APPROVED MINUTES
CLIFTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

The monthly meeting of the Trustees of the Clifton Public Library was held at the Main Library, 292 Piaget Avenue, Clifton, NJ. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 P.M. by President Patricia Vasilik. Library Counsel read an announcement which stated that pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of the meeting had been given in the annual meeting notice to the Record, the Herald News, the Clifton Journal, posted on the Clifton Public Library Website and in the Clifton Public Library and filed with the Clifton City Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Present: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik, Library Director Justine Tomczak, and Library Counsel Michael A. Cerone, Jr. Absent: Vivian Semeraro

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the August 16, 2023 meeting. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Polk, the minutes of the August 16, 2023 meeting were approved on roll call vote. Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one addressed the Board. On motion made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Charsky, the Board, on roll call vote, voted to close the Public Comment portion of the meeting. Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director provided the board with a written report with updates on the Library since the July meeting.

The Director met with Maintenance Supervisor Nick Alectoridis, Jason Van Winkle, Director of the DPW, and Giuseppe Mannina, Shade Tree Division Superintendent, to discuss what to do with the corner of Piaget and Third now that the Purple Heart monument is gone.

Modernfold came in on August 18 to fix the Main Library's community room folding walls.

There have been issues with the Main Library phone lines. Administrative Clerk Christine Althawabta has spent a lot of time on the phone with Verizon to determine the issue, and work to fix this.

The Library renewed its contract with Envisionware for wireless printing at Main. Statistics have been on the rise and staff has been reporting a lot of usage.

The group study room at Main has been reopened. The room is first-come first-serve to groups of 2-6 people with a one hour time limit, unless no one is waiting.

The Library is about to go out to bid on Main HVAC project. Board Counsel Michael Cerone, Christine and the Director have been working with Crane to finalize the documents and set a timeline. The project will go out to bid shortly and should be on the board's November agenda to award the contract.

Librarian Vivian Ungerleider reports that the Yoga program, provided for free by an instructor from Crunch Fitness, continues to do well. Vivian has another program on posture and balance by a local physical therapy group scheduled for Thursday, September 28 at 6:30pm at Main, and an estate planning seminar scheduled for October 18 at Allwood.

In Children's Department, the following summer reading program statistics were compiled for reporting to the State.

- Reading logs handed in both libraries: 664
- Books read: 11027
- Programs offered: 99
- Attendance: 2542

The finale program featured Travis from Eyes of the Wild, who brought some animals with him.

The Kiwanis Club of Clifton donated ice cream to wrap up the summer, with Key Club members from CHS on hand to help give it out.

Librarian Juliana Schicho is in the process of collecting all of our photos and videos for the Summer Reading Wrap-Up video, which will be posted on the Library's YouTube channel soon. The Children's Blog has been receiving many views, with 2,051 hits this month alone and 1,546 last month. She posts many of our program photos on here.

With summer at a close, Juliana, Supervisor Gloria Abero, and Librarian Heather Nilsen are planning fall programs. In addition to the classic story times and crafts, local authors will be visiting, digital scavenger hunts are in the works, outdoor programs are being planned – including the return of the Headless Horseman! – and Halloween events are being scheduled.

Gloria is finalizing a project with reading specialist Ali Zeidan. There will be five weeks of reading classes for first-grade struggling readers. This pilot program is founded by Mrs. Marie Mosckvam's donation, a former volunteer tutor at the library. Children will keep the book they will use in class to encourage them to continue practicing their reading skills at home.

Gloria applied for the ALA and FINRA Foundation Grant "Thinking Money for Kids program." If awarded, we will receive kits for children. The library commits to doing programs to help them make smart financial choices now and in the future, thanks to the skills they will learn.

Two solar eclipses will be coming soon: October 14 (annular) and April 8, 2024 (total). The Library received 500 eyeglasses from the Gordon and Betty Moor Foundation to distribute among children to look at the eclipses. The Library will be doing programs and book displays to create awareness among patrons.

