

**Minutes of the November 28, 2017 Meeting of the
Trustees of the Free Public Library of the City of Newark
Held in the 2nd Floor Board Room, 5 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102**

Call to Order: Dr. Crist called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM and read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

Roll Call and Attendance: Dr. Crist called the roll. Mr. Thomas Alrutz, Mr. Jeremy Johnson, Dr. Anasa Maat, and Dr. Rosemary Steinbaum were present, forming a quorum. Mr. Jeffrey Trzeciak, Library Director was present. Ms. Sandra King was excused absent. Ms. Trish Morris-Yamba arrived at 5:13 PM. Mr. Charles Auffant arrived at 5:43 PM.

Approval of the Public Session Minutes: Dr. Crist asked for comments or corrections to the minutes of the September 26, 2017 meeting. None were offered. On the motion of Dr. Crist, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the public minutes of the September 26, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

Correspondence: Mr. Trzeciak introduced two items of correspondence:

- Letter from Senator Cory Booker recommending NPL to receive the IMLS National Medal.
- Letter from a patron expressing gratitude to the NPL for many years of service, and for support through many years of personal troubles.

Director's Verbal Report: Mr. Trzeciak offered a report highlighting several areas of activity:

Main library and Branch activity (Statistics)

- Overall patron visits are up by nearly 7%
- Library Sponsored Programs are up by nearly 53% with attendance up by nearly 75%
- Community sponsored programs are up 35% with attendance up by nearly 34%
- Circulation is up overall by 7%
- Teen services
 - Teen Advisory Board (possibly tutoring children)
 - Scholastic Writing Awards
 - Jewelry Making
 - Poetry Workshops
 - Girls who code
- Notable events and programs:
 - October 11, Shaping Lives: Links to Homelessness Services--Over 300 people attended, received referrals, supplies, sneakers, haircuts, health screenings, and lunches. This event was co-sponsored by the Newark Department of Health and Community Wellness, Bridges, and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care. Corporate partner Audible generously purchased and distributed over 300 box lunches. Over 25 agencies were represented.
 - October 12- 15, For the first time, the Van Buren Branch participated in Newark Arts Open Doors Art Festival (main library participated as well)

- Robert Caro’s delivery of the annual Philip Roth Lecture drew over 300 people to the Main Library with another 25-30 people tuning into a simulcast at one of the five branch locations.

Elevating the Profile of the Library

- Nominated by Senator Booker for the 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service
- Mr. Trzeciak joined the Newark City of Learning Collaborative Board
- The Library was selected to participate in the Newark 2020 Initiative as a “hub”
- The Library was selected to participate in activities relating to the opening of a new Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Center at Rutgers University – Newark

Information Technology

- Video conferencing is available at all branches
- Upgrading all computers in the VTC
- Special Services Room - The NJ Commission for the Blind is funding five new computers and monitors, preloaded with accessibility software including screen readers and magnification; four iPads; one CCTV magnifier.
- d. Upgrade to Innovative Interfaces (among other things...a patron phone app)

Diversity and Working with Diverse Groups

- Ferguson Voices Exhibit
- Maisy Card was selected for the Victoria Emerging Leadership program (VELP)

Partnerships

- Rutgers
 - Leslie Kahn and Rutgers School of Business students discussed the students’ project to attract immigrants and refugees and immigrants to the Library.
 - Van Buren hosted an unconference in partnership with Rutgers Newest Americans: Telling (Untold) Histories: The Ironbound (50 attendees). This was an opportunity for the community to gather and share stories on what makes the Ironbound special.
- Newark’s LGBT Center
- NJPAC
 - Jazz in the stacks - first held at Vailsburg
 - Misty Copeland’s Firebird Books on the Move (Van Buren Springfield)

Update on the Strategic Plan: Ms. DeEtta Jones and Mr. Gary Wasdin of DeEtta Jones and Associates (DJA) presented an update on the strategic plan. A draft copy of the strategic plan was distributed, and Ms. Jones highlighted the following Draft Strategic Directions and Goals:

- Nurture Newark’s Youth and Families
- Contribute to the Personal Growth and Well-Being of All Newarkers
- Strengthen Digital Literacy Skills for All
- Enhance and Promote Newark Public Library’s Distinctive Special Collections
- Provide Welcoming, Safe and Vibrant Environments

Ms. Jones said she would work with Rob Latz to schedule appointments with individual board members to further discuss their thoughts on the strategic plan.

Statistical Report: Mr. Trzeciak asked the board to read the printed report. He expressed a desire (once again) to revise the process of measuring statistics, to be done in conjunction with the strategic plan.

President's Report: Dr. Crist did not offer a report.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Alrutz reported that he reviewed the detailed back-ups of the bill sheets for September and October, #1268 and #1269. Both were approved and signed on motion of Dr. Crist and seconded by Ms. Morris-Yamba.

Development Committee Report: Mr. Johnson delivered the report. He highlighted Robert Caro's delivery of the annual Philip Roth lecture on September 28th. He announced that the Roth lecture for 2018 would take place on Thursday September 27th, 2018 with the lecturer to be chosen by committee in January 2018.

Mr. Johnson mentioned the Library's annual Gala would take place on November 30th, 2017. Honorees include Michael X. McBride, Michael Bright, Affinity Groups, Andaiye Taylor. An after-party was planned. He announced that about \$172,000 pledged had been pledged, leaving the Library \$52,000 short of its fundraising goal.

