

**PASSAIC PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Passaic, New Jersey 07055**

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

**Tuesday, September 23, 2008**

**Minutes – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board convened with a salute to the American Flag, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2008:** At a regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees of the Passaic Public Library, Ms. Diodonet, Ms. Dukes, Ms. Evile, Mr. Shafrin, Ms. Tabor and Mr. Porto were present. Ms. Ramirez was excused. Ms. DeDios and Ms. Hiller-Cousins were absent. Mr. Porto presided. [7:18 p.m.]

Public Announcement of the Meeting was given.

Members of the Staff in attendance were Ms. Kathleen Mollica, Ms. Elizabeth Tooley, Mr. Martin Weingast and Mr. Jim Bordone (9:15 p.m.)

Mr. Porto welcomed Ms. Robin Dukes and Mr. Michael Shafrin to the Board.

**Hearing of Citizens:** Mr. Mark Auerbach expressed his concerns regarding the Reid Memorial Branch Library renovation project. He pointed out that only the Library Board is legally empowered to issue RFPs & RFQs pertaining to Library buildings. He stated the City cannot supercede the power of the Library Board and he reminded the Trustees the Board is semi-autonomous. Mr. Auerbach then questioned why the October Meeting was changed from a Sunday afternoon to a Tuesday evening at Reid. Mr. Porto responded that this was an Agenda item that would be discussed by the Trustees at this meeting. Mr. Auerbach then informed the Trustees that a new bank, TD Banknorth, located on Jefferson Street is redecorating the bank with local murals of Passaic. He stated he as City Historian and the Reference Department assisted the bank in this project and provided a copy of a photo from the Library's collection of a parade in Passaic from 1892. In appreciation, the bank presented the Library with a \$225 check. Mr. Auerbach requested that this money be used to purchase archival materials to preserve and protect our local history collection.

**Report of the Interim Library Director:** Ms. Mollica reported that the Staff in the Children's Room and Reid Branch worked exceptionally hard this summer and presented a Summer Reading Club and programs that were well attended. As has been done in previous summers, a teacher was hired at both the Forstmann and Reid Libraries to coordinate the Reading Buddies Program, where volunteers who may be teens, adults or staff members meet with elementary students one on one or in small groups and help the students with their reading. The teacher who worked at the Forstmann Library also presented a weekly story hour for preschoolers. She pointed out that next year the Library should recruit more adult volunteers for the Reading Buddies Program due to the large number of children who registered and need help in reading. Ms. Mollica then discussed the Open Borrowing issue and informed the Board that a meeting will take place on October 15 at the Clifton Public Library at 10 a.m., at which time the consortium heads will

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once again discuss the Open Borrowing Program and try to find some solutions to the high costs being incurred in Passaic County.

**Report & Communications of the President:** Mr. Porto discussed receipt of a letter from Eveready Pest Control Inc. that concerned a monetary price increase of \$60 (\$30 per building). Discussion took place, and the Trustees agreed that the reasons presented in the letter for the price increase were valid.

Mr. Porto then asked Ms. Mollica about the status of the sale of the Bookmobile. She reported that the Paterson Public Library Board Meeting will take place on October 1<sup>st</sup>, and in conversations with the Ms. Cindy Czesak, Library Director, their Board is still very interested in purchasing our Bookmobile.

Mr. Porto then discussed Councilman Daniel Schwartz's concerns about the Library's 2005-2006 Audit Report and Mr. Porto said that the Trustees had been asked to attend the City Council Meeting that was scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup> and conflicted with tonight's Board Meeting. Mr. Weingast said he has spoken to Councilman Schwartz and discussed his concerns at this time. Mr. Weingast stated the Board has not been officially asked to appear at a future City Council Meeting.

