

YONKERS PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD MEETING
ELECTRONIC MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2022

ATTENDANCE

TRUSTEES:	Nancy Maron Josephine Ilarraza Stephen Jannetti Joseph Puglia Hon. Michael Sabatino Patricia Duggan
LIBRARY DIRECTOR:	Jesse Montero
ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR:	Shauna Porteus
BUSINESS MANAGER:	Vivian Presedo
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY:	James Hackett
WLS BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:	Tr. Puglia
UNION REPRESENTATIVE:	Brandon Neider
GUESTS:	Carlos Figueroa, Suzanne Johnson, Vanessa Tapia, Silvia Merlo Rosales, Elizabeth Caruso, Mary Robison, Rose Avilés, Eileen Fusco, Emily Power

The Board Meeting was held electronically via ZOOM®, Conference ID# 863 2878 5398

The Board Meeting began at 7:02 pm, with Director Montero presiding until the Election of Officers for 2022.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR YEAR 2022

Trustee Sabatino of the Nominating Subcommittee presented the following slate of officers for nomination: for President, Nancy Maron; for Vice President, Josephine Ilarraza; for Treasurer, Stephen Janetti. With no other nominations or objections from the floor, the nominees were elected by acclamation.

Following the election of officers, Board President Maron welcomed Patricia Duggan, who was recently appointed by the Yonkers Board of Education to complete John Saraceno's resigned term, which expires at the end of the year. Trustee Duggan introduced herself as a retired teacher in the Mount Vernon school district and lifelong resident of Yonkers whose children are presently enrolled in Yonkers Public Schools. The other trustees and library staff introduced themselves to her as well. Director Montero also introduced new employee Vanessa Tapia as well, who will serve as a clerk at Will Library.

MINUTES

On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Minutes of the Meeting of December 16, 2021.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Director Montero reported that since the last meeting, nine employees had tested positive for COVID-19. Due to the alarming rise of cases at YPL and required quarantines among some other staff, Director Montero announced that YPL adjusted its operating hours and service model on January 3 to allow for more staff to work from home and reduce overcrowding in workrooms and service points. Staff working from home are expected to order and curate collections, attend professional development and host virtual programs and services but are also available to be called in if necessary. He was hopeful full service could be restored as soon as January 31.

Director Montero reported on several shifting projects in all three buildings. He believed shifting collections would make them more intuitive and easy to browse and find books and also create more space to prominently display curated collections. Some of the shifted collections include the Fine Arts and Young Adult areas at Grinton I. Will Library and DVDs and world language material in the Children's Department of Riverfront Library. Several collections at Crestwood Library were also reorganized while the building was closed for repair following Hurricane Ida.

Director Montero announced that YPL had recently applied for funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The CDBG is federally funded and administered by the City of Yonkers Planning Department for organizations located in lower socio-economic communities. If awarded, YPL would use the funds to renovate and reimagine the Small People's Place at Riverfront into "The Cove". The Cove would be a children's playspace outfitted with new toys and equipment that would host early education STEM programs and programs for families with children of special needs. He was hopeful it would make Riverfront an attractive destination for class visits, daycare centers and children's parties.

Director Montero announced that the Foundation for Yonkers Public Library (FYPL) just concluded a successful annual appeal. He reported that FYPL raised over \$17,000 to support Yonkers Public Library, which was more than was raised the previous year. In the past FYPL funds have been used to support special programs and projects, such as homework help, Make Music Day and refreshing the Senator Flynn Room at Will Library. He expected new funds would be used to support similar projects in the future, such as The Cove at Riverfront.

Director Montero also announced that YPL had received \$30,000 in funding assistance from the Westchester County of Board of Legislators. These funds would be used to support sustainability projects and programs, such as the pollinator garden at Will Library, a seed lending program and other programs to raise environmental awareness.

Director Montero asked Technical Support Manager Carlos Figueroa to update the Board on E-Rate funding. E-Rate is a federally funded program administered by the Federal

Communications Commission (FCC) to help make broadband services more available to schools and libraries. Previously, funding was applied for through WLS but this is the first year YPL has filed independently and Mr. Figueroa expects more funding to be available due to Yonkers' national school lunch enrollment rates. Up to 90% of hardware costs and 85% of service costs are eligible for reimbursement and approximately \$500,000 will be available over five years to replace network hardware and increase broadband speeds tenfold. He expects much of the equipment and services to be available by May.

