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 September 21, 2021. President Aaron Goldblatt called the meeting to order at 4:14 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. Tidd, seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: Ms. Serratelli.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

- Ms. Chmiel summarized the budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Ms. Chmiel highlighted a balance of $300,000.

- Ms. Chmiel noted the current budget is sound 2 ½ months into the current fiscal year.

- Ms. Chmiel noted technology expenses will be reimbursed via grants.

- Ms. Serratelli inquired if The Elizabeth Public Library received its budget for this year. Ms. Chmiel confirmed the budget has not been established, however she is optimistic The Elizabeth Public Library will be adequately funded with municipal and federal contributions.

It was moved by Ms. Smith, seconded by Ms. Jackson to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.
PRESENTATION OF BILLS AS OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2021:

- Ms. Chmiel explained the Sunshine Fund and how it is utilized.

- Ms. Chmiel explained Voucher #32683 for Vita is funds for a pergola at the Elmora Garden.

- Ms. Chmiel updated the Board of Trustees that *The New York Times* account had not been paid twice and the second payment listed was voided.

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

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 maintaining its current hours of operations.

- Ms. Chmiel reported the increase of patrons and events at The Elizabeth Public Library including Literacy New Jersey ESL and High School Equivalency Classes, use of computer lab, and citizenship classes beginning in October.

- Ms. Serratelli questioned the hours of operation at the LaCorte branch being extending to accommodate working people. Ms. Chmiel replied that currently, LaCorte is operating 10am-2pm to service the senior community.

- Ms. Serratelli suggested reintroducing Sunday hours. Ms. Chmiel requested feedback from The Board of Trustees and noted that including Sunday hours at Elmora would eliminate one evening shift at the Branch during the week.

- Ms. Chmiel updated The Board of Trustees on the status of the Union Contract. Ms. Chmiel explained the legal review did not object to the new additions.

- Ms. Chmiel announced the auditor’s review will begin after Thanksgiving.
• Ms. Serratelli inquired about plans to renovate Elmora. Ms. Serratelli noted the roof was the highest priority.

• Ms. Chmiel announced Staff Development Day would be Friday, October 8, 2021. Ms. Chmiel confirmed all members of The Board of Trustees were invited to participate and lunch would be provided. Ms. Chmiel commented that there was no cost for most of the presenters.

• Ms. Chmiel invited the Board of Trustees to the Grand Opening of the Local History Reading Room on October 23rd.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of Trustees that the staff elevator is currently out of service and she wants to move forward in the process of replacing it.

• Ms. Chmiel noted that the Elmora Branch was damaged by Ida.

• Ms. Chmiel encouraged all to continue to promote the laptop and hotspot loan program.

• Ms. Chmiel highlighted upcoming programs for Teens and Adult Services.

• Ms. Chmiel confirmed that the TASC test is being offered again.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

• Ms. Chmiel confirmed the last assessment of the LHR collection was in 1985.

• Ms. Chmiel noted she has received requests from interested persons to assess the collection, but the quote prices were not reasonable.

• Ms. Chmiel is researching the cost to clean the portrait of Lady Elizabeth.

• Mr. Goldblatt suggested the handling of the collection should be determined by a Board of Trustees subcommittee.
• Mr. Goldblatt questioned if appraisal would lead to increase in insurance payment and if a fair market evaluation would be accepted by the insurance. Ms. Chmiel confirmed the insurance company would accept a fair market value evaluation, and a discussion continued with Aimee Fernandez.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of Trustees of a CHAPA public hearing regarding the merger of Robert Wood Johnson and Trinitas Hospitals to be held in the Auditorium October 12, 2021.

• The Board of Trustees continued the discussion on the presence of homeless persons near the Elmora Branch.

NEW BUSINESS

• Ms. Chmiel initiated a discussion about the price of signage outside the Elmora Branch. Ms. Chmiel committed to following up with Fast Signs for more competitive options.

• Ms. Chmiel inquired about the location and time of the next Board of Trustees meeting. President Aaron Goldblatt confirmed the October meeting will be a hybrid meeting that begins at 5:30pm.

• Ms. Chmiel announced that the filming project will begin at The Elizabeth Public Library and that the Children’s Room will be closed during filming.

It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the salary increases for the Administrative Staff. Vote: Ayes: Ted Freedman, Aaron Goldblatt, Kenyetta Jackson, Earnestine Smith, and Lorraine Tidd. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to approve the line item transfers for FY 2020-2021. Vote: Ayes: Ted Freedman, Aaron Goldblatt, Kenyetta Jackson, Earnestine Smith, and Lorraine Tidd. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

It was moved by Mr. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to resume charging for Local History Room research requests. 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. Goldblatt, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to move out of closed sessions. Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

Submitted by Celeste Layton