

New Haven Free Public Library  
Library Board of Directors  
Minutes of Meeting  
November 23, 2021

**Members Present:** Dr. Anderson, Dr. Garcia-Blocker, Mr. Giering, Ms. Merson, Alder Morrison, Ms. Lamar, Ms. Schneider

**Members absent:** Mr. Cruz, Ms. Logan

**Staff Present:** John Jessen, Luis Chavez-Brumell

### **Welcome**

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes**

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the October 2021 Minutes. Dr. Garcia-Blocker moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes with corrections, Ms. Lamar seconded, and with no further questions or comments, the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Lamar reviewed the October 2021 financials, summarizing both the Board and the Foundation accounts. At a third of the way through the year for the budget, revenues and expenses are as expected.

The endowment saw a slight decrease.

The Board will eliminate the word "fines" from the descriptions in the financials as the library is now fine free.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the October 2021 financials, Mr. Giering moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and with no questions or comments the Board voted to approve the October 2021 financials.

Mr. Jessen presented a transfer from the NHFPL Foundation: \$10,000 from Internet Essentials, which is used for technology classes, marketing for classes, and technology equipment. Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the \$10,000 transfer from Internet Essentials, Ms. Schneider moved, Mr. Giering seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

### **Director's Report**

#### Covid-19 Update

Mr. Jessen reported that the Main library has become a Covid-19 vaccination site, including booster shots! The café area in the library has been opened for extra seating or if patrons need to eat a quick bite away from other patrons. Masks are still required in the building.

Ms. Merson asked about what the air exchange is like in the space. Mr. Jessen said the library has been very proactive with cleaning and maintaining their HVAC system. Air purges and a greater percentage of outside fresh air are control mechanisms that the library uses to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and its variants. The café is also a fairly open area.

#### Staffing

The Library is close to being fully staffed again. Mr. Jessen will be working next week to help correct the tests for the LTA's. A Librarian II Teen position is posted and the Librarian IV position should be posted at the beginning of December.

Luis Chavez-Brumell, the library's Deputy Director, will be reporting out to the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) about the work he has done with the City's task force on cultural equity and the results of recently hosting two

Yale/China fellows. Recently, census data collected by Data Haven has shown the Asian American population has increased in New Haven by 54% in the past 10 years. A large portion of this population, specifically Chinese speaking, is located around the Ives Main Library. The library's two fellows have been helping to research and pinpoint areas where the library can better meet the needs of the Asian American community. On December 15<sup>th</sup>, the library will present the fellows' findings and find ways to improve outreach and offerings.

### Grants

Today, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, a press conference was held for an American Rescue Plan grant the library received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This grant is worth around \$46,000 with a match of \$11,000 from the library for Liberty Community Services. This will allow Liberty to work full days (10am-5pm) at Ives Main Library. They will also be working at Fair Haven and Wilson branches on their late nights and every other Saturday.

### Programs

The library is continuing work on the *One City, One Book* initiative and has chosen *The Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler. Film viewings, book club readings, and author events are being planned to support the initiative. The Library is planning to apply for a Big Read NEA grant with Arts & Ideas for the 2023 season.

### Facilities

The Wilson Branch is having needed renovations completed. The lower level floor will be resurfaced, and interior painting will brighten up a heavily used space. Extensive roof repairs are being planned for the Mitchell Branch in the Spring.

## **Stetson Library Update**

### Opening

Due to a COVID outbreak at the facility where the furniture and fixtures are coming from, there will be another delay getting furnishings in the building. This will hopefully not affect the opening timeline.

The Stetson party that was going to be held in February is now being pushed to May. This will allow for more art organizations to participate in celebrating the new Stetson Library.

Mr. Jessen and Board members will set up a time to tour the new facilities. The new Chief Administrative Officer Regina Rush-Kittle, will also be joining and is starting her new position on December 6<sup>th</sup>, so the tour will be sometime after that date.

### LEAP

Progress is being made with establishing partner programming with LEAP. Through conversations, the library will work with LEAP to address any concerns about moving programming into the new Q House space.

## **Board of Directors Reappointments and Vacancies**

Dr. Anderson stated that all Board members who are up for reappointment, want to be reappointed. This includes Dr. Anderson, Mr. Giering, and Ms. Schneider.

The City has everything they need from the Board to start the process of reappointments. The Board's reappointments will most likely be on the City's agenda in February.

Dr. Garcia-Blocker is ending her term limit in January, so the Board will need to find one replacement. She will be allowed to continue her role until a replacement is appointed.

**City Librarian Reappointment Update**

The City has received the reappointment letter from the Board for Mr. Jessen. The Board has also called for a raise to Mr. Jessen's salary. Dr. Anderson mentioned that the Chief Executive of the Hartford Library makes \$180,000, Stamford Library's Director makes \$142,000, Middletown Library Director makes \$141,000, and the Director of Bridgeport's Library makes \$119,000. This is a contrast to the current salary of New Haven's Library Director of \$110,000.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Executive Session**

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to move into Executive Session. Ms. Schneider moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and the Board entered Executive Session at 6:13 pm. The Board left Executive Session at 6:32 pm

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Merson so moved, and the meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jessen  
City Librarian