**Committee Reports -- Reid Memorial Library Renovation Project:** Ms. Diodonet reported that in the late summer, she and Ms. Ramirez met with Mr. Jorge Torres, Passaic City Engineer, for a brief meeting which Mr. Greg Hill, City Business Administrator, attended toward the end of the meeting. They were told the funding for the Reid Branch Renovation Project would cover installation of an elevator, handicapped ramps & accessible bathroom, as well as insulated double-pane windows, hardwood floor under the linoleum and power washing of the exterior of the building. Ms. Diodonet stated that she expressed her concerns to both Mr. Torres & Mr. Hill that the building be historically preserved in appearance as much as possible. Further discussion took place. Mr. Porto told the Board that on September 4<sup>th</sup>, the City held a voluntary pre-bid conference concerning architectural/engineering services for the design of the building upgrade for the Reid Branch Library. The Library was called and notified of this meeting at 9:15 a.m. that morning. Mr. Carlos Rodriguez, Sr., Supervisor of Buildings & Maintenance opened the building and Ms. Mollica and Board Member Ms. Ramirez were in attendance at that meeting. The project was described to those who attended, questions were answered and the building was open for inspection. Bid packets were publicly opened on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. in the City Council Chambers. Mr. Porto, Ms. Mollica and Ms. Ramirez were in attendance at that meeting. Copies of the bid packets were given to Ms. Mollica at Mr. Porto's request, however the Trustees were told that even before Ms. Mollica had returned to the Library, the Library's Business Office received a call from City Hall that the copies of the packets received must be returned to City Hall. Further discussion took place concerning the Board's responsibilities in regard to the Reid Branch Renovation Project. Mr. Porto stated he would like to ask the Library's attorney if legally the Board could make a motion authorizing the City of Passaic to continue with the plans needed to renovate Reid Library. Mr. Auerbach requested to speak as City Historian, which Mr. Porto allowed. Mr. Auerbach stated the City does not have knowledge of the Reid Branch Library building, and he pointed out that architectural firms which specialize in historical preservation and in-kind restoration should be sought. Mr. Auerbach further stated that the City should not be given power to circumvent the Board of Trustees. After further discussion, it was decided that the Board would request a legal opinion in writing from Mr. Lane J. Biviano, Esq. that would be discussed at the next meeting.

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**Minutes:** Mr. Porto apologized for not following the Agenda and called for a Motion to approve the Minutes of May 18, 2008 & June 10, 2008. **ACTION: A Motion to approve the Minutes of May 18, 2008 & June 10, 2008 was made by Ms. Tabor and seconded by Ms. Evile. The Motion passed with two abstentions. The Minutes of June 26, 2008 were tabled until the next meeting in October.**

**Report of the Treasurer:** The September 2008 bills were reviewed. Mr. Weingast was present to answer questions of the Trustees. Discussion took place concerning a bill received that pertained to the Fire Alarm System at the Reid Branch. Mr. Porto stated that in August, he was informed that the Reid Branch would be closed because of the non-working fire alarm system. Mr. Porto discussed the matter with an friend who is an electrical contractor, and who agreed to test the system. When tested, the fire department and T&R Alarm Company responded to the alarm. Reports were received from the fire department and T&R Alarm Co., who monitors the system, and shown to the fire inspector that proved the fire alarm system is functional. Mr. Porto said the system needed some minor repairs and a new pull station. He also stated that he recently spoke to the owner of T&R Alarm Co., Mr. Tom Sansone, who contends that the system is obsolete and that is the reason the T&R Alarm technician reported a few months ago that it must be replaced. Mr. Porto said he would rather use the term “outdated” and pointed out the system will be updated and replaced during the Reid Branch Renovation Project.

Discussion then took place concerning bills from Spartan Security Company. Ms. Mollica informed the Board that a new security guard has been assigned to the Library who is conscientious and is following the Library’s security guidelines. Further discussion took place concerning hiring a guard for \$30,000, as was included in last year’s Library Budget. It was decided this issue would be discussed again at the October Board Meeting. Ms. Dukes will look into the possibility of hiring retired police officers.

**ACTION: A Motion to pay the September Bills in the amount of \$51,929.40 was made by Ms. Diodonet and seconded by Ms. Tabor. The Motion passed with one abstention.**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Technical Support Assistance:** Mr. Porto stated he has received one proposal, and he suggested a list of local companies be compiled and letters sent to each company requesting a proposal for technical support for the Library’s computers on an as-needed basis. Ms. Dukes offered to check with some people she knows through her work who offer technical support services.

