

YONKERS PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD MEETING
RIVERFRONT LIBRARY
JUNE 13, 2024

ATTENDANCE

TRUSTEES:	Nancy Maron Joseph Puglia Stephen Jannetti Michael Sabatino John Daily Jr. Ofunne Edoziem
LIBRARY DIRECTOR:	Jesse Montero
ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR:	Shauna Porteus
BUSINESS MANAGER:	Vivian Presedo
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY:	James Hackett
WLS BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:	NONE
UNION REPRESENTATIVE:	Brandon Neider
GUESTS:	Mary Robison, Benedict Cosgrove, Zahra Baird

The Board Meeting began at 7:00 pm.

President Maron opened the meeting by asking Director Montero to introduce a new staff member. Director Montero welcomed Benedict Cosgrove as the newest librarian in the Riverfront Reference Department. Mr. Cosgrove, who previously served in a part-time capacity for a year, was appointed to full-time status on April 26 and has over 30 years of experience in writing and editing. Mr. Cosgrove thanked Director Montero for the introduction and stated that he was fortunate to have the opportunity to work full-time for Riverfront and has enjoyed his time with the department so far.

MINUTES

On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded by Trustee Jannetti and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Minutes of the Meeting of May 16, 2024.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Director Montero was pleased to announce that Zahra Baird, Branch Administrator of Crestwood Library, was recently recognized by Westchester Library Association with the Bonnie Katz Award. The award, in honor of the late Ossining librarian, is given every year to a librarian who embodies a spirit of compassion, giving and service to patrons. This is the second time a Yonkers librarian has received the award, with Alan Houston having received it in 2021.

Director Montero reported that summer reading began on June 1 with a kickoff event at Will Library. The event, which was produced in partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Yonkers, was attended by over 600 and featured a bubble bus and performers. Riverfront will host an event later in the month on June 21, featuring the popular Zev the Entertainer. Director Montero noted that this year's summer reading program was the result of increased collaboration between YPL and Yonkers Public Schools and was looking forward to a successful summer.

Director Montero discussed YPL's celebration of Pride Month. He announced that the Riverfront Art Gallery will open the new exhibit "Radical Joy" on June 15 which celebrates the expression of queer joy, as well as an author talk sponsored by Sarah Lawrence College Writing Institute and Foundation for Yonkers Public Library (FYPL) on June 20 which will feature acclaimed authors Edgar Gomez and Amelia Possanza. He also reported that YPL participated in the annual Yonkers Pride Festival on June 8. Other planned events included a Drag Queen Story Hour on June 22 and a Drag and Draw art class on June 26.

Director Montero reported that YPL will again participate in Sarah Lawrence College's Community Leadership Internship Program (CLIP). Alleah Donahue will assist the Riverfront Children's Department with programming and services in the Sensory Room and Eleanora Lewis will assist with local history archives across all three buildings. The CLIP program began in late May and will continue through August; he noted that the program has been successfully managed by Head of Riverfront Reference Mary Robison for several years and has produced future librarian trainees, such as Charlie Loftus.

Director Montero reported that YPL was awarded \$5,000 by New York Presbyterian Hospital to support community health programs at Will Library, which was an increase of \$2,000 from previous years. The award will fund programming on healthy aging, women's health, emergency response and fall prevention.

President Maron asked about foot traffic in the buildings. Director Montero replied that new gate counters had been installed at Riverfront and Will libraries and, while the data is incomplete, he was hopeful that the new counters may reveal greater than previously thought counts.

Trustee Daily asked about the possibility of advertising services and programs in the Mayor's weekly newsletter. Director Montero agreed that advertising more in the newsletter would be a great way to promote library services and programs but he noted that while the library does make the newsletter sometimes, the marketing department is presently understaffed and it is difficult to regularly communicate the information by the weekly deadlines, but he would make it a priority as he expected marketing capacity to improve very soon.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Representative Neider reminded the Board that the current labor contract will expire in 17 days. Director Montero and President Maron asked if the Union was inviting them to negotiate; Representative Neider replied that the Union and Library do not need the City’s approval to agree to a new contract and formally invited them to start negotiations. Director Montero asked what the status of negotiations were with SEIU 704A; Representative Neider confirmed that their contract with the City of Yonkers expired in December and he expected 704A to offer an invitation to the City soon but was pessimistic of making progress anytime soon.

Representative Neider left the meeting at 7:16 pm.

