

## **Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees**

---

The Board of Library Trustees met on September 26, 2023, 3:30 PM,  
in the meeting room of the Lawler Branch Library

**Present:** Diana Henry, Vice-Chair  
Carl J. Cruz  
Elsie R. Fraga  
Ann O’Leary  
Helen Rogers  
Maria Gloria de Sá  
Kimberly S. Ferreira  
Lee Blake  
Olivia Melo, Director  
Carmen Brodeur, Administrative Assistant

**Guest:** Janet Barbosa, representing Mayor Jon Mitchell  
Denise Plaskon, Lawler Branch Manager

**Called to order:** Ms. Henry called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the minutes of the July Trustees’ meeting, seconded by Ms. Rogers; unanimously approved.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

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

Ms. Rogers commended the library staff for doing a wonderful job with all the programs and their continued dedication in promoting library services out in the community.

Ms. Rogers and fellow board members complimented Casa da Saudade Branch Manager, Irene de Amaral, for coordinating the August 10<sup>th</sup> program with author Duarte Mendonça, celebrating Madeiran culture. He was invited to present his book and gave an excellent talk about the Madeiran community in New Bedford followed by an interesting discussion on leadership and the implications for the future with the Madeiran representation in the United States.

### **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the Director’s report, seconded by Ms. de Sá, unanimously approved.

Ms. Melo reported the following:

- Wrote a recommendation letter for Irene de Amaral, Casa da Saudade, Branch Manager, in support of her enrollment application to Simmons College to obtain a master's in library science.
- A patron at the Howland-Green branch, under the influence of a substance, required assistance from 911 on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. He was transported to the hospital and a police report has been received to be used in the NO TRESPASS process for the individual.
- The transfer of a \$10,000 surplus in the FY23 budget from Library *Personnel Salaries* to *Public Safety* line provided the funds necessary to update all the security cameras at the Main Library to high definition, color image and IP-based (accessible via the internet).
- On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, Guido's Plate Glass replaced the damaged window in the Youth Services room on the Market Street side (near the Lewis Temple statue) at the Main Library.
- Casa Branch Manager, Irene de Amaral and I attended a book launch event at Casa dos Acores in Fall River. The author, Jose Andrade, Regional Director to the emigrant communities for the Azorean government, discussed his book and signed copies purchased for the Casa branch collection.
- The non-profit status of the Friends of the New Bedford Free Public Library has been completely restored, effective August 23, 2023.
- On September 7<sup>th</sup> I met with the new Consul of Portugal, Dr. Tiago De Sousa, and gave him a tour of the Main Library and spoke of possibly partnering on events. On September 14<sup>th</sup> we visited the Casa da Saudade Library so that he would be familiar with this unique, municipally funded library.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept the Committee reports, seconded by Ms. O'Leary; unanimously approved.

1. **Art:** Ms. O'Leary, Chair – Nothing to report.
2. **Building:** Ms. Rogers, Chair – Nothing to report.
3. **Development:** Ms. Ferreira, Chair – The Friends of the New Bedford Free Public Library 501c3 status has been approved and re-established. The Trustees joined Ms. Melo in thanking Ms. Ferreira for her dedicated assistance to the process of getting the Friends organization back into good standing with the IRS by filing the necessary reports. The board also acknowledged the excellent work done by Bethany Silva, Youth Services Librarian, and attorney Michelle Keith on behalf of the Friends organization.

Ms. Ferreira reported the following: The Friends of the Library held their Annual Meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup>. A new slate of Directors was installed, Michelle Keith as President, Kari Felisberto as Vice-President, Ned Denby as Secretary. Olivia Melo will remain as Treasurer and Bethany Silva as Public Relations.

4. **Finance:** Ms. Fraga, Chair – Nothing to report.

5. **Nominating:** Ms. Fraga, Chair – The recommendation of the Nominating Committee was to re-nominate Ms. Diane Henry as Vice-Chair for the 2023-2024 term. Mr. Cruz made a motion to accept, seconded by Ms. Rogers; unanimously approved.
6. **Personnel:** Ms. Blake, Chair – A Personnel Committee will be scheduled to review the library directors' annual evaluation.
7. **Policy:** Ms. Blake, Chair – Nothing to report.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Melo reported she had received an email from Matthews Specialty Vehicles about the outreach vehicle which is waiting for the inside components to be installed. The library should receive the vehicle soon, but a delivery date is still unavailable.

The edits suggested on the draft of the strategic plan were incorporated into the final draft submitted to the Board for final approval. A vote was required by the Board of Library Commissioners for the FY24-28 Strategic Plan. Mr. Cruz made a motion to approve the final draft of the FY24-28 Strategic Plan; seconded by Ms. O'Leary; unanimously approved.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Melo informed the Board that the roof project for the Howland-Green branch, through the Capital Improvement plan, had begun. The vendor, Silktown Roofing, is expected to be on site for 2-3 weeks. Now that the courtyard windows at this location have been uncovered and repaired, next on the list will be the replacement of the doors leading into the courtyard with ones with glass panels and the proper panic bars.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Ms. Melo reported the receipt of a gift of \$500.00 from Mr. Donald Bellefeuille, in memory of his wife Carol Bellefeuille, a former library employee who retired several years ago and passed away recently. As per the family wishes, the funds will be added to the Certificate of Deposit in memory of Hannah Roy, Carol Bellefeuille's granddaughter, when the certificate comes up for renewal. An acknowledgement letter was sent to the family.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE BOARD**

Ms. Henry thanked Lawler Branch Manager, Denise Plaskon, for attending the meeting and hosting the Board at her branch, adding that the library looked beautiful.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

Regular meeting: Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. at the Howland-Green Branch.

Ms. O'Leary made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Ferreira; passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 pm.

Clerk,  
*Lee Blake*