**Gates “Staying Connected Grant”:** Discussion took place and Ms. Mollica informed the Board that this is not a matching grant, and is intended for computers to be used by the public. After further discussion it was decided that since outdated staff as well as public computers must be replaced, all the computers should be purchased at the same time, probably from Dell. Printers also should be purchased at this time, and one or two vision-impaired screens for the public computers which Mr. Jim Bordone, Reference Librarian, noted to Ms. Mollica are needed as requested by some visually-impaired patrons. Ms. Tabor stated the school system recently purchased over 70 Dell computers through the State contract. It was decided Ms. Tabor would gather information pertaining to the purchase of Dell computers, and contact Mr. Porto with the information. Ms. Tabor also noted it is now time to begin work on the E-Rate funding application. Mr. Porto requested that Ms. Tabor also gather information in regard to E-Rate to be discussed at our next Board Meeting. Concerning funding the new computers & printers, it was decided that in addition to the Gates Grant, the non-restrictive Endowment Funds may also be used.

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**CDBG Projects:** Discussion took place concerning the funding for CDBG projects that have not taken place. Mr. Porto asked Ms. Mollica to call the Department of Community Development in City Hall and ask if these funds may be used for the air conditioning system at the Forstmann Library.

**Sunday Rates for Library Personnel:** After some discussion as to raising Sunday rates by \$15 dollars to \$85 for Library Assistants and \$110 for Librarians, it was decided that Ms. Mollica call a few other libraries and inquire as to what rates are currently being paid to Sunday staff.

**Library Audit:** Proposals received from several audit companies were reviewed and discussed. **ACTION:** Mr. Shafrin made the Motion to hire the accounting firm of Lerch, Vinchi & Higgins, LLP to complete the Library's Audits for fiscal years ending June 30, 2007 & June 30, 2008, at a cost of \$10,000. Ms. Dukes seconded the Motion. The Motion passed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Pre-authorization by the Board for payment of certain bills:** **ACTION:** After some discussion, Ms. Diodonet made a Motion to allow for the payment of certain bills prior to Board approval, subject to reconfirmation of such bills at the next scheduled Board Meeting; such bills would be limited to library materials (i.e.: book, non-print & newspapers), utility bills, contractual and leased items. Excluded would be bills for repairs, maintenance and supplies. Ms. Tabor seconded the Motion. The Motion passed.

**New Library Accounts at Valley National Bank - Opening of Bank Account for short-term holding of funds:** Discussion took place that some bills are payable once a year as insurance yet the Budget allocated funds evenly throughout the year on a monthly basis. In addition, the same holds true for salaried positions accounted for in the Library Budget but not filled. The purpose of this account will be to hold those funds as they are allocated monthly until such time as the invoices or salaries must be paid. **ACTION:** Ms. Diodonet made a Motion to authorize the opening of a new checking account at Valley National Bank for short-term holding of certain funds allocated by the Library's Budget, but not yet expensed. Ms. Tabor seconded. The Motion passed.

**New Library Accounts at Valley National Bank – Opening of Bank Account for Grants:** **ACTION:** After some discussion, Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to authorize the opening of a new checking account at Valley National Bank for the purpose of depositing and expensing monies received from Grant sources such as, but not limited to, CDBG, Gates and PCCHC. Mr. Shafrin seconded. The Motion passed.

**Allowing for online viewing and verification of the Library's various Bank Accounts at Valley National Bank:** Discussion took place. **ACTION:** Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to authorize the Library to register its various accounts at Valley National Bank for online viewing and verification of account transactions via the Bank's website. Mr. Shafrin seconded. The Motion passed.

**Reid Branch Hours:** Tabled.

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**Neopost Postage Machine:** Mr. Weingast presented a proposal that was just received from Neopost to lease a new postage machine, which would include a scale and would then alleviate the need to go to the Post Office to mail books received through JerseyCat. It was pointed out the difference in cost would be about \$70. **ACTION:** After some discussion, Ms. Evile made the Motion to lease a new Neopost postage machine. Ms. Diodonet seconded. **The Motion passed.**

**Executive Session:** **ACTION:** A Motion was made by Mr. Shafrin to enter into Executive Session; Ms. Diodonet seconded. All Trustees voted aye. [9:15 p.m.]