Assistant Library Director Porteus reported on the success of the winter reading warm-up challenge. She characterized the program as similar to summer reading for the winter months. The program is available to all age groups, including staff, and participants receive a free book and every book read enters them in a raffle for gift cards. Nearly 100 participants have enrolled and she expects that to grow throughout the winter.

Trustee Puglia congratulated management on the new funds and was looking forward to the new projects and services it would make possible.

Board President Maron led a brief discussion on the reports and statistics presented in the monthly packet. She noted that many trends appeared to illustrate patron engagement is beginning to slowly rebound. Director Montero acknowledged that although the recent omicron variant of COVID-19 has currently reduced engagement, he expects that to improve very soon and speculated seasonal trends may have a more significant effect going forward. Assistant Director Porteus also noted that prior to the omicron variant juvenile programming in particular was significantly improving and the presence of families for programs could enhance engagement elsewhere. Board President Maron also commented on the grant report in the packet and asked that it be included monthly and that Foundation donations be added as well.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Union Representative Neider did not have a formal report, but advised the Board that future formal reports would be in writing after they consult with other labor unions. He also added that he was recently elected to the SEIU Local 704 Board of Trustees and would be its first library representative there.

WLS REPORT

Trustee Puglia discussed the tools the WLS Board of Trustees is using to evaluate the executive director. Trustee Puglia was displeased with the level of criticism the director has received without any specific criteria or baseline but noted the Board is presently refining their evaluation and he hoped this may lead to a fairer process. He also reported that they are inviting trustees of member libraries to these meetings as well, noting that he is the only trustee on their board who serves this dual role and invited all YPL trustees to attend WLS Board meetings.

PERSONNEL REPORT

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board ratified the following appointments:

- Zegers, Carina, P/T Page, \$15.00/hr, eff. 12/24/2021
- Turner, Renieka, P/T Page, \$15.00/hr, eff. 12/24/2021
- Thaler, Susan, P/T Librarian II, \$25.35/hr, eff. 12/31/2021
- Tapia, Vanessa, Permanent Clerk I Spanish-Speaking, \$41,768.00/yr, eff. 1/7/2022

Acknowledged the following terminations:

- Mintah, Laurence, P/T Page, \$14.00/hr, eff. 12/15/2021
- Simnica, Sevdil, P/T Page, \$14.00/hr, eff. 12/30/2021

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board President Maron explained the purpose and role of each of the standing committees and, after seeking trustees' interests, made the following appointments. The Board President also serves *ex-officio* on all standing committees.

Finance, Budget & Planning – Stephen Jannetti, Michael Sabatino

Employee Relations – Joseph Puglia, Patricia Duggan

Buildings & Grounds – Stephan Giuffrida

Policy – Joseph Puglia, Michael Sabatino, Josephine Ilarraza

Fundraising & Development – Stephen Jannetti

Foundation update: Trustee Maron echoed Director Montero's report that the Foundation just concluded a successful letter-writing and online annual appeal that raised over \$17,000 in support of YPL. She also briefly discussed some of the Foundation's goals for 2022, including the annual gala in May

PAYMENT OF BILLS

On motion of Trustee Sabatino, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board approved payment of bills as listed on Schedule #835.

On motion of Trustee Duggan, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board voted to designate Trustee Puglia to certify claims for payment in the absence of the Treasurer and the President.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Director Montero updated the Board on the progress of YPL's Five Year Strategic Plan. He expects the process to be a long one with involvement of focus groups and meetings with trustees, staff, elected officials and other community stakeholders. Several of these meetings will occur over the coming weeks while staff work from home. The process will allow YPL to better understand the needs of the community and is an opportunity for YPL to communicate

Board Meeting – January 13, 2022

its vision of the future to the community. This plan will also better inform YPL's marketing and branding decisions in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NONE

NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE – Thursday, February 17, 2022

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, the Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Jesse Montero
Library Director & Secretary