The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held remotely via Zoom on February 16, 2021. President Aaron Goldblatt called the meeting to order at 4:07pm. A quorum was established by roll call.

ROLL CALL


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

Ms. Chmiel, Library Director, announced that adequate notice for this meeting was sent to The Star Ledger, and posted at City Hall.

Visitors: No visitors.

It was moved by Mr. Weingast, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Vote: Vote by Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

- Ms. Chmiel reported the E-Rate funds are significantly depleted, while our Capital Funds have a balance of $1.5 million. The carpet and glass classroom were the most expensive projects.

- Ms. Chmiel explained that more than 50% of the budget remains. There was a significant reimbursement from the County CARES Grant.

- Ms. Serratelli inquired about the end date of the fiscal year. Ms. Chmiel confirmed June 30th as the last day of the current fiscal year.

- Ms. Chmiel noted the Library is still waiting for the ADT upgrades at Elmora.
It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Mr. Goldblatt to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Vote: Ayes: Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Lisa Torres, and Mr. Martin Weingast. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS AS OF FEBRUARY 10, 2021:

- Ms. Serratelli inquired about afternoon hours at the Branches. Ms. Chmiel explained the staffing challenges that have delayed the next phase of reopening at the LaCorte and Eport Branches.

- Mr. Weingast inquired whether the Library or City received the bill for Express Scripts. Ms. Chmiel explained the Library reimburses the City of Elizabeth.

- It was moved by Mr. Weingast, seconded by Ms. Jackson to accept the Bill List. Vote: Ayes: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Ms. Earnestine Smith and Ms. Lorraine Tidd. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Mr. Goldblatt announced the reopening plan for The Elizabeth Public Library is in effect.

- Ms. Chmiel summarized the reopening plan to include remote services on Monday and for Main and Elmora to be open Tuesday – Saturday.

- Ms. Serratelli questioned the 45 minute allotted sessions. Ms. Chmiel explained the disinfecting process and reported the statistics of the day to the Board.

- Ms. Serratelli questioned if safely distanced seating was available at computer stations and Ms. Chmiel confirmed that socially distant seating has been established by the removal of chairs.

- Ms. Chmiel announced that personal computer assistance would not be available during this phase of reopening.
• Ms. Chmiel announced the week of Maker’s Day would be Monday – Friday, as that schedule had already been advertised.

• Ms. Serratelli stated it is too soon to resume normal hours of operation.

• Ms. Tidd questioned if the Library was offering masks to patrons. Ms. Chmiel explained how offering masks would prove to be quite expensive.

• Mr. Goldblatt commended Ms. Chmiel for organizing and implementing the reopening plan.

• Mr. Weingast extended gratitude to the Staff on behalf on the Board of Trustees.

• Mr. Goldblatt and Mr. Freedman suggested including a reopening date for the branches in the plan.

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Tidd to accept the Reopening Plan. Vote: Ayes: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Lisa Torres, and Mr. Martin Weingast. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that the City ID program is now located in the Children’s Room. Appointments align with the Library’s A day schedule 10am-5pm.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that the relocation of the classrooms is complete.

• Ms. Chmiel reminded the Board that new carpet has been installed.

• Ms. Serratelli commented that the new carpet should also be considered for Elmora.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that the handicap parking and gates project is incomplete. The contractor estimated the project would be completed in two weeks.

• Ms. Chmiel noted that the bulbs for outdoor lighting will be installed with assistance from the City of Elizabeth.
Ms. Chmiel updated the Board on the status of the laptops and hotspots. The laptops for the Staff are ready for use and the laptops for the public are being processed for circulation.

Ms. Chmiel mentioned that Martha Cardenas received a citation for her participation in the Laundromat Reading Program.

Mr. Freedman asked that the Board of Trustees be notified when The Elizabeth Public Library closes for weather related reasons.

Mr. Weingast questioned the City of Elizabeth’s application for a FEMA grant. Ms. Chmiel confirmed she was not aware of the status of this application.

Mr. Freedman inquired about Staff vaccinations. Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that Library employees who are also Union County residents were eligible for the vaccination program at the Dunn Sports Center.

Ms. Chmiel explained that for safety concerns, the Staff remains divided into two teams.

It was moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Weingast to accept the Director’s Report. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Chmiel noted that NJ Library Association has appealed to the governor to include Library workers in the COVID vaccination eligible population, along with teachers and other educators.

Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that confirmation of the weight bearing requirements is still needed for Aimee Fernandez to increase the Local History Room collection.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ms. Chmiel explained that vendors are researching ways to save money on the HVAC project.

Ms. Chmiel confirmed that the City of Elizabeth owns the Library’s Main building and any financing plan needs City Council approval.
• Mr. Weingast suggested Elizabeth Public Library research independent legal representation.

NEW BUSINESS

• Ms. Chmiel will formalize the resolution that was reviewed and agreed to by the Board of Trustees via email and submit for City Council approval.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Tidd to move to closed session. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Mr. Weingast to move out of closed session. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

PERSONNEL

• Ms. Chmiel recommended Robert Barbanell be promoted from Interim Assistant Director to Assistant Director at the recommended salary of $85,945.08 effective January 1, 2021.

• Ms. Chmiel recommended Brianna Gillen be promoted from Librarian I to Librarian II at the recommended salary of $61,165 retroactively effective as of August 1, 2020.

• Ms. Chmiel recommended Celeste Layton be promoted from Clerk 2 to Office Manager/Administrative Assistant at the recommended salary of $50,922.01 effective January 1, 2021.

• Ms. Chmiel announced the resignation of Alison Blumenfeld effective February 26, 2021.

• Ms. Chmiel announced the resignation of Sayuri Naito effective February 23, 2021.

• Ms. Chmiel announced the resignation of Sheila O’ Brien effective February 23, 2021.

• Ms. Chmiel announced the resignation of Tracy Robinson effective March 5, 2021.

It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Jackson to accept all recommendations for promotion and salary adjustment. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.
It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Jackson to accept the resignations of Alison Blumenfeld, Sheila O’Brien, Sayuri Naito and Tracy Robinson. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Ms. Tidd, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to Adjourn at 5:35pm. Vote: By Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

Submitted by Celeste Layton