**ACTION:** A Motion was made by Ms. Diodonet to return to Public Session; Mr. Shafrin seconded. The Motion passed. All Trustees who attended Executive Session remained in attendance. [10:03 p.m.]

**ACTION:** After some discussion, Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to promote Ms. Sandra Ballou, Ms. Avaughn Wilson and Ms. Michele Fornal to Senior Library Assistants. Ms. Tabor seconded. The Motion passed.

**ACTION:** Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to employ Ms. Mabel Ajala as Principle Librarian, in charge of the Children's Room, at an annual salary of \$43,648 (hourly wage \$24.00) to be evaluated after three months of full-time employment at the Passaic Public Library. Ms. Evile seconded. The Motion passed.

**Hearing of Board Members:** Mr. Porto discussed the possibility of purchasing a new mini-van for the Library. He asked Mr. Shafrin to look into the possibility of receiving a donation from the Passaic County Freeholders.

**Date of Next Regular Board Meeting:** **ACTION:** Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to change the date of the scheduled October Board Meeting from Sunday, October 26, 2008 at the Reid Branch Library to Tuesday, October 28, 2008 at 7 p.m. at the Reid Branch Library. Ms. Evile seconded. The Motion passed.

Book Sale for the Public: It was decided the Book Sale would take place at the Forstmann Library beginning Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup> and at the Reid Branch Library on Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment:** **ACTION:** Ms. Tabor made a Motion to adjourn the Meeting and Ms. Dukes seconded. The Motion passed. [10:20 p.m.]

Respectfully submitted by:

*Kathleen Mollica*

Kathleen Mollica  
Interim Library Director /  
Board Secretary

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2008:** At an Executive Session of the Board of Library Trustees of the Passaic Public Library, Ms. Diodonet, Ms. Dukes, Ms. Evile, Mr. Shafrin, Ms. Tabor and Mr. Porto were present. Ms. Ramirez was excused. Ms. DeDios and Ms. Hiller-Cousins were absent. Mr. Porto presided. [9:15 p.m.]

Matters of personnel were discussed.

Ms. Mollica informed the Board that a letter had been received from the Department of Personnel that stated that since Ms. Sandra Ballou and Ms. Avaughn Wilson who had been provisionally in the title of Senior Library Assistant for over one year, had not filed for and taken an exam, which had been announced by their title, they must be removed from their provisional appointment. The Board must now decide what action they wish to take in this matter, and Ms. Mollica must inform the Department of Personnel. ACTION: After some discussion, Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to promote Ms. Sandra Ballou, Ms. Avaughn Wilson and Ms. Michele Fornal to Senior Library Assistants. Ms. Tabor seconded. The Motion passed.

Discussion then took place concerning the hiring of a Children's Librarian. Ms. Mollica recommended Ms. Mabel Ajala to the Board who has over 25 years experience in the Library field, including several years of Paterson Public Library as a Principal Librarian in charge of the Children's Room. There was a review of her resume and some discussion, which included the fact that Ms. Ajala could not begin to work full-time until mid-December due to contracts at both Passaic County Community College and William Paterson University. ACTION: Ms. Diodonet made the Motion to employ Ms. Mabel Ajala as Principle Librarian, in charge of the Children's Room, at an annual salary of \$43,648 (hourly wage \$24.00) to be evaluated after three months of full-time employment at the Passaic Public Library. Ms. Evile seconded. The Motion passed. Ms. Mollica was told to contact Ms. Ajala, and to arrange a part-time schedule with her.

Resumes received for the position of Library Director were reviewed and discussed.

ACTION: A Motion was made by Ms. Diodonet to return to Public Session; Mr. Shafrin seconded. The Motion passed. All Trustees who attended Executive Session remained in attendance. [10:03 p.m.]

Respectfully submitted by:

*Kathleen Mollica*

Kathleen Mollica  
Interim Library Director /  
Board Secretary