



# New Haven Democracy Fund

"To ensure that all the citizens of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of mayor."  
New Haven Code of General Ordinances, Chapter 2, Article XI, §2-821 • Established in 2007 • [democracyfund@newhavenct.net](mailto:democracyfund@newhavenct.net)



## DEMOCRACY FUND BOARD MEETING

**6:00 pm Wednesday, April 19, 2023**

**Mayor's conference room #2**

New Haven Democracy Fund Board

Sergio Rodriguez, Chair

Members: James Bhandary-Alexander, Sarah Ficca, Aaron Goode, Lesley Heiffel-McGuirk, James O'Connell,

William Wynn

Democracy Fund Administrator: Alyson Heimer

---

### Meeting is in person with online attendance possible.

To join the meeting please use one of the options below:

Web Browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82382679039> ; Meeting ID: 823 8267 9039

Phone: Please dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (New Haven, CT) Meeting ID: 823 8267 9039

+1 312 626 6799 US (Outside New Haven) Meeting ID: 823 8267 9039

---

### AGENDA:

- I. Call to Order at 6:04pm. Aaron Goode joined late, but was present.
- II. Review of the Minutes from March 2023. One change was made to edit the vote count on the minutes to 4-0-3 on item 2. March minutes approved 6-0-0.
- III. Public comment: none.
- IV. Chair's Report
  - A. The Chair and Administrator met with the Abdussabur campaign to better understand their request for matching funds documentation. The Administrator also went through the NHDF filing with the Treasurer, Dana Samuels, to get clarification on returned overages and verify contributions were coming from individuals and not businesses. Following this meeting we released the first amount of matching funds that had been requested and announced that the campaign met the qualifying threshold for the \$23,000 grant (as soon as ballot access is obtained).
- V. Administrator's Report

A. 2023 Election Update

1. Participating candidates

- a) Abdussabur - presentation of audit for submitted request. Total matching funds approved \$9,738.00 in matching funds. The check was made available by the finance department on April 14th.
- b) Brennan - Following the receipt of the Liam Brennan Campaign's request for matching funds and the NHDF grant, the Administrator and Brennan campaign both requested clarity from the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) about the proper way for credit card fees to be reported on the Form 20 filing and guidance on the acceptability of those fees as a monetary transactions rather than in-kind contributions (this changes how much money would be matched by the Fund). Following discussion The Administrator will send a formal request for a ruling on this issue to the SEEC and request a ruling to add clarity to the situation. The SEEC also uses a different rule in reporting between municipal races and the Citizen's Election Program (CEP) participants. An explanation as to why that is the case would be very informative in helping the Fund to make a determination on whether to match contributions credit card processing fees.
- c) Elicker - The Treasurer alerted the Administrator that the campaign expects to file a second request for matching funds before the end of the month.

- B. Correspondence - The Administrator received multiple communiques from various sources about issues with the April 10 Filings. The Abdussabur campaign was requested to complete an addendum to be filed with the SEEC adding complete employer and occupation information for each donor. To ensure compliance for the Abdussabur, Brennan, and Elicker campaigns, we will wait on official word from SEEC on the preferred reporting methods before asking the campaigns to correct their documentation.

VI. Report from the Internship Review Subcommittee

- A. The subcommittee has so far received 15 applications for the summer position. The Chair confirmed that this individual will ultimately report to Michael Gormany in the Finance Department and need to complete standard ethics documents.

Member Ficca wished that it be added to the minutes that the files for the subcommittee from the various candidates had been "impeccably organized" and expressed her thanks for Administrator Heimer's attention to detail on the project.

The Sub Committee will begin scheduling interviews with first round candidates. Members of the Board expressed a preference for a local candidate and to request that those interviews be scheduled first

before interviewing out-of-state applicants. The Board also wanted to make sure that the same rules applied to the summer hire as to Board members and that they would be disallowed from also working or volunteering or supporting any of the local mayoral candidates.

VII. New Business

- A. Night Market - The NHDF is signed up to table at the Night Market on May 12th 5-10pm. Members Goode and Heffel-McGuirk have volunteered to staff the table. Administrator will provide the NHDF banner.
- B. Debate - The board asked if we should plan to host the debate this cycle or designate an already planned event as the official debate. The Chair advised that a change in venue would be necessary for this year given the number of candidates and relaxing of COVID protocols. The Q House, Shubert Theatre, and high school auditoriums were floated as venue options. Debate will occur in the last few weeks of the Primary cycle in late August or Early September.
- C. Ethics Form - an updated ethics form will need to be completed by all board members who have not done so already in 2023.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:13pm.