

Holyoke Public Library Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2025

Location: Holyoke Public Library Community Room

Present:

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

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

Also present: María Pagán, Director; Jason Lefebvre, Assistant Director; Alexandra Aguirre, Finance Manager

Meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by George Mettey.

Approve Minutes:

Denise motioned to approve December 2024 minutes as amended (wrong date), Manuel seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRESIDENT UPDATES: George Mettey

Investment policy

- Taking longer than anticipated
- Finance people have provided recommendations
- George will need help
- Andrew, Tom, Denise will help
- Still like to go out for proposals in Feb-Mar but need policies first

Fundraising

- Looking for ideas for fundraising
- Lighting will cost \$300k
- \$350k that we draw annually is for operations so we don't have a lot of extra money for capital improvements (including the punch list)
- Asking Fundraising Committee to meet with Nancy to talk about how to do a major fundraising campaign
- January 30th 6pm meeting with Nancy

Audit

- Still working the 2023 audit, requested more info recently
- Needs to discuss with Andrew as well
- Auditor hasn't given an engagement letter for 2024
- No idea how much 2023 audit is costing yet beyond the initial/partial payment

Teen Room attendance

- Extremely low attendance is a big problem
- She needs to be doing outreach with afterschool programs, etc
- Gabriela suggests decoupling programming from Children's Department
- George asks Maria and Jason to discuss this with Robin

Staffing

- Director's eval needs to be ASAP
- Maria's contract is every 5 years and this is the last year
- MBLC just sent resources
- Maria will check her file to see if the one from 5 years ago is there, no one else has a copy of it
- Brenna will collate resources from Wilbraham, MBLC and come up with a draft ASAP
- Brenna requests feedback ASAP before the Feb meeting because George wants the evaluation process approved in Feb meeting if at all possible
- Jan 29th employee appreciation 12-3pm
- Personnel department will be providing training as well as the appreciation event

DIRECTOR REPORT: Maria Pagan

- See report (attached)

- Board manual in progress, will get by email

Salary Schedule A (non-union employees)

- Ordinance Committee tabled this twice (April and November)
- Maria asked City Solicitor for an update but haven't heard back
- Personnel & City Solicitor are the ones who go in front of the Ordinance Committee to present raises/proposals/etc
- They were missing a few things requested by the Ordinance Committee
- In November, Barley voted to just reject it but others voted to table it so it was tabled
- Maria will ask staff to give her duties compared to job descriptions, maybe we can present this directly to City Councilors
- Tom asks about any recent city-wide job surveys
- Maria says last one was ~2011

Staff evaluations

- Jason supervises 12 people and evaluates them annually
- Self-eval and then Jason does them as well and then they discuss the evaluations and goal setting
- Ideally will be done with the meetings by end of next week

Attendance policy

- City Personnel department doesn't have much on this
- Policy Committee will be going through the Employee Handbook and tightening up language as appropriate
- We need to set expectations for employees as well

Misc

- Request from Springfield Rescue Mission to add library as a distribution location and ask staff to help distribute them
- Maria discussed with Board of Health for advice, they suggested we ask for a certificate for serving food
- Board of Health person pointed out if it's temperature-specific we can't do it because we're not equipped for that
- We would need staff dedicated to working this and need to be certified on it, and we don't have the person power to do this
- Jason says we looked into this several years ago and it was not possible
- We can provide space for their staff to do this (e.g., outside front door) but cannot provide staff
- Jacksiel asks whether it would help with people coming into the library
- If they staff it and follow city regulations then that would be OK

Brenna motioned to thank them for their care but to decline on the basis of safety and logistical concerns. Gabriela seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE:

- We have ~\$14k left from Nov because raises weren't given based on actual staffing, just based on 2% per head as if all people were FT
- Raised ~\$43k but budgeted to raise ~\$109k
- Approx \$100k budgeted for November that wasn't spent
- Brenna asks why we're concerned about spending if we're still spending less than the annual interest
- Andrew clarifies that inflation makes this more complicated— same dollar amount is less purchasing power

PERSONNEL:

- Nothing to report

HPLR:

- Nothing to report

POLICY: Jeremy Smith

- Starting to work on the employee handbook
- Came in front of the Board and then was supposed to go to Policy and Personnel committees but didn't go in front of Policy
- We'll deal with errors and also update as needed
- Petty cash policy— Alexandra hadn't seen it so Jason and Alexandra are going through it to make it reflect reality

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION: Jeremy Smith

- We're meeting with a new website person tomorrow

PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL PROJECT: Manuel Frau-Ramos

- Anyone interested in being part of the Comics festival organizing committee should email Manuel

MARKETING & FUNDRAISING:

- Meeting with Nancy

NEW BUSINESS

- Jacksiel asks if we've worked with restaurants for fundraising
- Maria says we have in the past

Gabriela moves to adjourn. Jacksiel seconds. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.