Notable Grants, Gifts and Fundraising Activity:

- The acceptance of NPL's NFF Newark Resilience Initiative Flexible Capital Grant application will be announced in December 2017.
- The Library was selected to be a Newark 2020 community hub.
- The Library was awarded the Preserve NJ Capital grant to repair the main library's exterior \$86,184 (the grant was not yet funded, and was pending legislative action and governor's signature).
- A collaborative event with Newark Museum was delayed until 2018 due to construction.
- \$175,000 from the Prudential Foundation (via the Newark Public Library Foundation) in support of strategic planning and \$135,000 and \$40,000 for new technology - all computers in the VTC will be upgraded.
- New Jersey Historical Commission, FY 2018 GOS Grant, \$54,300
- \$22,000 from PNC for Black History Month
- \$2,250 - Newark Arts Council for Toddler Story Time
- \$2 million award - the largest in the library's history - will be discussed in more detail during executive session.

Dr. Crist highlighted a \$100,000 gift from an individual in support of the NJ room.

Operations Committee Report: Mr. Alrutz delivered the report.

Budget:

- He noted that the budget would be adjusted due to unanticipated developments concerning fringe benefits. The Library had anticipated that the City of Newark would provide a 2% increase in funding for fringe benefits, and also an increase in the cost of providing fringe benefits. Neither of these events occurred.
- He noted an improvement in the E-Rate funding process, stating that NPL began receiving E-Rate funds directly, enabling the Library to pay bills directly. Jeffrey also announced an increase in E-Rate funding of around \$100,000.
- He noted an increase in the State revenue line, of about \$53,000, compared to the previous year.
- He noted that all endowment monies were moving into the Community Foundation of New Jersey (CFNJ) account, a total value of around \$2,000,000.
- He noted that the committee was reviewing the 2016 audit, to be addressed further at the next meeting in January 2018.

Buildings and Grounds:

- He stated that the Library was still waiting for bond act details to come out, including the maximum amount that any one library may apply for.
- Mr. Trzeciak thanked the Friends of the Newark Public Library for their advocacy work to get the Library Construction Bond Act passed.
- He noted that they were waiting for the AKF energy audit results to see about the feasibility of HVAC and lighting renovations at main library and the branches, and whether or not the bond act might provide funding for some of those improvements.
- Noted that the main library’s front façade repair work was still pending.

Policy on fines: Operations committee recommended abolishing late fines, but will continue to charge for lost or damaged items. Mr. Alrutz noted the detriment of costs associated with collecting late fines. He clarified that the only time that borrowing privileges are removed is when they are not returned for 60 days or more (at which point a book is deemed lost/stolen.)

Mr. Alrutz moved that the library policy be changed, effective December 1st, that the practice of late fines be stopped and all late fines on all active accounts be removed, seconded by Dr. Crist, and passed unanimously.

Full text of the resolution:

Current Policy: Overdue Notices and Fines

The Library sends overdue notices by email (if possible, otherwise by mail). The Library charges overdue fines (based on the type of material borrowed) to encourage prompt return of materials and thereby increase their availability to the public.

For each day that the Library is open borrowers are charged:

Item Type	Per Day	Maximum Fine
Adult Videocassette or DVD	\$2.00	\$10.00
CD	\$0.30	\$10.00
Other adult item	\$0.15	\$10.00

Children's Videocassette or DVD	\$1.00	\$5.00
Other Children's item	\$0.05	\$5.00

RECOMMENDED CHANGE:

Late fines are a barrier that stop children and families from using their local public library. With the support of the Board, our library is changing this practice. Effective December 1, 2017 the practice of late fines will cease and all active fines will be removed from existing accounts.

CURRENT POLICY: Lost and Damaged Items

Cardholders are responsible for all items borrowed with their cards and liable for the cost of repairing or replacing items that are lost or damaged. Items that are overdue 60 days are considered lost, and borrowers will receive bills for them. Payments for lost items will be refunded if these items are subsequently returned.

The Library will accept a new copy of the same edition of a lost item, in the same format, as payment for the lost item, but will charge a \$10 processing fee.

RECOMMENDED CHANGE: NO CHANGE

Suspension of Library Privileges

Borrowing privileges of those who owe fines in excess of \$15.00 will be suspended until the fines are paid. The Library will temporarily restore the privileges of those who make reasonable partial payments.

RECOMMENDED CHANGE: Change “fines” to “fees”

(End of resolution.)

Human Resources Committee Report: Deferred for the executive session.

Unfinished Business: Dr. Crist noted that an update on the Carnegie project had been deferred to a later board meeting.

New Business: Dr. Crist announced that Ms. Morris-Yamba had agreed to chair a nominating committee to come up with a slate of four new officers to be voted on in January. Mr. Johnson and Dr. Steinbaum agreed to serve on the committee as well.

Public Comment Period: The Board received comments from: Ms. Dorothea Moore, Dr. George Hawley, Dr. Melli Torres and Ms. Karen Horton.

Executive Session: On the motion of Dr. Crist, seconded by Ms. Morris-Yamba, the Board unanimously resolved to move into Executive Session at 6:23 PM.

Reconvening into Public Session: At 7:10 p.m., on the motion of Dr. Crist, seconded by Ms. Morris-Yamba, the Board resolved to return to public session.

Adjournment: As there was no further business, Dr. Crist announced that the next Board meeting would be on Tuesday, January 23, 2018.