

Holyoke Public Library Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2025

Location: Holyoke Public Library Community Room

Present:

Present	Member
X	George Mettey, President
X	Manuel Frau-Ramos, VP
	, Treasurer
X	Brenna Levitin, Clerk
	Gabriela Alcántara Pöhls
X	Jacksiel Colon-Rodriguez

Present	Member
X	Denise Duguay
	Jacqueline Glasheen
X	Victor Machado
	Andrew Parker
X	Jeremy Smith
X	Iohann Rashi Vega

Also present: María Pagán, Director; Jason Lefebvre, Assistant Director; Alexandra Aguirre, Finance Manager; Meghan Connolly, Director pending confirmation; Margaret Whitehead, Director pending confirmation

Meeting was called to order at 5:33pm by George Mettey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRESIDENT UPDATES: George Mettey

- Proposed meeting format/technique change-- stack
- 1 person has eyes on everybody and watches for hands and watches for who raises their hands and then writes it down
- Jeremy will do the stack this time but we'll change it up in the future

Committees

- Building & Grounds: **George**, Andrew

- Fundraising & Development: **Jackie**, Iohann, Nancy ex officio, Allie ex officio
- Nominating (ad hoc): Denise, **Manuel**, Jacksiel
- Personnel: **George**, Gabriela, Jason ex officio [Maggie after confirmation]
- Policy: **Jeremy**, Brenna, Jason ex officio [Maggie after confirmation]
- Strategic Planning: **George**, Maria ex officio, Jason ex officio, Omar ex officio
- Public Relations: **Denise**, Manuel, Jackie
- Finance & Budget: **George**, Andrew, Allie ex officio [Meghan after confirmation]
- Technology: Jeremy, Manuel, Iohann, **Brenna**, Omar ex officio, Kareima ex officio
- Puerto Rican Cultural Project (ad hoc): **Manuel**, Maria ex officio, outside people
- Transition Committee (ad hoc): Gabriela, George, **Manuel**, Maria ex officio?

Bylaws

- George wants to amend Article 4 of the bylaws, it covers Officers
 - 1st paragraph at the end, want to add:
 - “In the event an officer’s position becomes vacant, the Board, may by majority vote, elect a temporary replacement to serve until the annual elections.”
- George will send it out in writing and we can vote on it in August

Investing RFP

- 5 companies responded including Harpswell (current)
- Finance Committee will be reviewing these proposals
- Finance Committee will meet in person to discuss them and determine who to invite in to present to us
- They intend to meet by the end of July
- Will invite Bellamy to be part of this group
- Eventually Finance Committee will present their recommendation to the full Board

DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Maria Pagan

Building updates

- Electrical grounding study completed
 - Significant metal ungrounded on the roof
 - Will we ask the City for the money for this?
 - Did the mayor say he’d help with this? No
 - First step is go to the Mayor and see if they have the money
 - Maria will write up an RFP
- Water in History Room
 - One proposal is to move the smoke detector
 - Do an access door in the ceiling along with a leak alarm
 - We need a carpenter to do this work, otherwise Maria will do research
 - Brenna asked about the leak alarm and whether it will page someone, Maria said it’s local only but very loud and should be heard outside the room, also custodians check the room even when Eileen isn’t here
 - Cote will check the drain every time they change over from heat --> AC
 - Alarm lasts for 3 years

- No idea how much this will cost because we need the fire suppression technology company to move the fire alarm, and a carpenter, and the leak detectors
 - Maria also has the materials already
- Dehumidifying system
 - Both ABS and Cote will be here at the same time to diagnose why it's not working properly

City Budget

- Maria met with City Council, they approved the piece the Mayor proposed
- We have the full amount proposed by the Mayor: \$839,850 including 2% increase for staff, and a little bit for books and utilities
- Budget for new fiscal year is in progress

Misc

- Maria is working on the ARIS end of year report
- Alexandra is working on the financial one
- Summer Reading just started
- Try the Escape Room, we only have until Saturday
- Staff meeting is on July 25, Maria and Jason have an outline and plans for the exit questionnaire
- Simplify results into bigger headings, discussing solutions and/or plans
- No longer than an hour, plenty of room for people to give input, discussion time

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE:

- We're closing FY25, a few journal entries left
- This year we took \$400k from the endowment
- Don't have the final report from Harpswell yet
- Currently creating the new budget for FY26
- Charter of accounts has changed dramatically, more cohesive
- Banking has been a mess due to PeoplesBank system issues
- Once the year is closed, she'll share the updated Charter of Accounts

PERSONNEL:

- Nothing

POLICY: Jeremy Smith

- Nothing

TECHNOLOGY: Brenna Levitin

- Denise motions to approve \$15,503.00 one-time and \$652 monthly going forward for network hardware upgrades, Iohann seconds. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Website

- We need to get feedback in ASAP
- Omar will share the link and feedback document with the Board
- Feedback is due by EOD 15th

SharePoint

- Formally launch and demo at August meeting

PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL PROJECT: Manuel Frau-Ramos

- 2 projects
- Book of Latinos in Massachusetts is out, official release is middle of August, first event will be at UMass, second event here with Holyoke Media
- Volleyball Puerto Rican history working on something for Hispanic Heritage Month (late fall)

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT:

- Met with Jackie, who has the network to use
- She's working on a wine and cheese event
- We need to figure out what we're asking them for
- Some asks will include the ~\$20k for managed IT, ~\$300k for lighting updates
- We don't have a big database of donors, currently don't have a lot of big dollar donors who give regularly
- Do we have the data for the donors for the building? We should contact the fundraising company to see if they have this info
- People that gave for the building, names are on the plack and look them up
- They definitely weren't in our old system that was migrated
- Jeremy suggests that we invite and/or do personal outreach to the donors from the building

TRANSITION:

- Manuel is scheduling a meeting

OLD BUSINESS

- None

NEW BUSINESS

- None

Brenna moved to adjourn. Denise seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.