September is Library Card Sign-up Month and Juliana created a booklist for a display in both the Main Library and Allwood Branch, which has been circulating well. She also made a booklist for Autumn as well as National Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from September 15th-October 15th of this year.

Library Assistant Tess Lazo-Iwachow sent wording regarding Library Card Sign Up Month to City Hall to put on their outdoor digital display on the corner of Clifton and Van Houten, as well as created a slide to send to Clifton's Cable TV Channel advertising the event.

The Clifton Health Department will spend one day a week at each building for the next few weeks conducting a Community Health Assessment Survey.

Full time Allwood staff have all reported that on their respective Saturdays to work at Allwood there were patrons trying to enter the building despite the fact Allwood is always closed on Saturdays during the months of July and August. On the flip side even with Allwood being closed on Saturdays, total door counts for the summer months do not go down. August's door count is the higher of the summer months but this is expected with last minute students needing to do their summer reading assignment. Branch Manager Barbara Altilio notes that in the 6 years she's been at Allwood the door counts never fall in the summer months; our Saturday patrons choose to come during the week instead of going to Main on Allwood's closed Saturdays.

Students from the CHS Impact Program (for students with autism and developmental disabilities) will begin at Allwood Friday, September 15. Library assistants Cheryl and Marta decorated the workspace for the kids with a welcome back banner and made library ambassador tags for them to wear when working. One of the students visited during the summer with her sister-in-law and was so proud to tell her that we all knew her. The students will also be at Main on Mondays.

On Tuesday, September 19 at the Allwood Branch and Thursday, September 21 at the Main Library, there will be a teen crafts pick-up program, for tweens and teens who missed out on attending the teen crafts programs during the summer due to summer camp, vacation plans, or other conflicts, the pick-up programs will give them the opportunity to take the crafts home and complete them.

Inspired by the Children's Department, Khusboo is in the process of creating a Book Menu to facilitate better readers' advisory for teens.

Khusboo registered for the EBSCO webinar: “Show Me the Money: Financial Literacy for All Ages at the Public Library” on September 20, 2023. The one-hour webinar focuses on providing librarians practical strategies for enhancing financial education for library users.

Beginning every Wednesday starting on September 27 and ending on October 18, teen girls between the ages of 13 and 19 can attend a workshop on journaling entitled “Unleash Your Creativity”. The program will be run by a licensed clinical social worker, Najamah Davis, MSW, LCSW.

Kathy Sauerborn from the Clifton Garden Club held a butterfly program at Allwood. Additionally, the Garden Club continues their work on the grounds of both buildings.

Library Assistant Marta Feduniewicz-Alborzi decorated Allwood with a back-to-school theme with cutouts of pencils for patrons to write their favorite book title on which will be hung around the library. We do this every season with a different shape and patrons of all ages enjoy looking at the different titles that people recommend. Tess also changed the display around the circulation desk at Main.

Library Assistant Matt Agnoli and Sr. Library Assistant Joel Colon will be attending the city’s senior BBQ on September 22 to represent the library and promote our homebound service.

Allwood continues to be flooded with donations, and many boxes have been sent over to Main for their upcoming book sale. When donations come in, they are also assessed for possible inclusion in our collections. Recently, many titles have been added when we received 2023 titles that we either didn’t purchase for Allwood or are so popular that a second copy is useful to fill demand. Book Nook sales continue to do well; when it is kept full of books sales average at least $100 month. At that rate sales will be at 2018/2019 book sale year end totals. Allwood had a big multi-day sale earlier in the year, and Main is scheduled to have one October 5, 6 and 7 in the community room. Figures for Book Nook sales are provided monthly in the board packets under both General Fund – Unrestricted Revenue and the Statement of Revenues.

Staff noticed more of the library’s neighbors illegally parking in the library/park parking lot instead of the street or their own driveways. This can be just a small annoyance usually but on a busy day or if a big event is going on in the library, actual library users cannot find a parking space because of the illegally parked cars.

