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 October 19, 2021. President Aaron Goldblatt called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. 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.

It was moved by Ms. Torres, seconded by Ms. Tidd to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Vote: Ayes: Eloy Delgado, Aaron Goldblatt, Ted Freedman, Pearl Serratelli, Lorraine Tidd, and Lisa Torres. Nays: None. Abstentions: Martin Weingast.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

• Ms. Chmiel summarized the current budget, one quarter into Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

• Mr. Freedman inquired if the projected budget had been finalized. Ms. Chmiel confirmed that it had not been finalized, but noted that there was an increase in State aid to about $82,000.00. Ms. Chmiel confirmed that the monthly report will be updated to reflect the late arrival of the money.

• Mr. Freedman suggested the Board of Trustees create a committee to assist Ms. Chmiel in the creation of her annual reports. A discussion followed.

• Mr. Weingast noted that in addition to the report, the only requirement to receive State Aid in October 2022 is to satisfy the required number of Trustees training hours.
Mr. Freedman questioned the deficit amount for consultants. Ms. Chmiel explained Evelyn Thompson and architects’ fees are responsible for this deficit.

It was moved by Mr. Weingast, seconded by Mr. Delgado to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Vote: Eloy Delgado, Aaron Goldblatt, Ted Freedman, Pearl Serratelli, Lorraine Tidd, Lisa Torres, and Martin Weingast. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2021:

- Ms. Chmiel explained Voucher # 32745 is the key upgrade costs to Maffeys.
- Ms. Chmiel explained Voucher #32765 to BFI was for the LHR expansion project.
- Ms. Tidd inquired about Voucher #32784 to T-Mobile. Ms. Chmiel confirmed it is E rate costs for the hotspots.
- Ms. Serratelli inquired about Voucher #32787 for Swank Licensing. Ms. Chmiel confirmed the license allows The Elizabeth Public Library to legally show movies to the public.
- It was moved by Mr. Delgado, seconded by Ms. Tidd to accept the Bills List. Vote: Ayes: Eloy Delgado, Aaron Goldblatt, Ted Freedman, Pearl Serratelli, Lorraine Tidd, Lisa Torres, and Martin Weingast. Tidd. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of Trustees that The Elizabeth Public Library is no longer closing for cleaning as of Columbus Day/Indigenous People Day.
- Ms. Chmiel reported the feedback from the latest Staff Development Day.
- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that Paramount Pictures has inquired about the use of the parking lot but had not provided any written details until 4pm this afternoon. Ms. Chmiel confirmed the verbal offer was for the one-day use of six (6) parking spaces for $1500.
Ms. Chmiel informed The Board of Trustees of security issues at the Elmora Branch during non-operational hours. Ms. Chmiel proposed requesting police patrols and introducing more lighting to help with current security issues. Ms. Serratelli made a resolution for an evening security guard at Elmora for a six-month period. Mr. Freedman suggested the Board of Trustees introduce a resolution for a zero-tolerance policy banning patrons that demonstrate violent behavior directed toward employees and patrons. Mr. Delgado suggested the Mayor’s Representative could inform the Mayor of the lack of a response from the Councilman. A discussion followed regarding the best strategies to address security concerns at the Elmora Branch.

Ms. Chmiel expressed her approval for the renovation of the “red hump” by Paul Goulart.

Ms. Chmiel announced the completion of the sink hole renovation in the parking lot at the Main Branch. The project covered seven parking spaces at the depth of four feet and was completed at no cost to The Elizabeth Public Library.

Ms. Chmiel confirmed that she has signed the contract with the elevator consultant.

Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of Trustees that the garden at Elmora may be maintained by a volunteer moving forward.

Ms. Chmiel updated The Board of Trustees on the increase of laptops and hotspots available to the public.

Ms. Chmiel noted the increase in participation of projects offered by Adult Services.

Ms. Chmiel highlighted the potential events surrounding the Library pet residing in the Children’s Department.

Ms. Chmiel noted the updates to the Code of Conduct to include wearing masks properly.

Mr. Freedman noted his appreciation for the budget section of Jeff Cupo’s report.

Mr. Freedman suggested new employees be required to view videos of the active shooter training as demonstrated at Staff Development Day.
• Ms. Chmiel explained the proposed renovations to the Staff desk in the Children’s Room. These renovations would include storage and desk upgrades. Ms. Chmiel will ask the Board of Trustees to vote once a budget has been established.

• Ms. Serratelli initiated a dialogue about Groundworks at Elmora.

• Mr. Freedman expressed gratitude for the extended hours and inquired about longer hours at Main and the Branches. Ms. Chmiel confirmed that extending hours of operations will be examined in January. Mr. Delgado suggested that the discussion of extending hours is premature and should be revisited after the holidays season.

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Mr. Delgado to reintroduce a security guard at the Elmora Branch, hours and length of stay to be determined. Vote: Ayes: Eloy Delgado, Aaron Goldblatt, Ted Freedman, Pearl Serratelli, Lorraine Tidd, and Lisa Torres, and Martin Weingast. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Mr. Delgado to accept the Director’s Report. Vote: Eloy Delgado, Aaron Goldblatt, Ted Freedman, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd, and Lisa Torres. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Chmiel informed The Board of Trustees that The Elizabeth Public Library was awarded funding for an Access Navigator, allowing a designated person to be in the building to help patrons with technology concerns.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

• Ms. Chmiel noted she and Aimee Fernandez have received requests from interested persons to assess the LHR collection, at their own expense.

• Ms. Chmiel updated the Board of Trustees on costs of repairing the Staff elevator.
NEW BUSINESS

• Ms. Smith proposed the new Reading Room be named after the first African American Trustee. The Board of Trustees agreed more research is needed on her contributions to consider this proposal.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of Trustees of the changes to the heading to include hybrid meetings on the proposed meeting dates for 2022.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of Trustees of the addition of Juneteenth to the holiday schedule for 2022 and that part time staff with one year of service have both Christmas and the 4th of July as paid holidays.

• Ms. Chmiel explained areas of concerns in the M.O.U. from Ground Works Elizabeth.

It was proposed by Ms. Chmiel to postpone the renaming of the new LHR Reading Room until a written resolution including her contributions and background are provided. Vote: Ayes: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

It was moved by Mr. Weingast, seconded by Ms. Torres to approve the proposed meeting dates for the Board of Trustees. Vote: Eloy Delgado, Aaron Goldblatt, Ted Freedman, Pearl Serratelli, Earnestine Smith, Lorraine Tidd, Lisa Torres, and Martin Weingast. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

It was moved by Ms. Tidd, seconded by Mr. Delgado to approve the proposed holiday schedule for 2022. Vote: Vote by Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

CLOSED SESSION

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

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

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the resignation of Brianna Gillen. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.
ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Tidd to adjourn. Vote: By Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

Submitted by Celeste Layton