

YONKERS PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD MEETING  
CRESTWOOD LIBRARY  
DECEMBER 18, 2024

**ATTENDANCE**

TRUSTEES:	Nancy Maron Joseph Puglia Steven Jannetti Patricia Phelan 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:	Patricia Phelan
UNION REPRESENTATIVE:	Brandon Neider
GUESTS:	Zahra Baird, Mary Amato, Gloria Fields, Joseph Harbeson, Mary Ann Penzero, Patricia Ricardo

The Board Meeting began at 7:00 pm.

President Maron opened the meeting and welcomed members of the public from the Crestwood community and the Friends of Crestwood Library. She announced that public comments would be heard immediately following the Management Report.

**MINUTES**

On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded by Trustee Phelan and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Minutes of the Meeting of November 20, 2024.

**MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Director Montero discussed the Winter Wonderland programs at the libraries. All three locations hosted well-attended holiday-themed programs and conducted outreach at offsite locations with community partners such as Untermeyer Gardens, St. Joseph's Hospital and several daycare centers.

Director Montero reported that YPL was awarded a \$40,000 grant from the New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA) to support arts programming, an increase from \$25,000 last year. The grant is particularly flexible and will fund items such as teaching artist's stipends, equipment and art installations.

Director Montero discussed the Windows and Doors art exhibition at the Riverfront Art Gallery. The exhibition is a partnership with Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) and features art from incarcerated artists and has a successful track record of reducing recidivism among the program participants. The exhibition is on display December 6 through January 3 and he expects them to return next year as well.

Director Montero also discussed two murals on display. The Legend of the Four Crows, created by Gallery Curator Haifa Bint-Kadi, is on display on the first floor of Riverfront Library and depicts one of the Lenape Tribe creation stories, whose land is now inhabited by Yonkers. The Will teen space also features a new mural created by illustrator Erwin Ong and is the result of discussions and focus groups with teens. Both murals were funded in part by NYSCA.

Director Montero reported that Riverfront Library was honored by the Mexican Consulate of New York on December 6 for hosting its Consulate of Wheels program. Riverfront has hosted the popular program for over ten years, which assists Mexican citizens in obtaining passports, voting cards and other government documents. He thanked the Riverfront staff and mentioned other programs and outreach with other organizations in the Yonkers Hispanic community.

Director Montero asked Crestwood Library Administrator Zahra Baird to present a report on Crestwood. Ms. Baird discussed the Annual Homeschool Entrepreneurship Fair. The fair allowed 7-18 year olds to develop and display their business ideas and featured exhibits on shopping, branding and advertising.

Ms. Baird discussed a Book Tasting with seventh grade students at School 15. Two classes came to Crestwood to sample books on display from multiple genres like mystery, horror, mythology, nonfiction etc. Ms. Baird and Crestwood staff also pushed into the school to present to other classes as well.

Ms. Baird also reported on programs conducted with community partners. Bluey Friendsgiving was conducted with the Kiwanis Club of Yonkers and featured storytime with the popular television character. Crestwood also celebrated Diwali with the Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community of Yonkers (NNORC), which featured Indian music, food and health and wellness.

Ms. Baird also reported that Crestwood hosted a clothing swap. The event aimed to raise awareness and promote sustainability and underconsumption. More than 60 people participated over three days by exchanging clothing rather than throwing it away, while the remaining supply was donated to clothing bins.

President Maron asked management for an update on Spanish classes for the staff. Assistant Director Porteus replied that five classes have been conducted so far on the first three Wednesdays of each month for an hour. The classes are well-attended by

dozens of staff where they practice Spanish in an effort to better communicate with the growing Hispanic community of Yonkers.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Friends of Crestwood Vice President Library Mary Amato thanked the Board and YPL management for directing funded programs at Crestwood, specifically arts programs with Professor Val Franco and health and wellness programs.

Gloria Fields, Friends of Crestwood Board Member, spoke about the importance of making Crestwood ADA-accessible and discussed the loss of a group of senior citizens that used to meet regularly but could no longer due to physical challenges and difficulty accessing the building. She also expressed her concerns that Crestwood was understaffed and short on space, citing the need for professional staff to regularly move furniture for programming as well as the time it requires staff to produce virtual programs or host offsite programming. She thanked the Board and management for already securing funding for several planned building improvements and looked forward to working together in future phases to make the building ADA-accessible and perhaps expand the building.

Joseph Harbeson, Friends of Crestwood Board Member, commented that he understood the City and YPL's decision to not purchase neighboring property and appreciated the consideration. He also looked forward to working together with YPL and City administration to make the building ADA-accessible and promised the support of the Friends of Crestwood.

Mary Ann Penzero, local dance instructor, thanked Ms. Baird and Crestwood Library on behalf of her dance school for their support and assistance copying material and scripts for her students.

YPL Board President Maron acknowledged and thanked the members of the public for their constructive comments and invited them to continue attending meetings. She went on to talk about the limits of City support and promised to strengthen the library's appeal to the City for capital funding at Crestwood, but also encouraged the local community to consider patronizing the nearby Grinton I. Will Library in light of Crestwood's current physical limitations, where Will is a much larger building with meeting rooms and an auditorium and urged them to participate in conversations to improve the Will Library as well, which has greater City support to fund renovations.

## **UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**

No report.

## **WLS REPORT**

No report.

## **PERSONNEL REPORT**

There were no personnel updates.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Buildings and Grounds** - Daily Jr. (chair).

Trustee Daily announced that he met with Director Montero to discuss ideas on how to highlight the library's operational capacity and the efficiency of library service within the City's overall budget as they advocate for City capital funding. They also discussed how the Board can be more aggressive in pitching goals and a broader vision. The Board talked at length about goals and how they can better build support to meet those goals.

### **Finance, Budget & Planning** – Jannetti (chair).

Director Montero reported that the library will include in its capital request funds to make Crestwood ADA-accessible and discussed the next steps. He thanked the Friends of Crestwood for its advocacy of purchasing the neighboring property and believed it will help build more support in the City administration for the ADA project.

### **Fundraising & Development** - Jannetti (chair)

Foundation Update: President Maron reported that the Foundation's appeal continues and thanked Manager of Public Relations and Marketing Patricia Ricardo and Assistant Director Porteus for assisting with the campaign. Trustee Daily discussed leveraging social media engagement to support fundraising.

## **PAYMENT OF BILLS**

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Phelan and unanimously carried, the Board approved payment of bills as listed on Schedule #870.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

President Maron discussed the upcoming annual meeting and the election of officers for the new year. On motion of Trustee Daily, seconded by Trustee Puglia and unanimously carried, the Board created a Nominating Committee and appointed Trustee Jannetti as its chair to seek a slate of nominees for office to present at next month's annual meeting.

Trustee Jannetti discussed a trustee education program he attended earlier in the month on the role of Board officers and shared material he received from it.

Board Meeting – December 18, 2024

The Board discussed how often the Board should meet per year. The Board agreed to continue meeting monthly but will discuss further.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Annual Meeting on January 16, 2025 at 7:00pm at Will Library

On motion of Trustee Daily, seconded by Trustee Edoziem and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the Meeting at 8:09 pm.

Jesse Montero  
Library Director & Secretary