Branch Manager Barbara has completed the American Library Association’s Certified Public Library Administrator Program. Over the last two years she has been taking courses through the ALA to receive this certification and to learn and grow as a branch manager. The courses completed include organization and personnel management, library marketing, politics and partnerships, planning and management of libraries, management of technology, fundraising and grantsmanship, and budget and finance.

Board President Vasilik and the Director attended a statewide Zoom meeting on September 6 to learn about the Community Center Digital Connect grant program capital projects fund.

Personnel notes:
Analis Ortiz was selected to fill a vacant Page position, 15 hours/week, $14.13/hr. She began August 21.

Part time Building Maintenance Worker Sokol Gjermeni has resigned. His last day of work will be September 20.

Full time Principal Library Assistant Laure Barrett will be retiring. Her retirement will begin March 1, 2024 and she will use terminal leave as a prelude to date, making her last day of work sometime mid-December.

DONATIONS
Unrestricted:
$ 3.35 Canister

Restricted:
$ 1,000.00 From Adele Piela for books in Memory of Janine Piela
$ 1,000.00 From Adele Piela for books in Memory of Richard and Mark Piela
$ 20.00 From Karen Sommers for books in Memory of Margaret Zarif

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence for the board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BUILDING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Board reviewed the Encumbrance List dated September 1, 2023, and the Claims List dated September 20, 2023. On Motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Gozdz, the Board, on roll call vote, approved Encumbrance List dated September 1, 2023, in the amount of $89,614.21 and the Claims List dated September 20, 2023 in the amount of $25,762.56. 56. Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

Trustee Charsky noted that general revenue received through August already exceeds the budgeted figure for the year.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

On Motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee White, the Board, with Trustee Polk and President Vasilik abstaining, and all other trustees present being in favor, voted to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters at 6:55 pm.

The Board reconvened at 7:21 pm with the same members present. Counsel announced that the Board met in executive session and discussed personnel matters. No action was taken in the Executive session.

On Motion made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the personnel agenda as follows:

Provisional promotions of the following employees:
Isaac Gonzalez to Senior Building Maintenance Worker, salary to be on 3rd step of proposed new salary scale ($45,555.79),
Vivian Ungerleider to Librarian 2, salary to be on 6th Step ($75,700.86)
Khusboo Rana to Librarian 2, salary to be on 2nd Step ($62,739.99).
Approve 15.75 hours of unpaid leave for Usha Thampi-Lukose.

Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White. No: None; Abstain: Barbara Polk, and President Patricia Vasilik.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Director has advertised for librarians and library assistants for Sundays. The Director has received many applications and is in the process of reviewing and scheduling interviews.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board reviewed proposals for landscaping at the Main Library and the Allwood Branch. On motion by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the proposal of Jack Mayo for landscaping services at Main Library and Allwood Branch in the total amount of $3,550. Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

The Board reviewed the proposal from Generations Services for repair of the outdoor pole & recessed lights at the Main Library. The proposal is submitted in accordance with a bid award made to Generations Services by the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey for Time and Materials Bid #ESCNJ 23/23-02. On motion by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Sterni, the Board, on roll call vote, accepted the proposal from Generations Services for repair of the outdoor pole and recessed lights in the amount of $2,549.44. Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

The Board reviewed costs for electricity supply presented for AEP Energy and PSE&G. On motion by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Gozdz, the Board, on roll call vote, approved PSE&G as the Library's electricity supplier effective in October. Vote: Yes: Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

On Motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the request made by the Director to allow children's books authors who are doing book readings in October to offer their books for sale to those attending the programs. Vote: Yes:

Thomas Charsky, Marianna Gozdz, Barbara Polk, Richard Ruggiero, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, David White, and President Patricia Vasilik; No: None; Abstain: None.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

There were no trustee comments.

On motion made by Trustee Gozdz and seconded by Trustee White, the Board, with all present being in favor, voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael A. Cerone, Jr
MICHAEL A. CERONE, JR.
Library Counsel