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## Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees

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The Board of Library Trustees met on July 30, 2019, 3:30 PM  
in the meeting room of the Wilks Library

**Present:** Diana Henry, Vice-Chair  
Carl J. Cruz  
Elsie R. Fraga  
Helen Rogers  
Kimberly S. Ferreira  
Ann R. O'Leary  
Father Kevin Harrington  
Lee Blake

Olivia Melo, Director  
Carmen Brodeur, Account Clerk

**Excused:** Very Rev. Constantine S. Bebis

**Guest:** Thomas Anderson, Superintendent, New Bedford Public Schools  
Karen Stefanik, Wilks Library Branch Manager

**Called to order:** Ms. Henry called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the minutes of the June Trustees' meeting; it was seconded by Ms. Blake; unanimously approved.

Ms. Melo welcomed Superintendent Anderson and thanked him for accepting the Trustees' invitation to attend and meet them. The New Bedford Library has a long history of working with the School Department, especially with the Bookmobile service. After introductions, discussion was held on how the Bookmobile is currently utilized and how the stops can be more effective for both the library and the schools when made during school hours.

### **FRIENDS REPORT**

Ms. Melo reported on behalf of the Friends. The small group is working on gathering the documentation necessary to send to the accountant to file and regain the 503c status.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the staff reports; seconded by Ms. Fraga.

Mr. Cruz asked for a moment of silence and asked Fr. Harrington to lead all in a prayer in dedication to the mother of Denise Plaskon, Lawler Branch manager, who had passed away in June. A sympathy card on behalf of the Trustees will be sent to Ms. Plaskon.

Ms. Henry noted that the usage statistics at the Howland-Green branch are increasing and that Ms. Hester is doing a nice job as the new manager. Ms. Melo explained that Ms. Hester has rearranged the current seating and computer layout and there is a look and feel of organization, making the branch more inviting. Because of this new set up and arranging of the seating, the staff are able to monitor the patron activity right from the desk.

Mr. Cruz inquired if the Howland-Green restrooms were now open to the public. Ms. Melo reported that they are now kept locked and the keys are kept behind the desk. The public have to request the key in the same manner as patrons at the Wilks Branch for use of restroom.

Fr. Harrington noted that the Special Collections monthly report noted 4 visitors to the art room even though the Art Curator has not been hired. Ms. Melo explained that Ms. Goodman will open the art room for visitors upon request and for a few hours on Tuesday and Wednesday, long-time Art Room volunteer, Louie Doherty assists with access to the room.

The staff reports were unanimously approved.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the Director's report; seconded by Ms. Fraga.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Melo reported the following –

- The National Book Foundation is hosting *summer with award winners* and New Bedford was selected as a site (1 of 5 in the U.S. this year). Novelist Rebecca Makkai and poet Chen Chen will be at the Main library on AHA! Night! August 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm
- Attended City Council FY20 budget meeting on Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. The library budget was approved as submitted.
- The summer reading kick off with NASA Astronaut Stephen Bowen was a wonderful turnout with 190 attendees. The challenge in hosting this program (and programs like this) is that we are a municipality and the time between requesting a check to actually receiving it in hand to mail to presenter is longer than seven days. It's for programs such as this that a Friend's of the Library are a necessity.
- The Count Committee for Census 2020 was announced on June 10<sup>th</sup> and the Library Director is included as libraries and computer access will be important for this census.
- Partnered with New Bedford Art Museum/Artworks! to bring Harry and the Potters to New Bedford for the end of summer reading program celebration on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Received the United Way grant for \$8,000 for the Wash and Read Laundromat project. Books will be supplied by United Way and the project will start in early August. An individual will be hired to manage the book shelves at the Laundromats.
- New Bedford Symphony offered mini-concert events at all NB branches during the months of June and July.
- Book Rich Environment event on June 27<sup>th</sup> with the New Bedford Housing Authority.
- Reported that security watchman Ramon Bermudez will continue to work between Main & Howland-Green branch to assist with patron problems at both locations. Ms. Melo added that Mr. Bermudez goes above and beyond his work duties and has excellent customer service skills. The Board agreed Mr. Bermudez has been performing at an exemplary standard.

The Director's report was unanimously approved.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. **Art:** Nothing to report.
2. **Building:** Ms. O'Leary, Chair – Ms. Melo said the bookmobile generator will need to be replaced with a new one. The Board agreed and approved the replacement of the bookmobile generator pending cost. Mr. Cruz added it's time for a new generator as the current one has been repaired many times and the issue continues. Ms. Melo will work with the city garage manager, Steven Koczera on a plan for securing a new generator.
3. **Finance:** Ms. Fraga, Chair – Nothing to report.
4. **Gifts:** Father Harrington, Chair – Nothing to report.
5. **Personnel:** Ms. Rogers, Chair – The committee met on June 20<sup>th</sup> to interview the three finalists for the Art Curator position and a decision could not be made as all candidates were ideal for our organization. The committee asked the finalists to submit writing samples such as grants and any other materials which would assist with the selection process. After review of the materials submitted, a final decision was made to recommend the hire of Alexandra Copeland from Norwalk, CT. Ms. Rogers noted that Ms. Copeland is a graduate of Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science and studied Art History. She provided excellent written samples of her work which aligned with what the library is looking for and all of her references were outstanding. Ms. Rogers asked the Board for a motion to accept the recommendation.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the committee recommendation; seconded by Ms. Blake; unanimously approved

6. **Policy:** Ms. Blake, Chair – The committee met in early July and items discussed were committee assignments and updating the program policy. A draft of the policy was provided to the Board for their review and adoption at the September meeting. A proposed committee reassignment was also prepared and presented to Vice-Chair Diana Henry for adoption and now includes new Trustees, Ann O'Leary and Kimberly Ferreira.
7. **Scholarships:** Mr. Cruz, Chair – Ms. Melo reported that all documentation has been sent to the bank for disbursement of the scholarship funds to Simmons, which is the school both scholarship recipients Melissa Sears and Janet Barbosa will attend in the fall.
8. **Security:** Nothing to report.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the Committee reports; seconded by Ms. Rogers, and unanimously approved.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Blake reported the Trustee Manual needs to be updated to include attendance requirements to meet quorum. It will be reviewed and advised on by the City Solicitor's office.

Ms. Melo reported that the security camera installation project for the Howland-Green branch is anticipated to be complete by the first week of July.

Mr. Cruz asked if the paneling from the windows at the Howland-Green branch had been removed as decided on at the last meeting. Ms. Melo reported that upon inspection of the windows by DFFM, it was determined the window panes had been removed and replaced with wood panels. Glass windows will need to be purchased before DFFM can remove the wood paneling.

National Book foundation Author event- See above.

United way Grant/ Laundromat project- See above.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Nothing to report.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Ms. Melo informed the Board that the LSTA grant of \$15,000 for the *CreateLab* was approved. It will house a range of equipment such as computers, scanners, laser printer, and multi-media workstations. The funds will be available after October 1<sup>st</sup> to commence project.

Ms. Melo reported that the Wilks, Lawler and Howland-Green branches were open to the public as cooling centers on Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup> as requested by Mayor Mitchell. Branch managers of the three locations, one full-time library assistant and two part-time staff agreed to work for the 9-5 shift and were compensated with a day off during the week.

The Nominating Committee was appointed by Vice-Chair Diana Henry for the election of the 2019-2020 Vice-Chair at the September meeting.

## **NEXT MEETING:**

Regular meeting: Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at 3:30pm at the Main Library.

Meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.

Clerk,

*Lee Blake*