The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held remotely via Zoom on January 19, 2021. President Aaron Goldblatt called the meeting to order at 4:09pm. 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.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

- Ms. Chmiel indicated that 45% of budget remains. Technology and furniture budget is low and CARES Grant will adjust these amounts with reimbursement for PPE and furniture.

- Ms. Chmiel explained that for the monthly budget allocation the City sends purchase order, and she signs off.

- Mr. Freedman confirms the amount in reserves is as listed on page 7.

It was moved by Ms. Tidd, seconded by Ms. Serratelli to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

Vote: Ayes: Mr. Ted Freedman, Mr. Aaron Goldblatt, Ms. Pearl Serratelli, Ms. Kenyetta Jackson, Ms. Earnestine Smith, and Ms. Lorraine Tidd. Nays: None. Abstentions: Mr. Martin Weingast.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS AS OF JANUARY 15, 2021:
• Ms. Serratelli inquired about the vouchers to Evelyn Thompson. Ms. Chmiel explained Evelyn Thompson has been hired as an independent contractor. Mr. Freedman questioned is she would be responsible for tax payment, and Ms. Chmiel confirmed she would.

• Mr. Freedman inquired about Voucher #32298 to Edwin Lopez. Ms. Chmiel confirmed that Edwin paid for Zoom and was reimbursed as not all vendors accept purchase order payments. Ms. Chmiel explained that the Zoom account provided for free to the Library did not have the needed features, thus leading to a different account.

• Ms. Chmiel noted the Library has not been reimbursed for City ID Program. Mr. Barbanell has been tasked with following up on the reimbursements.

• It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Tidd 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: Mr. Martin Weingast.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

• President Aaron Goldblatt highlighted the Committees and their members for 2021.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Consult your packet for the complete report. Highlights include:

• Ms. Chmiel announced that the carpeting project has been completed. She explained it would be too expensive to change the carpet of the entire Library as the 3rd Floor project was close to $35K.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that the City ID program is not in place and that additional resources are needed from the City to safely accommodate the program.

• Ms. Chmiel noted the new parking lot gates are to be installed next week at Main.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that OSHA training has been completed and obtaining certificates of completion will decrease insurance costs.
• Ms. Chmiel provided an update on the Willdan project. There is a balance of $700,000 and the Board needs to decide on using Capital reserve or City Funds to complete the project. A third option is a lease/purchase plan recommended by Willdan.

• Mr. Freedman inquired about the shelving to be donated by Trinitas. Ms. Chmiel informed him that plan had to be abandoned due to space restrictions. The new plan involves the Local History Room relocating to a glass classroom while the genealogy materials will be relocated to the old Local History Room. Space for government documents needs to be determined.

• Ms. Chmiel announced that the Grotto Fund laptops and hotspots have arrived and are being configured. A waiting list of eligible participants is to be determined.

• Ms. Chmiel announced Makers’ Day will be “Take and Make” activities for children, teens and adults. In this capacity, participants will get materials in a bag or container and complete the activity at home. Ms. Chmiel confirmed that Tracy Robinson secured a $500 grant.

• Ms. Serratelli inquired about progress at the branch locations. Ms. Chmiel noted that LaCorte will be opening for curbside services. Carolyn is preparing this location.

• Ms. Chmiel gave an update that another staff member has a family member that has tested positive for COVID.

• Mr. Freedman inquired about Saturday hours of operation. Ms. Chmiel commented on the challenge of staff availability, but she is considering it.

• Mr. Freedman suggested chat hours and Ms. Chmiel committed to introducing this idea to related staff. Ms. Chmiel noted the staffing issues, the direct result of COVID, that make reopening a challenge.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

• Ms. Chmiel explained that almost all services are available to the public remotely and through curbside pickup.
• Ms. Chmiel confirmed that tax services will not be available at Elizabeth Public Library this year, but there are other organizations whose information we are sharing with interested patrons.

• Ms. Chmiel reviewed the COVID stats to defend not being open. Mr. Freedman commended her on the document and asked that it be sent to Board Members.

• Ms. Serratelli stated that an April opening date is optimistic.

• Ms. Chmiel requested to revise the holiday closings to include July 5, 2021 in celebration of July 4th.

• Ms. Chmiel noted that as the President, Mr. Goldblatt should decide on the committee meeting to discuss the Willdan project.

• Mr. Goldblatt inquired about a City department that could advocate for the Library regarding the Willdan project. Ms. Chmiel replied that the City’s attorney and engineer previewed the initial documents.

• Mr. Weingast commented that someone with knowledge and expertise should review the budget projections for the Willdan project.

• Mr. Weingast inquired about other libraries utilizing solar power. Ms. Chmiel confirmed that no Elizabeth entity are currently utilizing solar energy and the schools have inquired about the same solar project.

• Mr. Goldblatt commented that The Board has to know definitively that this project is a financial benefit to Elizabeth Public Library and the Committee can move forward after review from appropriate City officials.

• Ms. Chmiel informed the Board of an April deadline for the solar program.

• Resolution to adjust 2021 holiday schedule to include Monday, July 5, 2021 and not Friday, July 2, 2021.
It was moved by Ms. Serratelli, seconded by Ms. Tidd to approve Monday, July 5th on the Holiday Schedule in observance of Independence Day. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ms. Chmiel informed the Board that the Local History Room is in need of space to store donations.

- Ms. Chmiel reviewed her findings in the insurance policy. Mr. Weingast commented the section they were given applies to the Board members, and does not apply to accidents on the property.

- Ms. Serratelli questioned if the Library had an umbrella policy and Ms. Chmiel will follow up on her inquiry.

- The Board of Trustees selected to pass on the Indigo project.

- It was moved by Mr. Freedman, seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the cooperative pricing resolution. Vote: Vote in Acclamation. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Submitted by Celeste Layton