

**BOARD OF AGENTS –
SILAS BRONSON LIBRARY MINUTES –
Monday December 17, 2018**

PRESENT: Vice President Wrenn, Secretary Cullinan Agents: Harrell, Ranando, Albini, Ogrodnik, Cummings

ALSO: Director Raechel Guest, Lisa Bartkus

CALL TO ORDER: Vice – President Wrenn called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

AGENDA: MMSP (Ogrodnik, Harrell) to approve the agenda.
Amended Agenda to include Meeting Minute changes

MINUTES: MMSP (Ranando, Harrell) to approve the November 18th meeting minutes. Agents Ogrodnik and Albini abstained.

COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENT:

Thank you note from Heidi Barbieri for the flowers sent.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT—included with board packet:

The Waterbury Arts and Culture Commission, this year they will be giving their cultural award to the Library. We will get that date finalized, it should either be in April or May. I am going to try and tie it to our Benevento Cultural Program in the spring so that it would start with the award presentation and then we would have an actual cultural event celebrating our Cultural Award.

Front Plaza Project – Kurt Kuegler, the engineer who was brought in to assist with the front plaza renovation project, returned on December 7th to assist us with proper winterization of the fountain and to review the functionality. All our Maintainers were able to attend the meeting and have their questions answered. Kuegler will be following up with the manufacturer regarding some minor questions about the fountain in winter. Watterworth Signs has been selected to create a new sign for the front lawn, replacing the sign that was installed during the late 1970’s. Watterworth will also be responsible for removing the old sign.

East Wing/Teen Zone Renovations – We have selected vendors for the carpeting and the glass wall for the computer classroom. We do not have enough money available for the Teen Zone glass wall, which means we will continue using the movable walls as the barrier for that space. I met with the carpeting vendor on Tuesday last week to discuss the project and begin selecting colors and patterns. We anticipate that the vendor installing the computer cabling will start the job in early January. The City’s electricians will finish up their wiring at about the same time.

- We can only afford to do 1 of the 2 glass walls (Computer Classroom)
- Teen Zone will use the movable walls. The glass wall for this would be a good opportunity to get grant funding.

Accounting Issues – At the request of Michael LeBlanc, Director of Finance, I met with Mary Jane Boucher from Internal Audit last week to review the issues we’ve been having. As I work on creating Cash Handling Procedures, she will review all proposed procedures and forms to ensure that we adopt the best standards and practices. My goal is to complete the Cash Handling Procedures by the end of January.

- New procedures for the week areas of the Cash Handling (including new forms)
- Adding the Deposit spreadsheet to the board packets
- Should we have money to make change in the safe
- Copy Machine (\$ amount to be left in machine is not consistent)
- Possibly change the denominations accepted by eliminating \$50 & \$100 bills
- POS system with multiple drawers

Library Publicity – I talked about the library’s programs and services for a one-hour block on WATR’s Talk of the Town last week and have been invited to return in January, I anticipate that this will be a monthly segment to promote the Library.

VITA – We have joined the United Way of Greater Waterbury and Ct Assoc. for Human Services VITA program (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) to offer free tax prep at the library. We had previously been offering the service thru AARP, but they were not able to be here last season or this upcoming season. VITA is available to individuals earning less than \$54,000 per year. The VITA system will allow the public to make appointments by calling 211; we have previously offered first-come, first-serve tax prep, which was problematic.

Annual Budget Request – Our annual funding request to the City of Waterbury is due on Friday, January 4th. The budget allocation won't be decided until June, by which time we will hopefully know what to expect from the State budget and aid to municipalities. Any reduction in funding by the State to the City may result in a decrease of funding to the library. We currently have one Librarian II position vacant due to the City's budget concerns. We were previously asked to keep the position vacant until March. I am hoping to be able to fill the vacancy at that time, but uncertainties at the State level create uncertainties here.

Card Suspensions Due to fees/fines – Per the Board's request, we attempted to determine how many of the 4,579 patron card suspensions are for children or children's books. However, it cannot be done automatically and it will take an extremely long time to look up each record manually. A sampling was attached, but it is impossible to say if it is a fair representation. As mentioned previously, a current trend in public libraries is the elimination of all fees and, in some cases, lost or damaged book fees. If fees are over \$5, our patrons can no longer borrow anything from the library. People living in poverty are disproportionately affected by this policy, as they are the ones least able to pay the fees. Children who are most in need of the libraries resources often end up losing their library privileges because their families can't afford the fees. Waterbury's poverty rate is at 25.4%. That's a quarter of the city's residents who most need the library and are least able to afford to pay their fines. Here are some options for the Board to consider on this topic: Elimination of fines for late items; Elimination of fines for lost/damaged items; Raising the threshold for suspending cards (currently set to \$5, the official Board policy states that borrowing privileges will be suspended when a patron's fees exceed the price of a paperbound book established by the bibliographic database); Keep the fines for late and lost/damaged items, but stop suspending borrowing privileges entirely, encouraging patrons to pay what they can, when they can, or setting up payment plans for people with excess fines owed; Hold an amnesty day or week, during which patrons can return long overdue items without any fines. We have seen an unusual decrease since 2009 in the percent of Waterbury residents who are library cardholders (from an average of 25%), even as the number of library visits per capita has remained relatively constant. Although the percentage of resident cardholders finally started to increase in 2016, we are still seeing the number of cardholders drop each year. One explanation may very well be the suspension of borrowing privileges for thousands of cardholders.

- Adults vs Children
- Amnesty Day prior to forming a new policy
- Appeal system for hardship cases
- Approximate amount of fines owed
- New Year's Resolution – return your late/overdue books
- Amnesty Pilot -- Results

Finance & Funding:

At Thursday's meeting we discussed:

- Auditors suggestions
- Endowment.

Building & Projects:

We had a brief meeting prior to this one and discussed the East Wing Renovation Project.

Hall of Fame:

Friends of the Library:

At our December 11th Meeting we discussed:

- Teen Zone
- Holiday Party scheduled for December 13th (Cookies Purchased)

- New Tables for the Computer Classroom
- Benevento Program that is scheduled for January – Snow Date
- Popup Book sales

Waterbury Cable Council:

Other:

OLD BUSINESS:

Treasurer Vacancy – Agent Cummings suggested we contact Post University.
Term Appointments – Still waiting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Meeting Minutes – Use bullets instead of listing all the back and forth. Detail only controversial items.

MMSP () to approve payment of Bronson bills of \$0.00

ADJOURNMENT: MMSP (Cummings, Harrell) to adjourn at 7:14 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Monday January 28, 2019 – 6 pm,

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Bartkus for Anne Marie Cullinan - Secretary