

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
March 22, 2022

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

Staff Present: John Jessen, Luis Chavez-Brumell

Guest: Ms. Rush-Kittle

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:47 pm.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the February 2022 Minutes. Ms. Schneider noted that since Mr. Jessen was not at the previous meeting, the minutes should say "Prepared by Luis Chavez-Brumell" and "Submitted by John Jessen".

Mr. Giering moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes with the correction, Ms. Schneider seconded, and with no further questions or comments, the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes.

Ms. Lamar joined the meeting at 5:49 pm.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Lamar reviewed the February financials, summarizing both the Board and the Foundation accounts. Spending is where it should be at eight months into the fiscal year.

Copier rentals were more expensive in August due to bills being paid for both August and September. Overall, copier rentals are slightly over-budget. Mr. Jessen will look into it further and come back to the Board with more information.

Alder Morrison mentioned that the City has a contract with Xerox. Mr. Jessen explained that staff copiers are a part of the Xerox contract. Public copiers are leased, and the Library generates income from them.

The endowment saw a slight decrease.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the February 2022 financials, Ms. Lamar moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and with no further questions or comments the Board voted to approve the February 2022 financials.

Mr. Jessen presented two transfer requests from the NHFPL Foundation: \$23,264.23 for CT Next Quarter 2 reimbursement and a transfer request to accept \$100,000 from the Foundations Unrestricted Funds. Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve these requests, Ms. Lamar moved, Mr. Giering seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

Director's Report

Covid-19 Update

Outside groups using Library rooms for events have been asking if food is allowed. Food is going to start being allowed at the Administration's discretion, for certain events. Mr. Jessen shared that an RFP for the Café at Ives Main Library will be released soon. Mr. Jessen reminded the Board that if they know of individuals or groups interested in operating a Café at the Library, to let him know. Dr. Garcia-Blocker asked who will be reviewing the RFP process and if the plan for the café will be similar to previous years. Mr. Jessen explained that the RFP will be reviewed by many people at City Hall and then the bidding process can begin. In the future, the library will be more involved in helping vendors activate the space, being consistent with menu items, and have employees who are well-versed with customer service.

Staffing

Karina Gonzalez has accepted the Administrative Librarian IV position. She was previously the IT Supervisor and will be overseeing the new IT supervisor in this position. The Library is looking to open all branches on Sundays from 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Administration will look for potential staffing issues as they arise, but are optimistic that the extra \$100,000 from the City will make this achievable. A main concern with budget is hiring security and custodians. A Supervisor training program is in the works, headed by Mr. Chavez-Brumell. There will be 4-6 webinars for supervisors to attend. The first planned course is about Performance Reviews and Documenting Issues.

Programming

Mardi Gras! Another virtual event was held this year with no charge, which was similar to last year. This year, the Library was able to fundraise over \$31,000, making it even more successful than last year. Lauren Bisio, who has taken the lead on Mardi Gras for many years, celebrated her last one working with the Library Foundation. The Library is looking forward to being in-person again for the next Mardi Gras.

VITA

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance is located at Ives Main Library and Wilson Library branch. Ives location is run by Yale students, so it will be closed until March 26th for Spring Break. To date, the VITA program has brought in \$1.6 million tax dollar back to the state of Connecticut.

Passport Office

A huge success so far! The first week the Library netted \$730 and the second week the office netted \$2,300. All appointments have been booked, but walk-ins are still welcome.

Foundation

The Library is in the process of hiring a replacement for Lauren Bisio's position. By mid-April the Library hopes there will be a new Director of Advancement for the Foundation.

Stetson Library Update

The transfer request from a previous meeting, of \$500,000 from the Stetson campaign, will be put into the endowment.

Opening

The new Stetson location had a soft opening on Monday. There were many attendees.

There will be a celebration with donors and the Foundation in April, separate from the June 4th grand opening.

Mr. Jessen will provide more information to the Board about the April date.

Board Budget Advocacy

Ms. Schneider appreciated the e-mail that was sent to the Board regarding Budget Advocacy. Mr. Jessen will be sending an updated e-mail with location changes as well. Alder Morrison encouraged Mr. Jessen to ask for more money if he thinks the Library may need it for the extra hours on Sunday's. Mr. Giering advised to use information from both the Cultural Equity Plan and the Mayor's Transition Plan from his first swearing in for talking points on why the Community needs the Library and why there should be increased hours. Testimony, whether verbal or written, is highly encouraged for the next hearing. The next Public Hearing will be held on March 30, 2022 at Career High School.

Board of Directors Reappointments and Vacancies

Dr. Anderson shared that the four reappointments of current Board members have been approved by the Mayor and submitted to the Board of Alders on the agenda for March 21, 2022. They will now move to Committee. Aldermanic Affairs Committee meeting will occur on March 28, 2022. Board members being reappointed are not required to attend, but are welcome. Dr. Anderson will e-mail more information to Board members who are being reappointed.

The Board's sub-committee has narrowed the list to three people for the open Board member position and will be sending out the nomination to the Board prior to the next Board meeting.

Executive Session

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to move into Executive Session. Ms. Schneider moved, Mr. Giering seconded, and the Board entered Executive Session at 6:58 pm. The Board left Executive Session at 7:26 pm.

Public Comment

Alder Morrison thanked Mr. Jessen and the entire Library system for their partnership with the Board of Alders Black and Hispanic Caucus and the recognition of Historically Black Colleges and Universities Awareness month.

The next Library Board meeting will be held in-person.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Schneider so moved, Alder Morrison seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jessen
City Librarian