WLS REPORT

NONE

PERSONNEL REPORT

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Sabatino and unanimously carried, the Board acknowledged the following terminations:

Lagual, Justin; P/T Page, \$16.00/hr, eff. 5/13/2024

Murshed, Salem; P/T Page, \$16.00/hr, eff. 5/17/2024

Coyle, Maryann; Permanent Clerk I, \$56,670/yr, eff. 5/24/2024 (retired)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings & Grounds - Daily (chair), Puglia.

Trustee Puglia raised a discussion on the feasibility of a new library. Director Montero continues to support the Mayor’s proposed idea of a new library but noted that they were dependent on the City of Yonkers for a location and funding. Trustee Sabatino remarked that he was aware the Mayor has discussed several locations but nothing was finalized. President Maron suggested that a bookmobile might be a good way to improve access to library service in the meantime; Trustee Sabatino added that a bookmobile might also help justify and stimulate enthusiasm for a new library, Chairperson Daily agreed that data would help demonstrate demand. President Maron asked Director Montero and Trustee Sabatino to continue discussions with the Deputy Mayor and Mayor respectively and Trustees Daily and Puglia to study improving access with a bookmobile further and discuss it again within the next six months.

Employee Relations - Puglia (chair), Daily.

The Board discussed the expiring labor contract, including a first step of combining the existing stipulations into one contractual document; the Board discussed what that process would entail and what the first steps might be.

President Maron asked the Employee Relations Committee to discuss other ways to support the staff, citing a luncheon they sponsored earlier in the year and FYPL's practice of honoring a staff member at their annual gala. Chairperson Puglia expressed his concern for the staff and the pressure they face to serve patrons with mental health issues. Director Montero thanked him for the acknowledgement and discussed the challenges the mental health crises has created to library service and the increased burnout among library workers nationwide; he added that he will be proposing a new code of conduct for the Board to approve at next month's meeting and hoped the new expectations would create a healthier work environment for staff.

Finance, Budget & Planning – Jannetti (chair).

President Maron announced to the Board that the City Council formally adopted a budget earlier in the week. Director Montero added that there were no additional cuts to the library's budget beyond the 25% cut to Sunday service that was already in the Mayor's executive budget last month.

Chairperson Jannetti discussed trustee continuing educational classes on the subject of finance and said he would attend one soon.

Outreach - Edoziem (chair), Phelan, Sabatino.

Chairperson Edoziem reported that she intends to discuss outreach to local family centers about their book-based needs and how the library can support them. Assistant Director Porteus suggested Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry; she noted that although they have a library a valuable partnership with them could still be formed.

Policy - Sabatino (chair).

Chairperson Sabatino asked trustees to also review the policy book and contact him about any suggestions they may have. Director Montero believed that the updated code of conduct he will propose at the next meeting will improve policy and invited trustees to join his staff meetings on it.

Fundraising & Development - Jannetti (chair)

Foundation Update: President Maron reported that FYPL recently received a \$750 grant from the Rotary Club of Yonkers to support Make Music Day activities. She also reported that with the assistance of new FYPL staff they would pursue additional grants, including a capacity planning grant that would fund a FYPL staff retreat and planning session in the fall that would hopefully lead to a restructuring of the Foundation.

President Maron discussed Make Music Day in Yonkers on June 21. She shared flyers of the activities planned for the day, specifically the Marching Cobras, a student drum corps that will perform on the front steps of Riverfront Library. She also shared drum sticks and

other musical instruments that would be provided free of charge to the community for a public drum lesson the Marching Cobras would conduct during their performance.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

On motion of Trustee Edoziem, seconded by Trustee Daily and unanimously carried, the Board approved payment of bills as listed on Schedule #864.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Montero presented the 2023 NYS Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries included in the Board Report and asked the Board to approve it. On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded by Trustee Jannetti and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Annual Report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Maron motioned the Board into Executive Session at 7:48 pm to discuss the employment history and performance of a particular employee and asked Director Montero, Assistant Director Porteus and Business Manager Presedo to join them. The session ended at 8:14 pm.

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Sabatino and unanimously carried, the Board voted to ratify the stipulation of settlement between Yonkers Public Library and employee #732671.

NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE – Wednesday, July 24, 2024 at 7:00pm at Grinton I. Will Library.

On motion of Trustee Daily, seconded by Trustee Puglia and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the Meeting at 8:15 pm.

Jesse Montero
Library Director & Secretary