

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
January 25, 2022

Members Present: Dr. Anderson, Mr. Giering, Ms. Merson, Alder Morrison, Ms. Lamar, Ms. Schneider, Mr. Cruz, Ms. Logan

Members absent: Dr. Garcia-Blocker

Staff Present: John Jessen, Luis Chavez-Brumell

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the November 2021 Minutes. Ms. Merson moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes with no corrections, Ms. Schneider 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 December 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.

Ms. Merson asked for an explanation of the fee structure. Mr. Jessen explained that fees are primarily for lost materials, faxes, and large copy jobs that staff perform for public.

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

Mr. Jessen presented two transfer requests from the NHFPL Foundation: \$25,000 from New Haven Arts, Culture & Tourism Sustainability grant and a transfer request to accept \$5,000 New Haven Arts, Culture & Tourism Public Art grant. Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve these requests, Ms. Lamar moved, Ms. Schneider seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

Director's Report

Covid-19 Update

All staff now have access to KN95 masks. Enforcing the mask mandate with patrons continues to be a challenge, but anecdotally, the handful of staff members that have been diagnosed with Covid-19 have caught it offsite from friends and family, suggesting that library protocols have been successful in preventing transmission.

Library partner, Griffin Health, has boosted over 600 individuals at the Main Ives location. They continue offer vaccines and boosters Monday to Friday 10-4 pm.

The Mayor updated the City policy regarding acceptable vaccination status. City staffers must get a booster shot to be compliant. Library staff in this cohort have two weeks to update their information. Many are already boosted at the Library. Only a small handful of library staff are not immunized.

Strat Framework

The Library is conducting goals meetings with supervisors. Addressing issues raised in the Strategic Framework is a key topic of these meetings.

Facilities Management

The Library has found a possible grant to help us pay for bike repair stations at all locations.

The painting and floor resealing project in the lower level of the Wilson Library is scheduled for completion by the end of February. The board was invited to tour the space on their own to see the wonderful work.

Planning is underway for roof repairs for the Mitchell Branch in the Spring.

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.

Programs

Mr. Jessen shared information and updates about a few Library sponsored programs that are scheduled for this Spring. These included LunarFest, which the Library is co-hosting with the Yale / China Association, and The *One City, One Read* community read of Octavia E. Butler's *The Parable of the Sower*. This book is being read city-wide in support of Toshi Reagon's opera which Arts and Ideas and Yale's Schwarzman Center are producing later in the Spring. Film viewings, book club readings, and author events are being planned to support the initiative. The Library hopes to arrange an event with Ms. Reagon when she is in the area. Mr. Jessen promised to update the board as news develops.

The Library is still planning to apply for a Big Read NEA grant with Arts & Ideas for the 2023 season.

New Revenue Sources

The Library's Passport Office needs to send in an official opening date to the federal government. And finalize some technical issues. A revised opening date is March 3rd.

Advocacy-

Mr. Chavez-Brumell discussed how the NHFPL's efforts to support cultural equity are taking shape and impact the City in multiple ways as he reported out on the Cultural Equity Plan recently released by the City.

City Librarian Reappointment

Mr. Jessen announced to the board that he has received his re-appointment letter from the Mayor. CAO Regina Rush-Kittle attended the meeting and introduced herself to the Board. She has visited Wilson and Stetson and the Ives Main Library for a tour of the location and a quick meet and greet of staffers. Mr. Jessen is lining up tours at Fair Haven and Mitchell. CAO Rush-Kittle also commented on attending a successful Three Kings Day celebration at the Wilson Library and Mr. Jessen promised to invite her to more events in the future.

Stetson Library Update

Opening timeline

All new books are shelved. Movers are coming end of first week of February to move books and select materials from the old Stetson to the new Stetson.

The Library created a list of key concerns and has been working with various contractors and the City to fix first any issues critical to opening. Mr. Jessen was happy to report that the critical issues list was not long, and he expected that most of those issues would be fixed in the next 10 days. Mr. Jessen also reported that the City has assured the Library that it is moving forward on securing external signage for the Stetson Branch and that it will be in place by DATE.

Naming Rights

The Naming Rights discussion was moved to Executive Session.

Board of Directors Reappointments and Vacancies

Dr. Anderson shared an update with the Board regarding potential new member of the Board of Directors, the process underway, and a possible timeline for when the new member would be joining the Board.

Policy Review

Mr. Jessen introduced two policies – the *Lost and Found Policy* and the *Visitor Guidelines for Personal Belongings Policy* - to the board that were scheduled for review. Both policy reviews included a re-vetting by Supervisors at the Library.

Possible edits to the *Lost and Found* policy were discussed by the board. The board decided to approve the policy without the suggested edits. Ms. Lamar motioned to accept the Lost and Found Policy without any changes, Mr. Cruz seconded, and the motion passed.

Mr. Jessen introduced the *Visitor Guidelines for Personal Belongings Policy* without change for approval. Ms. Lamar motioned to accept the policy with no changes, Ms. Merson seconded, and the motion passed.

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 6:36 pm. The Board left Executive Session at 7:30 pm.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion regarding the Naming Rights in the new Stetson, which the board discussed during Executive Session. Ms. Lamar made a motion that stated that the Library Board approves the Stetson Library Naming Proposal and defers in this case to the Library Foundation Board's counsel on character assessment and sign content. Board members agreed to revisit the issue of naming rights, proposal language, and processes jointly with the Library Foundation Board in future meetings.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lamar so moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jessen
City Librarian