm is off the table.
- Robert states closing at 6pm will save 103 hours per week at an average of \$20/hr will save \$2,006 per week times 12 weeks: savings will be\$ 24,000

Mr. Michael Ojeda motions for 6:00pm closing, seconded by Lisa Torres.

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: Mr. Ted Freedman  
Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

- Ms. Chmiel confirms closing at 6pm Monday through Friday from December 1 2022 to March 1, 2023 PASSES.

## **CLOSED SESSION:**

Ms. Chmiel announces hiring Helen Speros as FT Office Manager for \$60,000/year, Zarlisht Sarbaz and Jessica Hernandez as PT Library Assistants at \$19/hour and Alexandra Apat for \$35,000/year, and the resignation of Audrielle Yan.

Ms. Chmiel announces EEOC filing challenging staff need to test weekly for Covid was dismissed.

Ms. Chmiel announces the Staff elevator is no longer safe.

It was moved by Mr. Michael Ojeda, seconded by Ms Pearl Serratelli

Vote: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

## **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mr. Martin Weingast, seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd to adjourn the meeting at 7:53pm. Vote by acclamation: AYES: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Ted Freedman, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Mr. Michael Ojeda, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd. NAYS: None. Abstentions: Mr. Eloy Delgado

Submitted by Helen Speros